

**Доц. д-р ГЕОРГИ ГЕОРГИЕВ**

*ЮГОЗАПАДЕН УНИВЕРСИТЕТ "НЕОФИТ РИЛСКИ", БЛАГОЕВГРАД*

**Докторант МАРИЯ ТРИФОНОВА ВАСИЛЕВА**

*ЮГОЗАПАДЕН УНИВЕРСИТЕТ "НЕОФИТ РИЛСКИ", БЛАГОЕВГРАД*

**НЯКОИ ПРОБЛЕМИ ПРИ РЕКРЕАЦИОННОТО ИЗПОЛЗВАНЕ НА  
НАЦИОНАЛНИТЕ ПАРКОВЕ В БЪЛГАРИЯ**

**PROBLEMS IN RECREATIONAL USE OF THE NATIONAL PARKS IN BULGARIA**

**Associate Prof. Dr. GEORGI GEORGIEV**

*SOUTH WEST UNIVERSITY "NEOFIT RILSKI", BLAGOEVGRAD*

**PhD Student MARIA TRIFONOVA VASILEVA**

*SOUTH WEST UNIVERSITY "NEOFIT RILSKI", BLAGOEVGRAD*

**Abstract:** Protected areas play a very important role in terms of the concept of sustainable socio-economic and tourism development on the planet. The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) created a special classification with the aim to divide into certain categories protected areas, depending on their natural values and significance. Except for their preservation functions, in particular conservation of biodiversity and their natural habitats, protected areas have one more function. They can be used for and contribute to the sustainable development of all aspects of the socio-economic development of community.

This paper has the aim to determine to what extent national parks could be engaged with tourism sector. Under observation are national parks as they represent one of the most preferred forms of nature protection in global scale and in Bulgaria as well. Their involvement in turn could be used to contribute to sustainable development. Ecotourism is considered as a basic instrument to achieve the aforementioned objectives. There are two concepts that lay the foundations for successful implementation. These are the concept of sustainable development, on the one hand, and the concept of development of alternative forms of tourism, on the other hand. The main idea is that the concept of development of alternative forms of tourism is derivative on the principles of sustainable tourism development.

**Keywords:** protected areas, national parks, functional zoning, alternative forms of tourism, ecotourism

**I. Introduction**

**One of the well - established forms of nature conservation represents the system of national parks and other protected areas of similar designation. The foundation of the Yellowstone National Park (USA, 1872), marked the creation and adoption of a concept of protected areas of such category.**

Gradually, the idea of foundation of national parks (NP) was disseminated and gained popularity in lots of countries all over the world. In 1876 in Mexico was proclaimed "Desierto de los Leones" National Park and in 1898 was proclaimed "Hielgo" National Park. In 1879

was proclaimed the first national park in Australia, located south of Sydney. Soon afterwards areas of similar designation were established in Canada – Banff National Park (1885), New Zealand – Tangariro (1897) and Egmont NP (1900). At the beginning of the XX century there were 19 National Parks, distributed in six countries with a total area of 4.6 million ha.

**The proclamation of vast areas of nature as national parks met initially resistance from the private entrepreneurs. One of the limiting factors was the lack of governmental financial and legislative support. Another essential reason, hindering**

**development of the network of national parks became the lack of a sound need of the public to use these areas for recreational purposes. Later, namely the intensification of this need was highlighted as a major reason, leading to establishment of new national parks, which encompassed unique natural and historical sites around the world.**

In the first decades of the XX century national parks were established in Sweden, Switzerland, Southern Rhodesia (modern Zimbabwe), South - West Africa (modern Namibia), Spain and others. For their creation were used the same principles, which were also applied for the national parks in the USA.

Over the years ahead serious attempts were made for the establishment of international collaboration in this field. **Another big achievement was the official adoption of a definition, applied to national parks (London, 1933; Washington, 1940; Delhi 1969; Perth, Australia, 1990; Caracas, Venezuela, 1992 and etc.). Finally in 1994 the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), after more than twenty years, developed and provided a unified classification, applicable to protected areas in the countries around the world.** The designation of protected areas into certain categories allowed people, responsible for their management to apply the experience of their counterparts, in various regions of the planet, as well as to co-ordinate their activities with them. **The main criterion for categorization of protected areas represented the purpose of their maintenance. The IUCN classification of protected areas is used to assist and guide national legislative bodies in their efforts to create national systems of protected areas as well as to determine the basic parameters for their management (The Green gold of Bulgaria, 2000).**

We have to emphasize that, the Commission on National Parks and Protected Areas (CNPPA), a structural unit to the IUCN, made serious efforts for the

last several decades to develop the basic principles for classification of protected areas, located around the world. **The main purposes of research in national parks include:**

- **Directing governmental attention toward the significance of protected areas;**
- **Development of national systems of protected areas, recognizing national and local conditions;**
- **Removing any misunderstandings and discrepancies resulting from the usage of different terms, used to define various categories of protected areas;**
- **Identifying specific features of functional zones within Bulgarian national parks;**
- **Creating project framework for data collection, processing and dissemination, concerning various categories of protected areas;**
- **Development of communication plans and collaboration among different institutions in the field of nature conservation.**

The first step in this field was marked by the first definition of national park, adopted at the X<sup>th</sup> General Conference of IUCN (Delhi, 24.11 – 01. 12.1969). During the event R.Dasman made an attempt to present a preliminary scheme of different categories of protected areas. This scheme was published in 1973 by IUCN.

**Several years later, in 1978, IUCN published a report, prepared by CNPPA called “Categories, objectives and criteria for protected areas”. The key person responsible for the development of the report was dr. Kenton Miller. The following categories of protected areas were enlisted in the report, in particular:**

- I. **Scientific reserve (Strict regime of protection) ;**
- II. **National Park;**
- III. **Natural monument (nature landmark);**
- IV. **Managed reserve (reserve for conservation of nature);**
- V. **Protected landscape;**

- VI. Reserve for resource protection;**
- VII. Natural biotic area (anthropogenic reserve);**
- VIII. Area for multipurpose maintenance (area for resource preservation);**
- IX. Biosphere reserve**
- X. World heritage site**

The aforementioned system of protected areas was widely used in various countries around the world. It was transposed into the national legislations of a series of countries. It also served as a basis for the preparation of the UNEP List of National Parks and other protected areas.

However, the real practice revealed that, these categories of protected areas adopted in 1978 needed an update. The existing discrepancies among different categories of protected areas could not be noticed at a first glance. Furthermore, the part related to marine conservation needed amendments. The last two categories - IX and X – did not have to be considered independently from one another and what is more, the international names usually were misinterpreted for other categories of protected areas. Except for that some of the criteria needed more flexible interpretations, in order to meet the various conditions in international scale. Last, but not least, the proposed interpretations of various definitions also needed re-defining, in order to reflect the newest understanding and interpretations in the field of nature conservation.

For that purpose a group of professionals was formed in 1984. It belonged to the structure of CNPPA, and their aim was to revise the existing system of protected areas and to amend it, where necessary. The report, prepared by this workgroup, supervised by the Chairman of CNPPA, Mr Harold Eidsvik was presented at the General Assembly of IUCN in Perth, (Australia, 1990). One of the major issues, proposed in the report concerned the system of protected areas of 1978. It was suggested that the first five categories of the system might be used to create an

updated system of protected areas, where all categories from VI to X would be removed. The proposition was warmly welcomed at the Assembly and it was further discussed at the IV<sup>th</sup> World Congress on National Parks and Protected Areas, held in Caracas, Venezuela (1992). All debates at the congress resulted in adoption of recommendations aimed at creation of a new system of protected areas, which had to replace the one adopted in 1978. This was officially confirmed in the text of recommendation number 17, adopted at the Congress. As a result, in 1994 the new system was officially proclaimed. The categories from I to V were the same with the ones of the system, dated 1978, and a new, sixth, category was added. It was widely admitted that the system had to be flexible enough, in order to answer adequately the complex character of the modern times.

According to IUCN the starting point in designation of protected areas would be the definition of protected area, applied to identify them. It was officially adopted at the IV World Congress on National Parks and protected areas. According to this definition, protected areas represent land or marine territories, designated with the aim to protect biodiversity, and natural and cultural values associated with them, implemented through legal or other effective means. This definition encompasses all types of protected areas and each category has to be made in conformity with it. Despite the fact that all protected areas meet the requirements of this definition, the specific objectives and tasks for their designation differ considerably.

The main objectives in terms of maintenance include:

- scientific research;
- preservation of the original state of nature;
- preservation of species and genetic diversity;

- preservation of environmental functions;
- conservation and protection of cultural and natural attractions;
- recreation and tourism;
- education;
- sustainable use of assets of natural ecosystems;
- preservation of cultural and traditional specific features.

As a result of the adherence to the main objectives aimed at maintaining of protected areas in conformity with IUCN (1994) the following forms of protection were created:

- I. Strict regime of protection (Nature Reserve). Encompassing areas with primary state of nature, being under strict protection regime;
- II. Preservation of ecosystems and organization of leisure activities (National Parks)
- III. Preservation of natural landmarks (Nature landmarks);
- IV. Preservation by the means of managed care (Protected habitat);
- V. Landscape preservation (Protected landscapes);
- VI. Sustainable use of ecosystems (Protected areas for resource use). The aim was to encourage the use natural resources of the adjoining areas. In Bulgaria there are no areas, corresponding to this category.

In accordance with the IUCN classification (1994), it is believed that reserves with a strict regime of protection, national and nature (regional) parks as well as managed reserves are of greatest importance in terms of biodiversity conservation.

According to IUCN definitions, national parks are areas maintained mainly for the protection of their ecosystems and recreation of the population. Emphasis is placed on the fact that these areas are natural territories or aquatories, meeting the prerequisites:

- To exclude the use or exploitation of natural resources through activities incompatible with the objectives and purpose of protected areas;
- To serve as a basis for spiritual, educational and research purposes as well as for leisure activities of visitors, who cannot damage the environment and existing cultural values.

According to IUCN the main objectives of designation of protected areas include:

- Protection of natural and extraordinary beautiful natural landscapes of national and international importance for spiritual, research, educational, recreational or tourist purposes;
- Preservation of representative samples of physical and geographical regions, genetic resources and species in natural condition with the aim to ensure ecological stability and diversity;
- Limited use of the natural resources in the parks by public for constructional, educational, cultural and recreational purposes. The latter ensures the preservation of the environment in natural state;
- Elimination and consequent prevention of the use and exploitation of natural resources, incompatible with the objectives and purpose of designation of protected areas;
- Ensuring respect for the ecological, geomorphological, religious or natural features justifying their use;
- Acknowledgement of the needs of local communities, including their living conditions, as the latter could not influence on the other purposes of protection.

In addition to the above IUCN has the following recommendations:

- Selected areas to include representative samples of significant natural territories and natural sites, where plant and animal species, living spaces and geomorphological landmarks are of special importance on spiritual life, science, education, recreation and tourism;
- Each area should be large enough in order to encompass one or more ecosystems that are not altered

substantially because of current exploitation and anthropogenic intervention;

IUCN considers that the rights of ownership and maintenance should be given to the highest, legally competent national institution. This in turn does not exclude the responsibility for one area to be transferred to another governmental level, another body of local authority, foundation or any other legal institution engaged with the long-term conservation of nature.

In accordance with these requirements at the Xth General Conference of the Union (Delhi, 24.11. – 01.12. 1969), IUCN asked the governments of the countries not to consider scientific reserves and provincial parks as nature parks, unless the latter are subject of acknowledgement or control by their central authorities. The above mentioned group of protected areas includes also specialized reserves (as defined by the Algerian government - floristic and faunistic reserves, reserves for game, for bird refugees, geological or forest reserves, etc) as well as natural, regional and other parks. The adherence to these prerequisites creates an opportunity for consolidation of national parks within the system of protected areas. It also allows statistical proceeding and accounting of data, evaluation of the role of national parks to preserve large geographical and biological regions on the planet. Except for that it also allows determination of the nomenclature and classification of protected areas at international scale.

The modern international concept of national parks has been developed over time, being enriched by wide experience and practical results in various countries, reflecting the shifts in the public needs from physical and other resources. For the last several years, these needs were supplemented by the desire for recreation in untouched nature.

**Nowadays, it is more than obvious that national parks represent one of the well established forms of nature conservation in various regions around the world. The implementation of their**

**multifunctional tasks as well as the match between nature conservation and recreation is achieved through their spatial separation of one another. In this regard at the XI General Assembly of IUCN, it was decided that national parks have to be divided into the following three functional zones - absolutely natural (area of strict protection of nature), managed nature (managed area of nature protection) and a zone, encompassing untouched areas. Moreover, in some cases, there could be established zones of protected anthropogenic, historical and archaeological sites and special administrative and tourist areas, where construction of highways and other engineering infrastructure is allowed.**

It should be emphasized that there are considerable differences concerning functional zoning of protected areas in different countries around the world. Specific features are also recorded by regions. For example, in the Western European region, unlike the USA and Canada, national parks are under regime, allowing economic activities at the stages of area designation and regulation. On the contrary, the protected areas in the most of Western European countries do not include areas of strict protection, while the main part of their territory encompasses areas, resembling "untouched nature areas" in the USA and Canada. Eastern European nature parks on the other hand are most often divided into three zones – reserve, tourist and serving areas.

No matter what is the applied form of zone distribution in different countries, each category has certain systems, representing subsequent levels of the ratio nature protection – recreation and economic use. However, a unified model, characterizing the structure of national parks does not exist. The specific location of the zones, their size and configuration depend on many conditions.

The functional zoning in national parks could be monocentric – that is when a national park has only one

**nucleus – or concentrically located areas of buffer protection and recreation, as well as polycentric structure, featuring several nuclei located within the park. There could be free (mosaic) zoning, where the boundaries of each zone are not distinctively set. The main criterion, applied to functional zones is the character of nature that needs certain level of protection.**

The conception of national parks as protected areas featuring certain recreational use, places one basic prerequisite, namely – a reduction on the intensity of their mass recreation and their location away from nature sites under strict regime of protection. In most of the national parks worldwide, there are two main types of regulation of recreational processes, represented by direct and manipulative regulation. The first one includes numerous limitations to park visitors. As regulative are considered measures, aiming to increase sustainability of the plant cover around the lodging places, situated in national parks. The organization of recreation in the USA reveals that neither legislative protection, nor artificial restrictions on visits could lead to a decrease of the excessive use of sites of scientific and recreational importance if there are no suitable conditions, which to direct tourists toward sites and areas that are not under strict regime of protection. The intensity of recreational use of peripheral and adjoining areas, as well as the existing favourable conditions for mass tourist activities in proximity to national parks serve as an important prerequisite aimed to overcome the excessive “pressure” over protected areas.

At the same time for the last several decades there has been reported a tendency to neglect the status of protected areas, including national parks. Bulgaria also showed the same trend. The recreational use of national parks deteriorated seriously these areas for the last years. Bulgarian tourism, on the other hand, is monostructural in terms of territorial distribution and product diversification. Some 70 % of all activities are concentrated

on a less than 5 % of the overall territory of the country. Both summer (seaside) and winter ski tourism form the dominating share of tourism supply and shape to a large degree the image of Bulgarian destination. On the other hand, the majority of tourist resorts resemble typical urban settlements that do not offer favourable recreational opportunities. Unfortunately, very often this is accompanied by various forms of deterioration over nature in the national and nature parks, Ramsar sites, biosphere reserves and other protected areas. If human negligence toward protected areas do not stop there exists a real threat of extinction of valuable genetic fund. The latter is considered to possess great potential for development of alternative forms of tourism.

On the basis of conducted analysis, concerning the origin and development of the network of protected areas in different regions around the world, together with the evolution of one of the most preferred forms of nature protection and recreation – national parks – this paper has the aim to clarify and solve the following tasks:

1. To trace the origin and development of the system of protected areas, including Bulgarian national parks;
2. To analyze the evolution of the term “national park” in the scope of conservation legislation in the country. Furthermore, it sets the aim to evaluate the importance of this category in the realm of biodiversity preservation and tourism development;
3. To find out specific features in the management, regulation and the protection of Bulgarian national parks;
4. To examine the specific nature of the biodiversity of Bulgarian national parks, as well as to identify the peculiarities in their functional zoning, recreational and tourist resources;
5. To make all necessary conclusions and recommendations, including ones, that could contribute to remove any discrepancies between the national legislation and internationally accepted definitions in the field.

We must emphasize that investigations like this one possess great potential because of the increasing importance of the problem on sustainable and balanced development of society, which in turn requires permanent monitoring.

The main issues, under review at this paper are subject to investigation by a great number of scientists, biologists, geographers, foresters and many other who have worked and continue their work in the field of biodiversity conservation and protected areas. Especially valuable in this respect is the research work of Miller (1984, 1990, 1995, 1996); Miller and others (1996); Dasman (1973, 1984); Chauham (1992); Choudhury (1992); Mathur and Mukherjee (1992); Panwar (1992); Panwar and Mathur (1992); Roy and Prasad (1992); Sawarkar (1992); Sawarkar and Rodgers (1992); Sinha and Sawarkar (1992); Oever (1990); Ypsilantis (1990); Bilsborrow (1990); Fonseca (1990); Strom (1990); Nuhimovskaya (1992) Suparto (1990); Falkenmark (1990); Qutub (1990); Muller (1982); Gurri (1987); Michna (1988); Rygelski (1981); Sikora (1979); Viedma (1978); Zabelina (1987); Reymers and Stilmark (1976, 1978); Reymers (1988); Dulitskiy (2009); Georgiev (1994, 2004, 2010), Nikolaevskiy (1985); Spiridonov (1987) and many others.

## **II. Materials and methods**

For the purposes of this research there have been used recognizable observation methods and approaches for data and information collection. Some sources have been used, provided by the Ministry of Environment and Water, the Directories of Bulgarian National and Nature parks, and all 15 Regional Inspections on Protection of Environment and Water, the Ministry of Economy, Energy and Tourism, the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works, the Ministry of Agriculture and Food, the Executive Forest Agency, research publications from international scientific forums, dedicated to biodiversity and protected areas, as well as a series of publications of Bulgarian and foreign

authors. The analysis is conducted and the results have been established by the means of comparative and analytical approaches. Last, but not least personal observations in some of the protected areas have been conducted. The working methods that have been used for the purposes of this research include description, diagnosis, analysis and synthesis, comparison, statistical and expert methods.

### **Nature of methods**

1. Descriptive and diagnostic methods have been used to establish the state of the subject of study;

2. Methods of comparison have been used with the aim to determine and compare the state of the subject of study at national and global level;

3. Methods of analysis and synthesis allow to be established the common features which characterize the examined processes. They have been used to facilitate management decision-making;

4. Statistical methods based on collective approach allow examination of the registered problems, establishment of the main trends in their development and creation of prognoses and managerial solutions;

5. Expert methods have been used to identify the main problems, to develop prognoses and to provide management decisions as well as to undertake specific guidelines, recommendations and measures.

This methodology could make it possible to be identified the actual status of the problems in Bulgaria and other countries, to be established development trends, the level of sustainability. They in turn serve as a basis for the further maintenance, management, and conservation of protected areas as well as for the extension of the existing opportunities for international cooperation in this field.

### **III. Results and discussions**

**The first protected areas in Bulgaria were proclaimed on 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> of June 1933. These were the reserves Gorna**

**Elenitsa – Silikosa (10 266 decares) in Strandza mountain and Parangalitsa (14 924,4 decares) in Rila mountain. On 29<sup>th</sup> of January 1934 the localities of Bayuvi dupki, Dununo kuche and Banski Suhodol (700 ha) in Pirin mountain were proclaimed reserves.**

Together with that special measures were undertaken in the aim to protect the longose forests along Ropotamo river. **A final stage of conservation activities in Bulgaria marked the Government decree issued by the Ministry of agriculture and state property since 27<sup>th</sup> of October 1934. The document officially proclaimed Vitosha as the first National Park in Bulgaria and within the Balkan peninsula.** At the same time another protected area, namely the reserve called Bistrishko branishte (942,6 ha) was established. In 1935 was proclaimed another reserve – Torfeno branishte (144, 6 ha). **The proclamation of some areas of Vitosha mountain as a national park lay the grounds of the park activities in Bulgaria, which played a very important role for the protection of the biodiversity and for the development of eco-oriented forms of tourism.**

Despite the encouraging initial steps, undertaken in the filed of conservation activities in the country, it was more than obvious that the regulation and management of protected areas needed a stable legislative basis. In other words there was a need for development of a special law. Lots of reasons led to its official adoption on 25<sup>th</sup> of February 1936, which marked the signing of a Decree for protection of Bulgarian nature. It contained definitions of different categories of protected areas in the country – forest reserves, national parks, natural monuments, natural and historical sites.

This newly adopted law introduced limitations in national parks, natural monuments, forest reserves, natural and historical sites. These limitations had the aim to ensure more efficient preservation of the floristic and faunistic diversity of protected areas. Since then dated the idea

for prohibition of building structures in such areas. An exception was allowed only for public tourist and skiing chalets, scientific stations, whose building were possible after a prior written permission, given by the Department on forests, hunting and fishing at the Ministry of agriculture and state property. There were legal sanctions in case of any infringements.

A Rule for application of the Decree for the protection of Bulgarian nature was officially adopted on the 30<sup>th</sup> of July 1937. It set for the first time the objectives and tasks of Bulgarian national parks and forest reserves (reserves).

According to the rule, only areas of great nature diversity that were easily accessible for camping and visitation were proclaimed national parks. The objective of their designation was to habituate people to love and care about nature beauty and its specific features, as well as to encourage people to go in nature more frequently.

Bulgarian national parks encompassed other sites, such as forest reserves, natural monuments, sites of cultural and historical values, all of them having a special status according to the Decree on the protection of Bulgarian nature. This document specified the permitted regime of regulation, the punitive sanctions and management requisites and principles. Responsibilities, concerning the supreme management and the overall supervision of all protected areas within the country had been given to the Ministry of Agriculture and State Property, in particular to the Forestry, Hunting and Fishing Directorate. Forest managers had to be employed for larger areas in accordance with the same document. The bodies, in charge of protected areas management, could also rely on assistance of the members of the Bulgarian Tourist Union and the Youth Tourist Union. The latter had the rights to prosecute trespassers as well as to draw up statements.

**The definition of a national park, given with the Decree on Protection of Bulgarian Nature revealed the basic trends in the field, but at the same time it**



**differed to a large degree from similar definitions, adopted in countries with long traditions in nature conservation and protection. In accordance with the London convention (1933), national parks were natural areas under state protection, whose boundaries could not be changed, neither could any part of their area be subject of disturbance of tenure. They were considered as parts of land, intended for breeding, preservation and protection of wild animal and plant species, or sites under protection for their aesthetic, geological, archaeological, historical values, as well as for the well-being and recreation of a wide section of society. Hunting as well as herb collection was strictly forbidden within the boundaries of such protected areas.**

**It was obvious that Bulgarian legislation stressed on the recreational value of such areas, whereas the London convention placed the emphasis on their scientific and conservation importance.** Approximately at that time, subject of debates was the issue concerning integration of conservation activities and recreation of people. The latter was considered to be achieved through territorial segregation of both activities.

Some specific features of protected areas also confirmed these conclusions and differences, occurring in Bulgaria as soon as the above mentioned documents came into force. Together with the adoption of the Decree since 1936, national parks were proclaimed the natural and historical site of Busludza and St Nicola as well as the state forest of Plovdiv. A more shocking example could be given with Kaylaka. A specially released regulation on the subject of forest management within the boundaries of Pleven (17.10.1939), stated (par.3, art.3), that Kaylaka was proclaimed a national park. It was more than obvious, though that all four newly adopted protected areas did not meet any of the international requirements and the main purpose for their

establishment was due to private interests lacking scientific arguments.

The case with Vitosha National Park was a little bit more different. On 09.01.1939 was published a Regulation on Vitosha National Park together with the forest reserves included on its territory. In comply with that this national park was under strict regime of regulation and management.

**The convention signed in Washington in 1940, on the protection and preservation of the flora and fauna of the western hemisphere, introduced a new definition of national parks. Until that time national parks were considered as areas designated for conservation and protection of landscapes of unique beauty, whose flora and fauna was of national importance. It was pointed out that if national parks were controlled by the state authorities, people could have economic benefits and satisfaction alike. The state-signatories of this convention agreed that any hunting activities and herb collection had to be forbidden within the boundaries of national parks. Exceptions were possible only for scientific purposes with the prior permission from the administrative bodies of national parks. Furthermore, it was considered that the boundaries of national parks could be amended or any part of their territory could be removed only by a competent legislative body. The resources of such areas should not be subject of exploitation for commercial purposes. The negotiating governments agreed to provide favourable recreational and educational conditions for their communities, compatible with the convention prerequisites. The signing of the Washington convention marked for the first time the main characteristics and specific features of these areas – they were under control by the central authorities and could be established for certain conservation, recreational and educational purposes.**

The adoption of the Washington convention in Bulgaria marked the proclamation of three other national parks,

the first of them was Kaylaka (1941). On 27.02.1942 a Regulation on Kaylaka National Park was published. The establishment of this national park made a prominent exception compared with the national parks, established till that time. On the first place Kaylaka National Park was found in order to preserve the species of *Monachus monachus*, endangered in Bulgaria. In other words this national park had distinctive aims to

ensure conservation activities. Except for that it was the first protected area in Bulgaria, covering a protected sea aquatory – a sea strip, wide about one kilometer. Fishing in the park was permitted under strict terms and conditions.

The other two national parks of that time, namely “Golden Sands” (240 ha), was proclaimed in 1943 and “Ostritsa” (124 ha), in March the same year.

*Tabl. 1 National parks in Bulgaria until the Second World War*

| №             | National Park                   | Data of proclamation | Regulation | Area (ha) | Reserve                                      | Area (ha)      |
|---------------|---------------------------------|----------------------|------------|-----------|--|----------------|
| 1.            | Vitosha                         | 27.10.1934           | III 15422  | 6400      | Bistrishko<br>Branishte<br>Torfeno Branishte | 942,6<br>144,1 |
| 2.            | „St. Nikolay” in Stara Mountain | 17.09.1936           | 20681      | -         | -  | -              |
| 3.            | Buzludza                        | 17.09.1936           | 20681      | -         | -  | -              |
| 4.            | State forest in Plovdiv area    | 23.09.1936           | 20972      | 12,8      | -  | -              |
| 5.            | Kaylaka, Pleven                 | 17.10.1939           | 21496      | -         | -  | -              |
| 6.            | Kaliakra                        | 26.09.1941           | 16298      | 52        | -  | -              |
| 7.            | Golden Sands                    | 03.02.1943           | 2134       | 240       | -  | -              |
| 8.            | Ostritsa                        | 02.03.1943           | 4507       | 124       | -  | -              |
| <b>TOTAL:</b> |                                 |                      |            |           | <b>6828,8</b>                                | <b>1086,7</b>  |

Unfortunately, no documents were issued for their conservation and recreational usage. For that reason their statute as national parks was formal. The overall evaluation for the status of the network of national parks in Bulgaria till the end of the World War II was that their proclamation had lots of weaknesses, resulting from the negligence on behalf of the Ministry of agriculture and state property, as well as many other government institutions. Another disadvantage was the insufficient theoretical knowledge, unfamiliarity with the concerned problems and etc. All national parks at that time, excluding to some degree Vitosha and Kaliakra NPs did not meet the adopted criteria, applied in Canada, the USA and other countries. There was no clarity concerning the objectives of their proclamation, there were no clear distinction between their conservation and recreational tasks and they lacked

functional distribution of zones. Their selection was made without any extensive floristic, faunistic, forest or other research.

We may assume as positive the fact that all related activities were implemented by a small group of people, being in love with nature and natural beauty of Bulgaria. As another advantage, we consider the successful works related to the adopted Regulations of Vitosha and Kaylaka National Parks, and in particular the measures, undertaken for their maintenance and protection.

The network of protected areas in Bulgaria continued to develop after the World War II. Typical for that time was that no further amendments were done in the field of conservation legislation. The proclamation of new protected areas was made based on the existing requirements, included in the Decree on the protection of Bulgarian nature (1936), the Regulation for categorization of

**forests and the List of the categories of Bulgarian forests (1951). According to these documents reserves were divided into the following categories – historical monuments, natural monuments and forest reserves.** Even though that approximately 40 protected areas were proclaimed reserves, in most of the cases they did not meet the modern requirements for protected areas of such designation. The network of national parks continued to enlarge at the same time. On 10<sup>th</sup> of February 1951 was officially proclaimed “Kobaklaka” National Park (546,8 ha), and a little bit later, after a special decree, issued by the Council of ministers (01.08.1952), “Vitoshka” (22 725.6 ha) was proclaimed as national park for a second time. At that time, it turned into the most important protected area in the country.

**A positive role for the nature protection played the issuance of 165 Decree of the Council of ministers since 1958 on the preservation of the cultural monuments and development of museum activities in Bulgaria. The first point of the same documents stated that natural landmarks were proclaimed typical natural formations of extraordinary beauty. On 13<sup>th</sup> of September 1960 was published an Enactment on the protection of Bulgarian nature, which stated that protected natural sites could be proclaimed only reserves, national parks, natural landmarks, significant plant and animal species, historical sites, as well as other sites of great importance for the scientific and research works and recreation. The adoption of the enactment led to a better clarification of the system of protected areas and definition of the main objectives of their maintenance. The latter included strict scientific reserves, allowing recreational use to certain degree. The adoption of the enactment was followed by the official adoption of three new national parks.**

In 1962 were officially proclaimed “Ropotamo” National Park together with

four reserves, encompassed within the its territory - "Arkutino"(96,6 ha); "Morski pelin"(14,0 ha); "Vodnite liliy"(14,6 ha) and "Zmiiskiast ostrov"(1,00 ha) and "Vihren"(6212 ha). Within their boundaries were also included the flows of the rivers Banderitsa and Demianitsa, located from 1100 to 2914 meters above the sea level. The following year, 1963, marked the proclamation of “Steneto” National Park (1796 ha). Large areas of the park had a statute of reserve areas. At the same time the proclamation of the national park was accompanied by some legislative amendments, contributing to the improvement of the legislation in the field of protected areas. Efficient measures were undertaken in the aim to preserve vegetation as well as to limit grazing and fires, hunting, highway building, water protection and etc. It was clearly stated that the level of forest use and regulation within the parks’ territory could be implemented in a way allowing better protection and improvement of their aesthetical role. Their maintenance, the character and volume of processes of afforesting and building was described in the management plan of each national park. This was a completely new measure, applied in the management of protected areas of such designation. Later, due to the fact that the whole territory of “Steneto” National Park (3578) gained a statute of reserve area, it was removed from the List of Bulgarian National Parks in 1991.

On 30<sup>th</sup> of October 1967 at the insistence of the population in the town of Gabrovo, the area along the lower flow of Sivek river, located in the area of the village of Etar was officially proclaimed as National ethnographic park. This protected area had a very unrestricted regime of maintenance and in fact it could be classified as an area designated for recreation than as a national park.

**A significant role for the improvement of the nature-scientific legislation in Bulgaria had the Law on protection of Bulgarian nature (1967) together with the Rules for its implementation (1969).**

Section three of the law stated that protected areas in Bulgaria constituted reserves, national parks, natural landmarks, localities of typical landscape (protected localities), historical sites and significant plant and animal species.

According to the same legislative act as national parks could be proclaimed only areas, which nature had distinctive nature of great variety and beauty. They encompassed relatively large areas, suitable for recreation and tourism. They could sometimes encompass other protected areas such as reserves, natural landmarks and historical sites, having certain statute in comply with the legislative documents.

At the same time the above mentioned legislative documents had some weaknesses, which unfortunately deteriorated to a large extent the natural heritage of the country. For example, article 27 of the Law on protection of Bulgarian nature (1967) included a text, allowing building in protected areas. Another example could be given with point 2 of article 35 of the Rules for application of the Law, where was stated that within the boundaries of protected areas (excluding reserves) were allowed building of hotels, restaurants and other servicing establishments, serving the needs of Bulgarian domestic and international tourism, with a prior written permission on behalf of the Ministry (later, called a Commission), according to article 27 of the text of the Law. As a result, a lot of tourist and sport organizations got the opportunity to build infrastructure within the areas of the National parks. That way, serious infringement was caused on national parks of "Vitosha", "Pirin", "Ropotamo" and etc. **In fact, at the end of the seventies of XX century there was not a single national park, meeting the internationally adopted requirements in the field.**

In 1970 was proclaimed "Roussenski Lom" National Park, in 1973 "Vihren" NP was renamed after "Pirin" NP which was accompanied by an enlargement of its

territory, covering 26 413,8 ha. It was made in order to be preserved the specific character of the mountain, whose alpine relief, biocenoses and existing endemit and relict plant and animal species were of great scientific importance. However, there was one disturbing point. It was emphasized that the proclamation of the national park was established for the favourable conditions it provided for the needs of Bulgarian domestic and international tourism. That fact was used to serve the interests of lots of local and central authorities. Gradually, "Pirin" National Park was divided by numerous ski tracks, sport establishments and etc., which had negative effects for the nature in this part of the country. Despite that, we cannot ignore the fact that the order for the park's proclamation created an idea for establishment of functional zones as well as a scientific approach projecting the needed forest, agricultural and other specialized activities.

Later, the park's territory was enlarged for several times. Today, it comprises 40 332,4 ha. At the same time, in order to ensure an optimal protection for "Pirin" National Park, taking into consideration its national and international importance, on 19<sup>th</sup> of December 1979 for the first time was formed a subdivision of park, under the authority of forests, hunting and fishing, headquartered in Bansko. It had the tasks to implement all forestry, hunting and fishing activities, nature conservation, recreation and sociological activities, data collection, evaluation of ecological status of the park and etc.

The other protected areas of such designation were proclaimed in 1980. These were the national parks of "Shumensko plato" and "Sinite kamani".

A very complicated was the case with "Vitosha" National Park. After several amendments, today it comprises 26 606,6 ha, controlled by four independent authority units. In particular, these were the Directorate of "Vitosha" National Park, (11 403 ha), State forestry division of Radomir (9687,1 ha), State forestry division

of Samokov (3 076,2 ha) and State forestry division of Sofia (272,3 ha). As a result, this discrepancy caused lots of serious problems in nature protection within this region. Furthermore, for a long time, the park lacked an officially adopted planning project.

Other problems were caused when "Vitoshka" NP was proposed two times to host the winter Olympic games in 1992 and 1994. The voting results were known to the public, and today, we may conclude that the International Olympic Committee saved the mountain. The Plan and main concept of CNIP "Sofproject" prepared for the Olympic games in 1992 and in 1994 intended to build sport and tourist complex "Aleko", special sport and tourist zone called "The Golden bridges" and sport center "Boyana" together with an accompanying infrastructure. The total area intended only for the building of "Aleko" complex covered 885,3 ha, out of which 206,9 ha forestry areas and 678,4 ha areas, planned for afforestation. The complex would penetrate to the reserves of "Bistrishko branishte" and "Torfeno branishte". The expected deterioration over nature, estimated for the boundaries of "Bistrishko branishte" reserve was equal to 163,4 ha species of *Picea abies*. We have to emphasize that during the application process, all projects were hidden from the eco-oriented and scientific organizations.

On the 21<sup>st</sup> of December 1989 "Vrachansky Balkan" was officially proclaimed National Park. It was situated on the territory of several State forestry divisions and agricultural areas, controlled by several municipalities. The latter pretended to be a prerequisite for the lack of integrity of maintenance and regulation.

On 31<sup>st</sup> of December 1991 was proclaimed another national park – "Central Balkan" (73 261,8 ha). Its area comprised of nine reserves, covering 20 019,6 ha, including four out of five biosphere reserves – "Boatine", "Tsarichina", "Steneto" and "Dzendema". The park's territory included 40 079,8 ha forestry lands, encompassing the area of eleven State forestry agencies

and another 29 327 ha of high-mountain lands and grazing grounds, located within the area of seven municipalities.

A special order, issued by the Ministry of environment since 24<sup>th</sup> of February 1992 proclaimed the establishment of "Rila" National Park, whose total area came to 107 923,7 ha, out of which 67 358, 7 ha (62,41 %) forestry areas and 40 665 ha (37,59 %) high- mountain grazing grounds. The park encompassed areas out of eleven municipalities. Within its boundaries were included also the following reserves – "Parangalitsa", "Rilomanastirska gora", "Skakavitsa", "Central Rila reserve" and "Ibar", covering total area of 19 898, 6 ha.

"Strandza" National Park (116 136, 2 ha), proclaimed on 24<sup>th</sup> of January 1995 was the last national park, established in the country before the official adoption of new legislation amendments in the field of nature protection. The park encompassed all five reserves, situated in the mountain, as well as major areas of the protected localities and natural landmarks in the same region. The proclamation of this national park could be considered as a great success for the communities, engaged in nature protection in the country.

**Until the official adoption of the Law on protected areas (1998), the main documents for management and regulation of Bulgarian national parks were the Park planning projects. They included special events intended for reforestation and establishing of zones of various functional designation – reserve, tourist, buffer and etc.** Their designation implied certain level of use. There were some requirements and limitations on the establishments, forming their infrastructure. As a result of the efforts, undertaken by IPP "Agrolesprospekt" were created park planning projects for several of the national parks.

We cannot ignore the fact that the measures, undertaken by the professionals, working in this field, improved to a certain degree the regulation and maintenance of protected areas in the country. **Very positive was the role of the Committee**

on nature protection, found in 1976 with the authority of the Council of Ministers. Another organization of great importance for nature protection was under the authority of the Bulgarian Academy of Science. Gradually, lots of scientific institutes and administrative units were involved actively in the majority of international initiatives in this field. Bulgaria, became a signatory state in lots of international programmes and conventions, including the Ramsar convention, the World Heritage Convention, the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES). At the same time the UNESCO international programme "Man and biosphere" was initialized. Lots of national parks and other protected areas were enlisted in the UN List of National Parks. Many of the Bulgarian protected areas were also included in the list.

Structural measures were undertaken in the scope of management and maintenance of the existing genetic fund. At the same time, the country implemented intensive international activity which turned into a great stimulus for the proclamation of new protected areas. This was especially intensive in the period 1991 – 1996, when were proclaimed the biggest national parks and reserves in the country.

On 16<sup>th</sup> of February 1990 was found the Ministry of environment and in 1997 it was turned into a Ministry of environment and waters. It had a very positive effect. At the same time Bulgaria ratified the Convention on the conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats and the Convention of biodiversity. The interest of the USA and a series of European countries toward Bulgarian nature increased. Consequently, this led to a sudden increase of the surface of protected areas, which from 1 % in 1977 reached 4.5 % in 1995 (Bulgarian green gold, 2000).

At the same time, despite the achieved success, the version of Law on nature protection that was into force in 1967 had

lots of disadvantages, making it inapplicable to the modern circumstances. That is why, as a result of many years of efforts of the professionals, working in the field of nature conservation and protection of biodiversity, numerous public debates and expert advice, a new Law on protected areas was adopted in 1998. It introduced six categories of protected areas – reserves, national parks, natural landmarks, protected localities, nature parks and managed reserves.

According to the law, national parks were areas which boundaries did not encompass any villages or towns, including only natural ecosystems of great biodiversity of plant and animal species as well as habitats of typical landscapes and sites of inanimate nature. National parks had the following objectives of maintenance:

- to preserve ecosystem diversity and of wild nature;
- to conserve biodiversity in ecosystems;
- to create conditions for implementation of research, educational and recreational activities;
- to create prerequisites for tourism development, eco-friendly agricultural activities and other activities non-disturbing nature and etc.

Special attention was paid to the functional zones of national parks, which included the following areas: reserves and managed reserves, tourist sites, chalet sites, administration centers for maintenance of national parks and sport establishments, other areas compliant to the specific nature of each national park.

The following activities were strictly prohibited in national parks – building of any infrastructure, except for tourist huts and chalets, sewage systems and constructions, buildings and establishments, needed for the park's management and points, servicing tourists, underground communication channels, highways and sport constructions and etc. Any manufacture-oriented activities were also prohibited, with the exception of activities

contributing to the recovering of forests, land and water areas, use of artificial fertilizers or other chemistry means, that were not typical for the areas of plant and animal species. Collection of herbs was also under prohibition, also wild fruits and other plants and animals of certain sites, fossils and minerals. Under prohibition were also deterioration of rock formations, water habitats, water flows, their beaches and surrounding areas, any game activities and hunting (exceptions were allowed only in the cases when animal populations were under regulation), sport fishing and fish breed at special places, water pollution with industrial, domestic and other waste, making of fires out of the boundaries of

permitted areas, invasion in biodiversity, collection of rare, endemit, relict and endangered species, for any other purposes except scientific.

**The official adoption of the new Law on protected areas came into force in the following 1999. It was applied for the existing at that time ten national parks and all nature parks. Status of national parks in accordance with the new law obtained only three of the formerly existing parks.** Their area came to 193 047,9 ha, including 42 27, 7 ha reserve areas, accounting for 21,9 % of the park overall territory and 54,91 % of the area of the reserves

*Tabl 2 National Parks in Bulgaria*

| Name of the National Park    | Date of proclamation | Number of the proclamation document | Area in ha | Region/ District                              | Name of the reserve         | Reserve area in ha |
|------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------------|------------|---|-----------------------------|--------------------|
| Rila National Park           | 15.10.1999           | 397                                 | 81 046     | Pazardzik, Sofia, Kyustendil, Blagoevgrad     | Parangalitzta               | 1509               |
|                              |                      |                                     |            |   | Ibar                        | 2248,6             |
|                              |                      |                                     |            |   | Central Rila reserve        | 12 393,7           |
|                              |                      |                                     |            |   | Skakavitza                  | 70,8               |
| Pirin National Park          | 15.10.1999           | 395                                 | 40 332,4   | Blagoevgrad                                   | Bayuvi dupki – Dzindzeritza | 2873               |
|                              |                      |                                     |            |   | Yulen                       | 3156               |
| Central Balkan National Park | 15.10.1999           | 396                                 | 71 669,5   | Lovech, Gabrovo, Sofia, Plovdiv, Stara Zagora | Boatin                      | 1597,2             |
|                              |                      |                                     |            |   | Tzarichina                  | 3418,7             |
|                              |                      |                                     |            |   | Kozyata stena               | 904,3              |
|                              |                      |                                     |            |   | Steneto                     | 3578,8             |
|                              |                      |                                     |            |   | Sokolna                     | 1250               |
|                              |                      |                                     |            |   | Peeshtite skali             | 1465,7             |
|                              |                      |                                     |            |   | Severen Dzhndem             | 1610               |
|                              |                      |                                     |            |   | Dzhendema                   | 4220,2             |
| Stara reka                   | 1974,7               |                                     |            |   |                             |                    |

In compliance with the Law on protected areas (1998), the Ministry of environment and waters contracted the development of the Park management plans after a number of public discussions, allowing the local communities to be involved actively in management of protected areas. Another series of expert commissions led to the official adoption of management plans for the three national parks.

**Park management plans contained description of all permitted and recommended activities within the parks' territory. The Law on protected areas together with the Regulation for development of management plans determined the conditions for their development and responsibilities of involved parties. The Ministry of Environment and waters obtained rights**

and obligations to develop Park management plans and be in charge of their proper implementation. All management plans had to be adopted by the Council of Ministers, after an official conclusion of the High expert council working under the authority of the Ministry of environment and waters, with the participation of all involved state bodies, municipalities and non-governmental organizations. These plans were developed on the basis of several important criteria – the existing database for the protected areas, the status of biological species and their habitats, the overall conditions of the park environment - water, air, soil and ecosystems, available infrastructure in the parks and the surrounding areas, as well as the ways, by which local communities, municipalities and visitors used these protected areas.

One of the important problems concerning nature conservation in the former national parks and other protected areas, was related to the fact that the park control and maintenance was implemented by different state bodies. **A step, leading to the solution of this problem was the establishment of a National agency for nature protection (NANP) – representing a special department at that time. Today it is a Directorate at the Ministry of environment and waters, responsible for the management, control and protection of biodiversity, protected areas and natural ecosystems. This agency developed and applied a national policy in the field of biodiversity conservation, relict and endangered species and protected areas. It also develops strategies, plans, programmes and acts aimed at biodiversity preservation and development of the network of protected areas.**

After the adoption of the new Law of protected areas (1998) national parks became under the authority of the Ministry of environment and waters, which was in charge of their and maintenance. Directories of all national

parks, on the other hand, were regional bodies at the Ministry of environment and waters, responsible for the direct management of national parks. Their main functions and activities, included management and protection of national parks, application of developed Park management plans, coordination and control over the activities, implemented by any other bodies and organizations and persons, monitoring of the components of the environment and maintenance of database.

The directorate of Rila National Park included a central office, situated in Blagoevgrad and eight local offices, located in Blagoevgrad, Belitsa, Yakoruda, Kostenets, Borovets, Beli Iskar and Dupnitsa, each one responsible for the park areas located within their boundaries.

The Directorate of “Central Balkan” National Park is headquartered in Gabrovo. It includes a central office in the same city, and other seven local offices in Ribaritsa, Troyan, the village of Stokite, the village of Taya, Kalofer, Karlovo and Klisura.

The directorate of “Pirin” National Park is located in Bansko and has other three offices in Sandanski, Dobrinishte and Kresna.

Despite the fact that these three national parks preserve unique natural complexes of Bulgarian nature, they are confronted to a series of dangers, including:

- Exploitation of natural resources leading to their complete depletion and devastation (uncontrolled deforestation, fishing and hunting, collection of herbs, fruits and mushrooms in bulks and etc);
- Construction of highways, buildings, water systems, ski centers and other establishments, creating conditions for devastation of natural habitats, deterioration of whole ecosystems and etc.
- Decrease in the size of national parks. When, isolated in small and limited “islands” lots of ecosystems are threatened with extinction. Lots of animals could not provide enough food, if they are



isolated in certain regions. The herb seeds could not disseminate free, as well.

- Intensive animal breeding in the areas, surrounding national parks. The lack of buffer zones around park areas threatens the stability of biodiversity within their boundaries;

- Tourism development. Unfortunately, localities, attracting tourists for their nature and beauty are devastated and lots of the species on their territory are threatened with extinction. The option for them could be ecotourism development, where wild nature is saved, tourists enjoy their biodiversity and local communities develops sustainable business initiatives;

- Transfers of exotic species in new, unusual environmental conditions, threatening the ecosystem balance. Selection of species that are of higher interests of people and tourists than others. The latter, though, deteriorates seriously wild nature.

**Last, but not least, it should be taken into consideration that one of the most serious threats for biodiversity is related to human psychology and behavior.**

#### IV. Conclusions

**It is obvious that the network of protected areas in Bulgaria plays an important role to ensure preservation of nature elements of highest conservation value. The system is considered as a significant resource for development of alternative forms of tourism in the country. The leading role for nature preservation is given to national parks and relatively large reserves. The other categories are also related to nature protection and recreational use, especially nature parks and protected localities.**

The system of national parks in Bulgaria is considered to be completely established, with the creation of the three parks – “Central Balkan”, “Rila” and “Pirin”. At the same time, as a big holdback is considered the isolation of Rila National Park from the areas of the rivers of Manastirska, Iliina and Rilska and their independent isolation in “Rila monastery”

National Park. Their separation deteriorated the integrity of a unique nature complex within the boundaries of Bulgaria and in Europe as a whole.

**Bulgarian national parks constitute one of the most important instruments for maintenance of these lands and efficient management of diverse natural resources. They are basis for prosperity of the local communities, living in the surrounding territory of protected areas. The latter are considered as a solid basis for ecotourism development.**

The fulfillment of their multifunctional tasks and objectives together with the combination of nature protection and recreation is achieved thanks to their territorial differentiation. The latter is implemented through the means of functional zoning of Bulgarian national parks. **Usually, the following zones are established within the boundaries of parks: an area of reserves and managed reserves, a tourist site, an area of tourist huts, an administrative zone for management and maintenance of parks and sport facilities; other areas, relevant to the specific park conditions.**

In conformity with the Law on protected areas, for the three national parks in Bulgaria there have been developed Plans for management, containing descriptions of all permitted and recommended activities, implemented within park areas. They include detailed information on all tourist activities that can be implemented within the boundaries of the parks.

**National parks are places, creating favourable conditions for restoration, spiritual enrichment and enjoyment, resulting from the interaction with wild nature. All tourist activities are under control, ensuring restriction of the negative anthropogenic impact over nature. Tourism forms such as walking tourism are encouraged together with cycling, riding, photo – hunting tourism, observation of wild animals and plants, alpinism, speleotourism and etc. There are information and visitor centres in all**

national parks, in villages or towns, located in the peripheral areas of the parks.

**Essential role for tourism development within national parks play the partnerships between the private and public sectors.** These non-government organizations represent unions between park's directorates, local authorities and private businesses. They provide services such as bookings, hotel information, transfers and etc. as well as detailed information about tourist services, excursions and mountain guides, visits to ethnographic, cultural and historical landmarks and etc.

**Together with the positive trends in establishment, management and preservation of protected areas in Bulgaria, including national parks, there have been reported some infringements related to the genetic funds in these areas. If the trends from the last two – three decades keep, an essential part of the genetic fund will be threatened with extinction. Especially vulnerable are higher plants, the green forest plants, various animals – amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals.**

**Sustainable development of recreational and tourist resources, including biodiversity, implies their rational use. If the latter is successfully implemented it would contribute to the prosperity and improvement in the quality of living of the local communities. It would also preserve these resources and the quality of nature.** Such maintenance could be achieved through improvement in scientific and research methods, applied in tourism. The latter should be treated as a complex management system, including natural resources on the one hand and all forms and tools for their use, on the other hand. The criteria on sustainability, implying the principles of sustainable development in global scale, concern ensuring high efficiency of the overall development of tourism today as well as in the future. This means that the management of the overall system should be balanced in order to ensure an optimal combination of use of the natural resources and their preservation and maintenance in long-term perspectives. (Jordanova, 2005).

#### REFERENCES:

1. Георгиев Г., 2004, Националните и природни паркове и резерватите в България, Издателство „Гей Либрис“, София, 294 стр.
2. Георгиев Г., 2010, Природа под закрила, Издателство „Гей Либрис“, София, 287 стр.
3. Дулицкий А.И. Об истории, оценке и перспективах заповедного дела, Заповедники Крыма, Теория, практика и перспективы заповедного дела в Черноморском регионе. Материалы V Международной научно-практической конференции. Симферополь, 22-23. 10. 2009, сс.47-54.
4. Забелина Н.М., 1998, Заповедники и национальные парки, России, Москва, Логота, 160 стр.
5. Зеленото злато на България, 2000, София, МОСВ, 116 стр.
6. Йорданова М., 2005, Швейцарско – български институционален проект „Усъвършенстване на научно-изследователската база за устойчиво управление на рекреационните ресурси“, В списание „Проблеми на географията“, кн. 3- 4, София, БАН, 12 стр.
7. Dasman R.F. 1973. Classification and use protected natural and cultural areas IUCN, Occasional Paper N4, Morge, p.25.
8. Dasman R., F. 1974. Development of a classification system of protected natural and cultural areas-2 World Conference of National Parks Yellowstone and Grand teton, 1972, Moryes, pp.388-396.
9. Dasman R., F., 1984, Environmental conservation, Publisher John 8 Sons Incorporated, Declaration du congres mondial des pares nationaux. Bali, Yndonesie, 11 an 22 octobre 1982, Bulletin de IUCN, 1982, 13, N:10, 11, 12.
10. Evolution of a National Parks System, 1982, Environmental Conservation, N9, pp.287-292
11. Miller K., R., 1984, National Parks Conservation and Development: The Role of Protected Areas in Sustaining Society, Publisher: Smithsonian Institution Press
12. Miller K., R. 1990, Nature management, Glossary, Moskow.