

Marine Parks for protection and tourism in Turkey

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Abstract. Protected Turkish areas in the Mediterranean region are compared with those of other Mediterranean countries. Policies followed in Turkey for conservation protection of the natural and cultural environment and the use of coastal resources for tourism are discussed. The purpose and application of Turkish law is examined with respect to the interaction between the protection of coastal areas and tourism. Modifications on the administrative and management regulations in Turkey enabling a better use of coastal areas is suggested by combining coastal tourism and protection. The necessity and importance of establishing and managing Marine Parks in short- and long-term plans are acknowledged.

Keywords: Aegean; Coastal tourism; Environment; Mediterranean; National Park; Natural area; Protected area.

Introduction

A protected area is an area of land and/or sea especially dedicated to the protection and maintenance of biological diversity, of natural and associated cultural resources, managed through legal and other effective means. The main purposes of management of protected areas are: (1) scientific research; (2) wilderness protection; (3) preservation of species and genetic diversity; (4) maintenance of environmental services; (5) protection of specific natural and cultural features; (6) tourism and recreation; (7) education; (8) sustainable use of resources from natural ecosystems; (9) maintenance of cultural and traditional attributes. Six categories based on management objectives for protected area management (Anon. 1994) are distinguished:

- Category Ia: Strict nature reserve; protected area management mainly for science;
- Category Ib: Wilderness area; protected area managed mainly for wilderness protection;
- Category II: National park; protected area managed mainly for ecosystem protection and recreation;
- Category III: Natural monument: protected area managed mainly for conservation of natural features;
- Category IV: Habitat/species management area; protected area managed mainly for conservation through

management intervention;

- Category V: Protected landscape/seascape; protected area managed mainly for landscape/seascape conservation and recreation;
- Category VI: Managed resource protected area; protected area managed mainly for the sustainable use of natural ecosystems.

In category II, the National Park is defined as a natural area of land and/or sea, designated to (a) protect the ecological integrity of one or more ecosystems for present and future generations, (b) exclude exploitation or occupation inimical to the purposes of designation of the area, (c) provide a foundation for spiritual, scientific, educational, recreational and visitor opportunities, all of which must be environmentally and culturally compatible (Anon. 1994).

Turkey is privileged in having a very important cultural heritage and many sites which exhibit natural beauty. 23 National Parks, eight Natural Parks, 23 Nature Conservation Areas and two Natural Monuments have been established for protection by the General Directorate of National Parks and Wildlife (GDNPW). In addition to these, 12 further areas were declared and established as Specially Protected Areas by a Council of Ministers' Decree in Turkey. These areas are under the control of the Authority for the Protection of Special Areas (APSA). The aims for establishment of these areas have been given in Yalçiner & Gökdalay (1995).

Institutions, rules and regulations which have been established by relevant Turkish laws for addressing various coastal and sea issues, their deficiencies and shortcomings have been discussed in Özhan et al. (1993). There are many characteristics of the Turkish coastline, each of which has been sufficient for the establishment of conservation areas and/or Marine Parks (Tont & Yalçiner 1993). The marine protected areas (MPAs) in the world with special attention to the Mediterranean basin are discussed in this paper and the conservation areas (National Parks, Nature Parks, Nature Conservation Areas, Specially Protected Areas) in Turkey have been enumerated by Yalçiner & Gökdalay (1995).

Although the aims of establishing and managing many areas for protection in Turkey satisfy most of the categories given by the IUCN (Anon. 1994), further effort is necessary in order to obtain an acceptable balance between the use and protection of the areas. In this paper, the policies followed in Turkey for nature protection and coastal tourism development, are briefly discussed. Tourism development and its negative effects on conservation of the natural and cultural environment are examined. Necessary short- and long-term plans are recommended for establishing and managing the larger protected areas as well as economic coastal tourism. Marine Parks are recommended as the final solution in this process.

Protection in the Mediterranean region

For each of the Mediterranean countries, the percentage of the (terrestrial and marine) protected land areas (%PA), the number of protected areas (PA), the number of coastal and marine protected areas (CMPA), taken from global protected areas summary statistics (Anon. 1994), and a review of Mediterranean (Anon. 1993a) and some other countries is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. The lengths of coastlines, the percent land area (terrestrial and marine) protected (%PA) and the numbers of protected areas (PA) and coastal and marine protected areas (CMPA) in the Mediterranean Region (Anon. 1994, 1996 and Anon. 1993)

Country	Length of coastline (km)	No. of PA	%Land area of PA in total area	No. of CMPA
Albania	4 018	11	1.18	2
Algeria	1 200	19	5.00	6
Bulgaria		46	3.34	5
Croatia	5 790	29	6.82	15
Cyprus	782	4	8.14	4
Egypt	950	12	0.79	3
France	1 703	110	10.30	18
Georgia		15	2.68	
Greece	16 600	24	1.69	10
Israel	190	15	14.82	10
Italy	8 800	172	7.55	25
Lebanon	225	1	0.34	1
Libya	1 770	6	0.10	3
Malta	180			3
Monaco	4			4
Montenegro	280	21	3.40	2
Morocco	512	10	0.79	2
Romania		39	4.57	1
Russian Federation		199	3.84	
Slovenia	46	10	5.34	7
Spain	2 580	215	8.41	39
Syria	183			0
Tunisia	1 300	7	0.27	5
Turkey	8 200	44	1.05	20
Ukraine		20	0.87	7

Note: Missing data for PA or CMPA areas in certain countries is either not available or each one is less than 1000 ha in the country.

Spain, the Russian Federation and Italy are the first three countries according to numbers of PA; Israel, France and Spain are the first three countries according to % land area of PA in total area; Spain, Italy and Turkey are the first three countries according to the number of CMPA (Table 1).

When Turkey is compared individually with the other Mediterranean countries, the establishment of, and dominance of protected areas and specially protected areas, is evident. (Yalçiner & Gökdalay 1995).

Protection and coastal tourism in Turkey

In 1983, the Environment Law, the current National Park Law, and Law for Protection of Cultural and Natural Wealth were all enacted in Turkey. The prime objectives of the Environment Law are general environmental protection and pollution prevention. The purposes of the present National Park Law are: (a) to establish the principles governing the selection and designation of protected areas of national and international value; and (b) ensure protection, development and management of such places without spoiling their natural characteristics. The purposes of the Law for Protection of Cultural and Natural Wealth are to establish definitions, to regulate processes and activities and to identify Institutions.

A group of experts for investigation and survey purposes was set up in 1997 by the GDNPW to investigate the present National Parks and candidate areas for National Parks. The National Parks Fund was established under the authority of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Affairs, in order to meet the expenses of the use and operation of the National Parks. This fund is supported by entrance fees and revenue obtained from the sale of publications (N. Ceylan pers. comm. 1997). It has to be emphasized that the income of the fund is very low and cannot cover the expenses of the Parks. Therefore no research or any kind of investigation can be properly supported financially. Apparently new developments on the administration and management of National Parks in Turkey are not significant.

Responsibility for the protected areas is with the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Affairs, together with the Ministry of Environment and Ministry of Culture. As permanent liaisons between Ministries, the Government and the Municipalities do not exist, developments in establishing new protected areas and better managing existing protected areas will take a longer time than expected.

In 1983, the Tourism Incentives Law was enacted to guide and develop the tourism sector in Turkey. The Law has helped the growth of the tourism sector and

supported the national economy considerably. The main contradiction of the Tourism Incentives Law with the above mentioned laws for protection, is in article 8. According to this article, application by any tourism project has the priority to continue even if any problem (or any conflict with the other laws) appears. In essence, while this article accelerates tourism developments, it also decelerates the protection processes.

Since the primary capital of any tourism sector is the natural beauty and cultural wealth of the area and most of these values are near coastal areas, coastal tourism has developed significantly in Turkey in the last decades. Turkey is surrounded by the Black Sea, the Sea of Marmara, the Aegean Sea and the eastern Mediterranean Sea. The coastal areas in these seas have a considerable variety of natural and cultural values. Weather conditions, the length of the tourism season, sea water temperature and coastal topography are all important factors for coastal tourism. The number of tourist establishments along the Aegean and Mediterranean coastlines of Turkey is more than the number of tourist establishments along the coastlines of the other seas. This comparison is presented in Table 2.

Underwater tourist activities in Turkey have been carried out mainly via the sporting activities associated with tourist establishments. However, the level of underwater tourism has not yet reached that of countries which gain significant income from this tourism. For underwater tourist development, Marine Parks appears to be the best application with respect to resources. In Turkey, there are many sites as candidate areas for Marine Parks, especially in the northern Aegean coastal areas which possess diverse and distinguished natural and cultural richness.

Conversely, diving is prohibited in some coastlines of Turkey because of the value of sunken archaeological sites, for example the Kekova-Üçagiz district, and these should be investigated in detail. This area with extensive ecological, geomorphological, archaeological and natural characteristics, has the potential to be a sole Marine Park that would be different to any other Marine Park in the world.

The significant difference of the Mediterranean Sea compared to the other seas is the cultural values which have accumulated within the region (Franko & Verdesi 1993; Liritzis et al. 1983), especially in Anatolia (Pulak 1994; Arisoy & Kurtulus 1993; Türe et al. 1994) during the past 5000 yr. The cultural importance of the Anatolian coastlines has to be pointed out as the 'cultural heritage'. These special characteristics attract tourists, scientists for research and environmentalists for conservation. In order to balance economic and cultural/ecological benefits and to provide sustainable development

Table 2. The number of tourist establishments and the number of beds at the coastal regions in Turkey (at the end of 1997; source: Ministry of Tourism; Anon. 1998).

Coastal region	No. of tourist establishments	No. of beds
Sea of Marmara	617	98 034
Aegean Sea	1184	190 460
Mediterranean Sea	929	191 322
Black Sea	169	17 779

while serving the tourist industry, strict well-defined short- and long-term plans have to be followed in Turkey. Brief recommendations are given in the following paragraphs.

Since cultural values are very important for mankind, National and International institutions should take active roles by supporting efforts to protect these values in Turkey. This necessitates financial and technical assistance in establishing and managing a balanced protection and usage system, both in short and long-term plans. In addition, NGOs have to take a continuous role in public awareness on protection and usage.

In the short term, the present situation of administration and management in Turkey for protection of coastal areas and the development in coastal tourism, should be modified. Responsibilities of all Institutions have to be co-ordinated and permanent liaisons between Institutions has to be established. Income (which is necessary for expenses involved in running the protected areas) has to be obtained from the protected areas, similar to that for coastal tourism. A National Park tax should be levied in order to obtain a proper income.

In the long term, an administrative and financially independent (responsible for protection and usage) authority has to be established. A significant exemplar would be the Authority of Specially Protected Areas. Experts in many different disciplines (coastal zone management, biology, zoology, geology, oceanography, engineering, urban planning etc.) have to be employed in the authority.

In all these plans, Marine Parks, providing a diversity of usage and a range of concerns in the Park areas, should be established. Well managed Marine Parks balance the ecological/cultural and economic benefits, and provide sustainable development to a higher degree than that of protected areas.

Conclusion

Policies followed in Turkey for the protection of nature and for the development in coastal tourism are discussed and the necessary short-term and long-term plans for Turkey are proposed briefly. Concluding remarks are:

- The Tourism Incentives Law (article 8) in Turkey gives priority to tourism projects rather than protection of the areas. The present status accelerates tourist developments, but decelerates the protection processes.
- Responsibilities of the Institutions for protection have to be unified. Permanent co-ordination between Ministries, Government and the Municipalities in Turkey has to be set.
- The income from the present protected areas and National Parks has to be increased to compensate for the cost of protection, usage and research.
- Natural values – especially cultural values – are special for the Turkish coastline. In order to balance economic and ecological/cultural benefits in coastal area usage, Marine Parks (which provide a diversity of usage and a range of concerns in the park areas) should be established and managed.
- Since cultural values are very important for mankind, National and International government and non-government institutions/organisations should take more active sustainable roles in public awareness by supporting efforts, financially and technically.

Acknowledgements. The authors wish to thank Mr. Nevzat Ceylan, former General Director of National Parks, Hunting and Wildlife, Ministry of Agriculture, Forests and Rural Affairs for many kind and valuable discussions.

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Received 19 January 1999;

Revision received 28 June 1999;

Accepted 12 July 1999.