Visitor load in protected nature areas during COVID-19

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Abstract

COVID-19 induced visitor load reveals the importance of recreational infrastructure in specially protected nature areas. Visitor flow analysis of nature sites in various locations based on sensor data before and during COVID-19 crisis demonstrate the interconnections and dynamics of the phenomena. The overall trend indicates significant increase of visiting nature sites in vicinity of larger cities and in popular places caused by domestic and local demand. Visitor load has increased creating tension in sustainable site management. That creates the debate about alternatives for society to visit nature sites outside specially protected nature territories and leads to imprecise strategies for the use of other state-owned forests. The analysis of geospatial data indicates the lack of adequate facilities suitable for longer-term active recreation in state forests outside specially protected nature territories.

Key words: recreation, nature, Covid-19, visitor flow, geospatial, management

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