

Abstract:

The objective of this master's thesis is to examine a detailed summary of the present situation of visitor monitoring methods in large-scale protected areas in Czechia. Methods used in Czechia are introduced on 9 areas. The main research tools used were interviews with 8 key actors and a survey with the head managers of 4 national parks and 25 protected areas. The questionnaire survey was conducted in November and December 2011 and had 100 % return. This thesis presents comprehensive characteristics of the situation in Czechia including levels of monitoring methods. It seems that this study is the first of its kind which has been done in Czechia. Findings show that there is systematic quantitative visitor monitoring in Czech national parks, but that there is not in protected landscape areas. The majority of national park and protected area management do not have a standard certificated methodology for managing counting visitors. This means that their results cannot be compared. To promote better understanding of methods the text includes 22 examples of visitor counting done in chosen European countries and 9 examples from other non-European countries with the goal of summarizing which methods and technologies are available and suitable for use in Czechia. Finally, the evaluations of eight different methods for quantitative monitoring of visitors by multi-criteria analysis are included, because one of major objectives of the study was to recommend a method suitable for application in Czechia.

For Czech large-scale protected areas, outcoming from the analysis, automated methods using counting equipment, and not personalized methods, were selected as optimal and recommended. This is due to the inability to guarantee the reproducibility of counting conditions and continuous measurements to determine the annual number of visitors. The cost per day of monitoring and data processing is also expensive.

Key words: tourism, monitoring, national park, protected landscape area, visitor, Czechia