

## Editorial by Günter Köck



Today, many protected areas (PA) are popular tourist destinations, intensively used as recreational spaces and offering a variety of leisure activities, such as hiking, climbing, mountain biking, canoeing, horse-riding and cross-country skiing. Many studies indicate that tourism plays an important role, on various levels, in the economic development of PAs. However, there is clear evidence that tourism can have adverse environmental effects on PAs. Increased traffic and overcrowding, for example, can alter ecosystems through their negative impact on flora and fauna. And with increasing visitor numbers, conflicts can arise between different user groups, land owners and the PA management. Such problems are particularly in evidence in PAs situated close to large cities and those that provide easy access for urban populations.

As the impacts of tourism on the environment are manifold and complex, there is a clear need to study them closely. Tools and methods for integrated PA management and monitoring need to be developed which, on the one hand, will use the potential of a region for tourism and, on the other, will protect the area against negative environmental impacts.

The majority of the articles presented in this issue of *eco.mont* reflect on tourism and economic development.

Nowadays, natural and semi-natural landscapes are increasingly seen as restorative settings, positively influencing human health. However, the extent of these positive effects may depend on the quality of the landscape. The study presented by *Arne Arnberger, Renate Eder, Brigitte Alex, Hans-Peter Hutter, Peter Wallner, Nicole Bauer, Johann G. Zaller* and *Thomas Frank*, carried out in the Austrian biosphere reserve *Großes Walsertal*, shows that meadows have very positive psycho-physiological effects, such as stress reduction, regardless of whether the meadows are *managed* or *unmanaged*.

A study carried out by *Estela Inés Fariás-Torbidoni, Demir Barić* and *Petra Anić* in five PAs in Spain investigated whether the willingness of visitors to engage in physically challenging recreational and sports activities can be used as a visitor-segmentation criterion.

*Joanna Hibner, Karolina Taczanowska, Antoni Zięba, Christiane Brandenburg, Andreas Mubar* and *Jaroslav Balon* studied the profiles of visitors in two of the most heavily-used leisure destinations accessible by cable car in the Tatra National Park (Czech Republic and Poland). Their findings can be used practically in this sector of PA management.

The study by *Ivo Machar, Jaroslav Simon, Jan Brus, Vilém Pechanec, Helena Kiliánová, Jarmila Filippovová* and *Kateřina Vrublová* carried out in the Hruby Jeseník Mountains (Czech Republic) complies with the demand for effective tools to support PA managements in fulfilling their biodiversity conservation goals. The authors present a growth simulation model for future changes in forest ecosystems which can be used for the assessment and creation of adaptive conservation management strategies in mountain PAs.

Two further articles deal with aspects of biodiversity in three very different biogeographic regions in Asia – the Himalayas, the Altiparmak Mountains and the Taurus Mountains.

The study presented by *Til Bikram Chongbang, Christine Keller, Michael Nobis, Christoph Scheidegger* and *Chitra Bahadur Baniya* used various mathematical models to evaluate the species richness and composition of lichens in the Kanchenjunga Conservation Area in Nepal and found significant differences in lichen species richness for different land-use types.

*Recep Karakaş* and *Murat Biricik* investigated bird species richness in the Mount Nemrud National Park in Turkey. The authors report a total of 160 different species in the area but noticed negative effects of mass tourism and illegal hunting due to ineffective protection measures in the World Heritage Site.

Within this issue's Case in Point *Salih Birinci* examined the natural and social tourism potentials of Tunca Valley Natural Park in Turkey describing its natural features and traditional settlements and culture.

Last but not least, a review article by *Benedikt Hora, Carla Marchant* and *Axel Borsdorf* provides an overview on Private PAs in mountain regions of Latin America and their role in conservation practices.

I would like to draw your attention to the last page of this issue, which for the first time (and, after almost 10 years of existence, certainly very tardily) presents a list of contributing reviewers, for this issue and the three volumes published in 2017. This list is a way of acknowledging our gratitude to our reviewers for their hard and time-consuming work and of saying thank you to them.

On behalf of all the editors, I would like to thank *Michael Vogel*, former Park Manager of Berchtesgaden National Park in Germany, for his endless enthusiasm about all matters relating to research in PAs. From the journal's inception, he has always supported the importance of a publication such as *eco.mont* and has focused consistently on its success. Thank you Michael!

Finally, I would like to welcome Leopold Füreder, professor for limnology at the University of Innsbruck, and Herbert Wölger, park manager at the Gesäuse National Park, in our editorial board team!

Günter Köck

## Related projects according to the **European Mountain Pool**

At the editorial office of eco.mont, we maintain the **European Mountain Pool** on research in European protected mountain areas. [http://4dweb.proclim.ch/4dcgi/ProtAreas/en/BuildSearch\\_ProtArea](http://4dweb.proclim.ch/4dcgi/ProtAreas/en/BuildSearch_ProtArea)

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*Perceived health benefits of managed and unmanaged meadows in a mountain biosphere reserve – an experimental study in the Austrian Alps* by Arne Arnberger, Renate Eder, Brigitte Alex, Hans-Peter Hutter, Peter Wallner, Nicole Bauer, Johann G. Zaller & Thomas Frank

*Willingness to engage in physically challenging activities as a visitor-segmentation criterion: the case of five protected areas in Catalonia* by Estela Inés Farías-Torbidoni, Demir Barić & Petra Anić  
*Visitor profiling for cable car mountain destinations as a basis for protected area management: a case study of the summer season in the Tatra Mountains at Kasprowy Wierch (Poland) and Skalnaté Pleso (Slovakia)* by Joanna Hibner, Karolina Taczanowska, Antoni Zięba, Christiane Brandenburg, Andreas Muhar & Jarosław Balon

*Birds of Mount Nemrut National Park Area, Turkey* by Recep Karakaş & Murat Biricik

*From natural forest to cultivated land: Lichen species diversity along land-use gradients in Kanchenjunga, Eastern Nepal* by Til Bikram Chongbang, Christine Keller, Michael Nobis, Christoph Scheidegger & Chitra Bahadur Baniya

*A growth simulation model as a support tool for conservation management strategy in a mountain protected area* by Ivo Machar, Jaroslav Simon, Jan Brus, Vilém Pechanec, Helena Kiliánová, Jarmila Filippovová & Kateřina Vrublová

Related projects in the **European Mountain Pool** and **eco.mont**

**Arne Arnberger:** Alpine landscapes under global change: Impacts of land-use change on regulating ecosystem services, biodiversity, human health and well-being (Healthy Alps). CH-5781

**Arne Arnberger:** Biosphärenpark-Landschaften und ihre Bedeutung für die Gesundheit. CH-6158

**Hartl Arnulf:** Health effects of alpine waterfalls. CH-5095

**Elias Butzmann:** Developing a typology of sustainable protected area tourism products. CH-6176

**Elias Butzmann:** Ökonomisch und ökologisch favorable Besuchersegmente im Kontext des Nationalparktourismus. CH-6182

**Matthias Gattermayr:** Distribution, abundance and habitat requirements of protected bird species in the Hohe Tauern National Park (Austria): combining field work and habitat modelling. CH-5085

**Jürgen Pollheimer:** Monitoring breeding birds in the National Park Thayatal: point counts with distance sampling – a case study on selected songbird species. CH-5558

**Thomas Sattler:** Ornithologische Dauerbeobachtung in der subalpinen und alpinen Stufe des Schweizerischen Nationalparks und der Biosfera Val Müstair. CH-1802

**Christoph Scheidegger:** Genetic diversity, ecotype differentiation and mating types of a primeval-forest lichen, *Lobaria pulmonaria*, in fragmented and extended habitats. PN: 3100-059241

**Peter Brang:** Factors driving forest dynamics in mountain pine forests in the Swiss National Park. CH-4931