Siegrist, D., Clivaz, C., Hunziker, M. & Iten, S. (eds.) (2006). Exploring the Nature of Management.
Proceedings of the Third International Conference on Monitoring and Management of Visitor Flows in Recreational and Protected Areas.
University of Applied Sciences Rapperswil, Switzerland, 13-17 September 2006. Rapperswil.

# Visitor Monitoring in Tatra National Park

**Juraj Svajda**

Tatra National Park Administration & Biosphere Reserve, Slovakia

svajda@sopsr.sk

*Keywords: Tatra National Park, High Tatras, monitoring of visitors, research inquiry, motoring charge.*

## Introduction

The main objective of the paper is an analysis and comparison between density of visitors on both sides of the Tatra mountains (on Slovak and Polish side). Manual monitoring of visitors was realized for the first time in history of both national parks on August 5–7, 2004 by recording of visitor's frequency on the whole mountain chain and comparing the sizes of tourist's charge on both sides of border. Objects of monitoring were actual data about numbers, detailed structure of visitors, time and spatial dynamic. The monitoring serves for the need of nature conservation, science, research e.g. by providing regulation of tourist activities, by planning maintenance of tourist trails and their facilities, intensifying of ranger services, as well as for tourism experts.

## Methods

Detailed counting of visitors in the national park, including bottom entries to Tatra, was realized in a project of the Tatra National Park Administration and town High Tatras in 1981. Thenceforward since 2004 similar monitoring has not been realised. Monitoring of motoring charge was performed on 12 positions, where number of vehicles, number and nationality of visitors were recorded. Monitoring of visitors in high mountain environment was realised on 33 positions. One of the factors, which has been monitored for a long-time, are the weather conditions and their influence on visitors. A research inquiry on the territory of TANAP was created by set of questions detecting the visitor's opinion on the state of the natural environment, nature conservation in the visitor's mind, services for people as well as the visitor's viewpoint on rangers. In total, more than one thousand inquiry leaflets were given away there.

## Results

Total input of 108845 visitors using 37387 vehicles was recorded during monitoring of motoring charge. Personal motor-cars created 90% of vehicles; the most charged sector was the road II/534 and time between 10:00 and 11:00. 17988 visitors used railway transport with the highest peak between 11.00 and 12.00. It means, that totally 126833 visitors came to HT area during the three sampling days, which means the average 12457 vehicles and 42278 visitors per day. The comparison with the year 1981 is interesting, the increase of visitor numbers and vehicles can be observed, but also the decrease of shared transportation by railway and the efficiency of vehicles' utilization. An important fact telling us about reason of visits is that 62% of visitors remain below the mountains and 38% of them consecutively enter to the high mountain environment. Monitoring of visitors in high mountain environment showed us, that 17651 visitors entered the high mountain environment on Slovakian side of Tatry on the 6th of August, 2004. For comparison, 25282 visitors were on the Polish side in the same date. Traditionally the most visited parts on Slovak side were e.g. Strbske Pleso - Popradske Pleso and Morskie Oko on the Polish side. For comparison on the Slovak side of Tatras 661 km and on the Polish side 245 km marked tourist's footpaths are registered; the density of networks of tourist's footpaths is higher in Poland (1,19 km/km2). In high mountain environment there were about 40% visitors from Czech

Republic, 30% from Slovakia and 19% from Poland. From the interesting results of the research inquiry it could be mentioned, that 79% of the people have visited territory of Tatra national park several times and 75% are satisfied with state and number of tourist's footpaths. Inquiry confirmed the trend on the Polish territory of the Tatras - higher visiting of the third high mountain zone, which presents at the same time the most significant natural values and special sensitive environment.

## Conclusion

Visitor monitoring realized simultaneously on both side of High Tatras allows to record frequency of visitors in the whole Tatras and compare visiting on both sides of the border. Results of monitoring are part of the management plan with limits based on indicators of environment quality. In history, thanks to data from monitoring, free movement of visitors in the national park was limited, the visitor's charter got regulations about moving only on marked tourist trails, some areas were closed because of non-respectable visiting, as well as the maximum quota of visitors who can ride mountain transport facilities were determined. The main goal of the questionnaire was to find out the sociological characteristics of tourists, which are very important from the viewpoint of safety, information and tourist infrastructure. On the Slovak side inquiry underlined finding the tourist opinion on the status of the environment and services related to tourism. In contrast to the Slovak side, the number of visitors in Zakopane (Poland) and surrounding communes doesn't directly correlate with visiting of the Tatra mountains, which is especially the result of the fact that residential centres are found outside of the park. Therefore, monitoring of motoring charge was provided only on Slovak side.

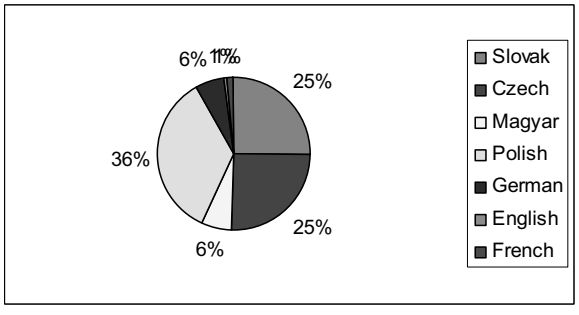


Figure 1: Identifying of visitor's nationality in high mountain environment (Zdiar - Monkova dolina, 5.8.2004, 5.00-20.00).

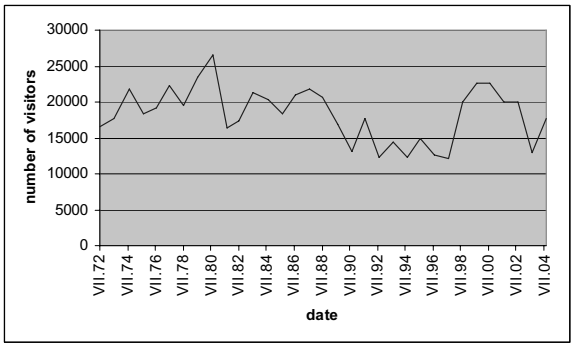


Figure 2: Number of visitors in high mountain environment on a specific day during the period of 1972 – 2004.

## References

Ladygin Z. & Chovancova B. (ed.) (2005).Visitor's monitoring in the Tatra mountains 5th-7th August 2004. Zakopane.