

UNDERSTANDING TOURISTS' IMPACTS AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS NATURE AND PROTECTED AREAS

HUMANITA



Project summary

Interreg
CENTRAL EUROPE



Co-funded by
the European Union

HUMANITA

Interreg Central Europe Humanita (2023-2026)

Project partnership

10 partners from Slovakia, Croatia, Italy, Austria, Slovenia, Hungary

Pilot areas

5 protected areas of Central Europe

Main objective

Improving human-nature interactions, developing new tools and methods to assess the impacts of tourism on protected areas

Assessing tourism impacts on Protected Areas

The pilot sites involved in the project are protected areas where **tourism has generated over time impacts on the natural environment and its ecosystems.**

The natural area management bodies have activated differentiated **impact monitoring programmes** which, thanks to the project, will be **strengthened and shared among the partners.**

We are aware that protected areas suffer from impacts on several and different elements of the environment: soil erosion, displacement, trampling, disturbance of wildlife, water pollution, rubbish, introduction of invasive species...

The point of view of the tourists

How do tourists perceive their presence in protected areas as a factor of impact on the environment?

How aware are they of the criticalities caused by tourism on natural elements?

What behavior and habits do they adopt to mitigate the effects of their interaction with the environment?

During the summer of 2023 we conducted a survey among tourists in the five pilot areas, asking them to answer a questionnaire to collect data on the target, know their behavior, habits on the most practiced activities and attitudes to environmental protection of protected areas.

These are the results that we have collected

Distributed within 5 pilot areas

Protected areas

- Geopark Karawanken (AT-SLO) transboundary area
- National Park Malá Fatra (SK)
- Tuscan-Emilian Apennine National Park (IT)
- Bükk National Park (HU)
- Kamenjak Protected Areas - Lower Kamenjak, Medulin Archipelago (HR)



7 languages



6 countries



July-October 2023



>600 questionnaires

Tourist outline



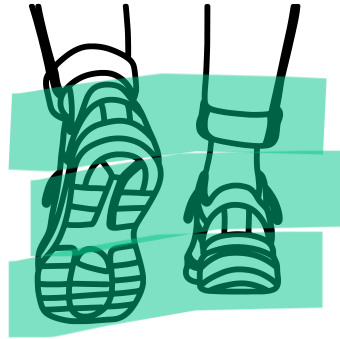
Most popular

Activities

WALKING 48%



HIKING 49%



PHOTOGRAPHY 13%



GUIDED VISITS 12%



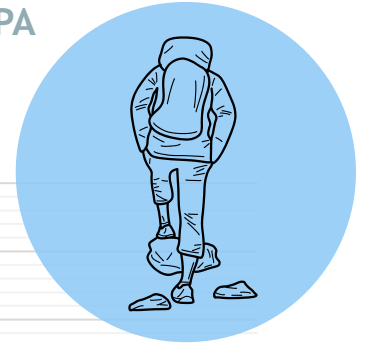
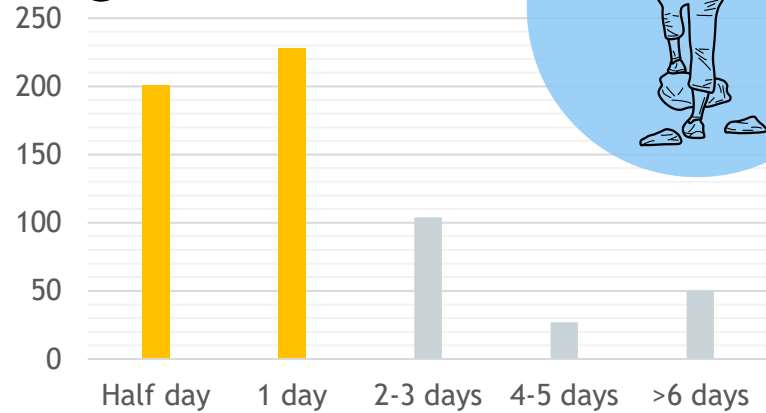
**BIKE TOURING
MOUNTAIN BIKE** 12%

67% Already visited the area

33% 1st time visiting the PA



Duration of stay

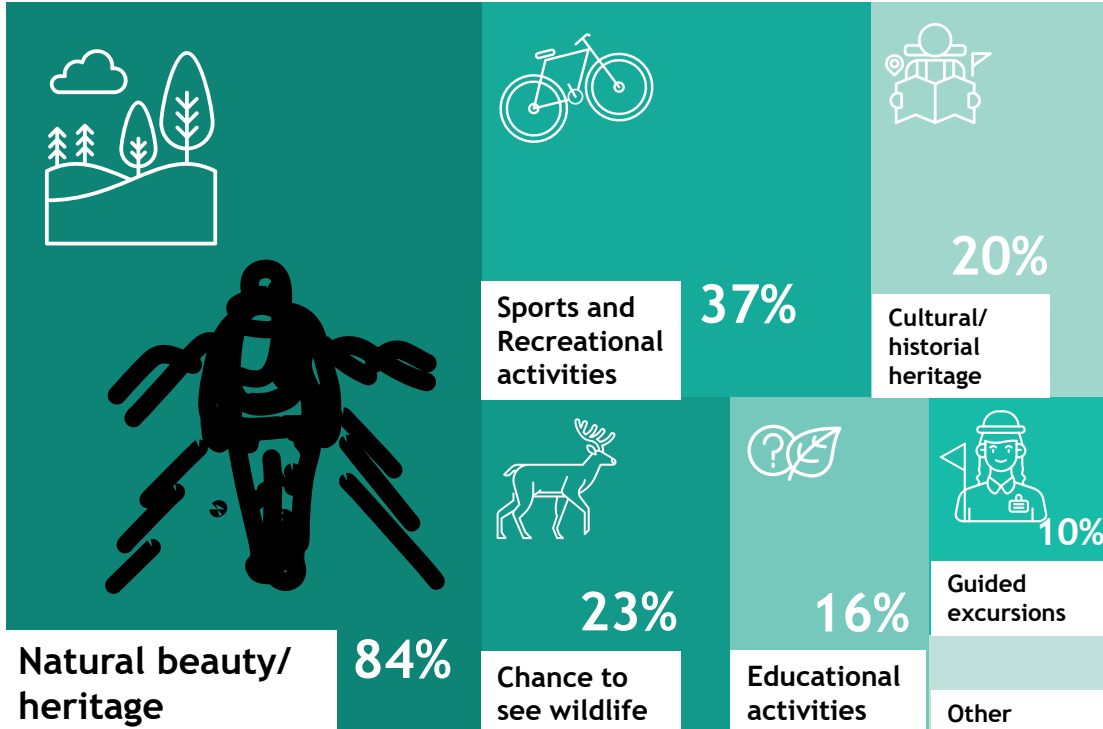


Tourist outline

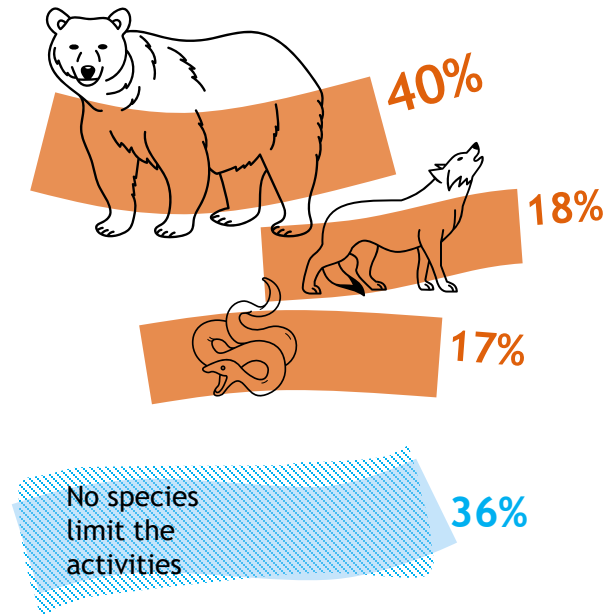


Most

Valued Aspects



Wildlife that discourages visits to the pilot areas



Tourist outline



Interactions with
the **environment**



**AWARENESS ON
INDIVIDUAL
ACTIVITY/EXCURSION
in the protected area**

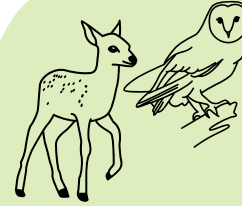
45%

May have had impacts
such as:

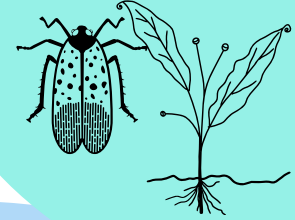
Trampling



Wildlife disturbance



Introduction of
invasive species



Pollution



Garbage



Erosion



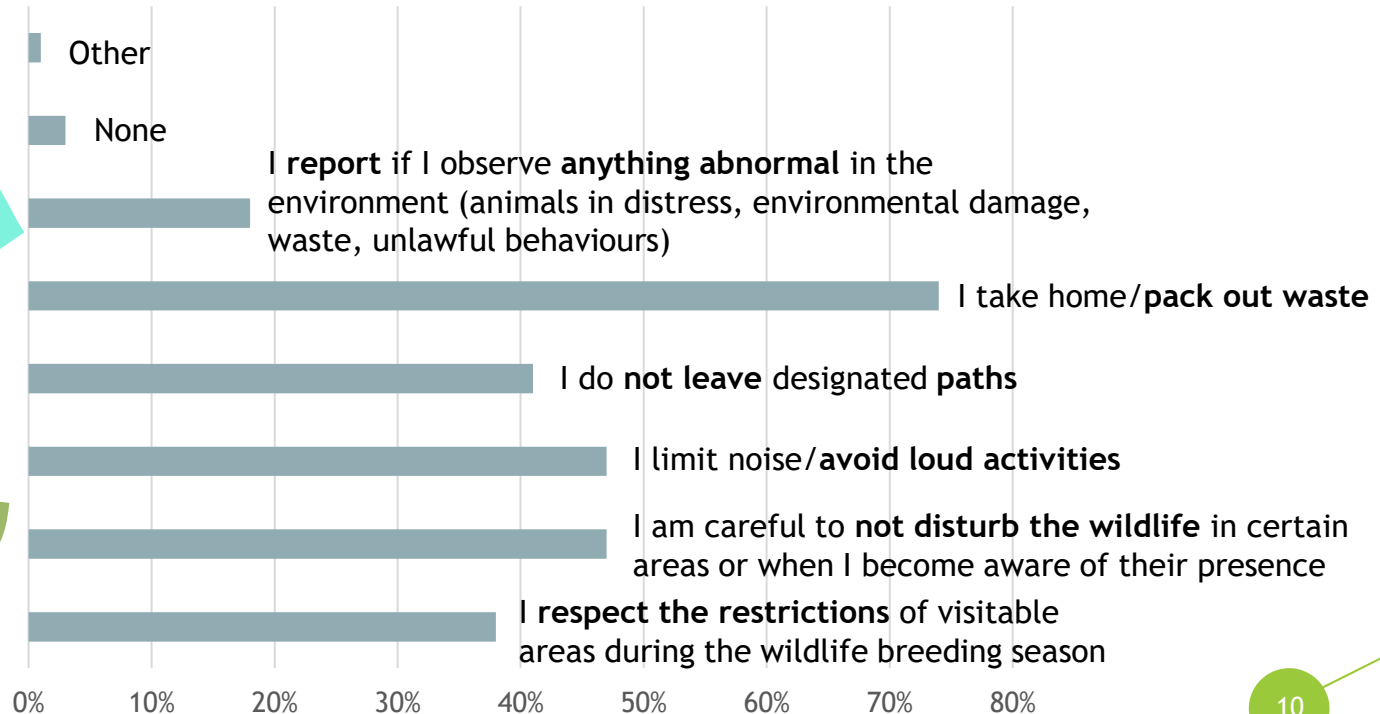
55%

Haven't had impacts

Tourist outline



What kind of attention and respectful behavior do tourists have to protect the environment?

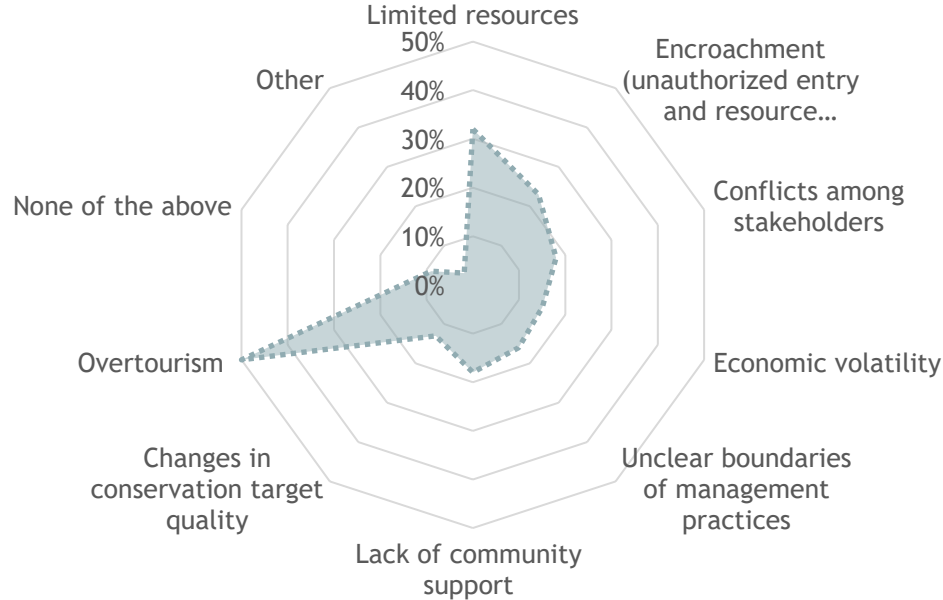


Tourist outline

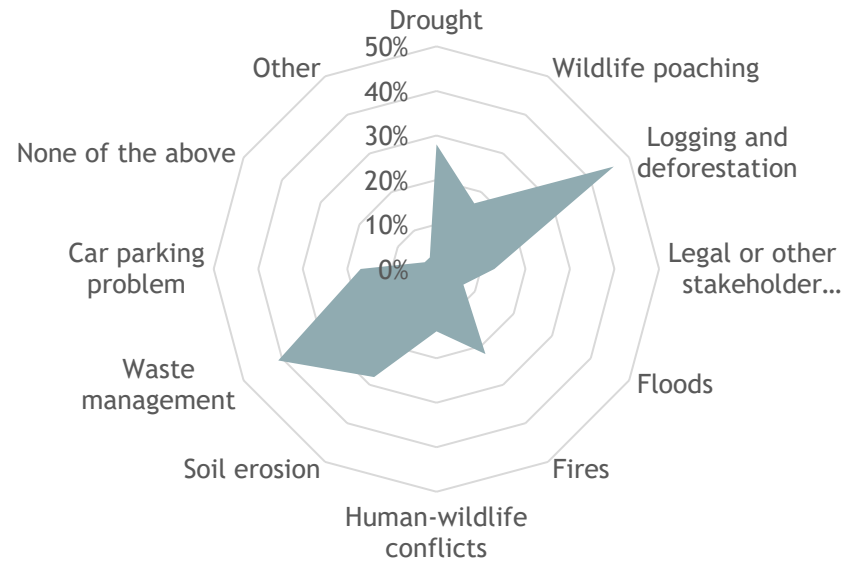
Challenges and threats from tourists' point of view



Challenges



Threats



Tourist outline

Which **conflicts** and **contradictions**?

Tourists



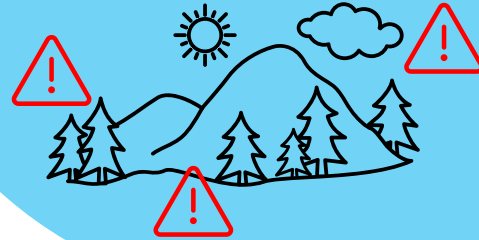
are

**AWARE ON
CHALLENGES/THREATS**

put in practice

**GOOD BEHAVIOURS
/ATTITUDES**

**PAs State-
of-the-art**



Actual challenges/threats of PAs

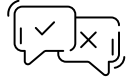


But NOT aware
of own impacts



Actual impacts of tourists
on environment

Tourist outline



Which **conflicts** and **contradictions**?

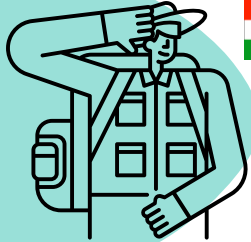
Tourists

of Bükk
National Park



consider as

THREATS



Deforestation



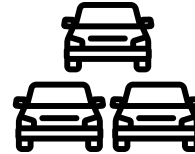
Waste management

\neq
whereas

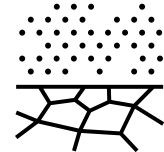
**Bükk
National Park**

record as main

THREATS



Motorized
vehicles

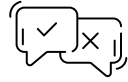


Soil erosion



Plants and mushrooms
harvesting

Tourist outline



Which **conflicts** and **contradictions**?

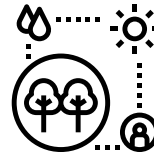
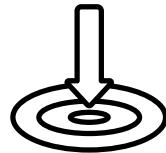
Tourists

of Appennino
Tosco-
Emiliano
National Park



only 22%
consider that
personal
activity/excursion
could have
generated

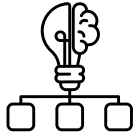
**IMPACTS ON THE
NATURAL
ENVIRONMENT**



Lack of awareness
on the entire

**COMPLEXITY OF
HUMAN-NATURE
INTERACTIONS**



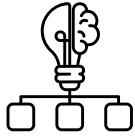


Considerations

It is difficult to see one's own behaviour as being a part of the challenges facing the natural environment.



Challenges tend to be recognized as being outside own responsibilities.



Considerations

The vision of the impacts is often partial and short-sighted as limited and reduced is the awareness of the overall complexity of the relationships between humans and the environment.



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