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Organization of tourist and recreational activity within the objects of the natural protected fund in the Odessa region

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Abstract. The article deals with the issues of nature use in protected areas, the exploitation of objects of the nature reserve fund for recreational and tourist purposes. It is emphasized that ecotourism, which includes, first of all, orientation of tourists to the consumption of ecological resources – recreational aspect, preservation of the environment – nature protection, is an important direction of recreation within the

territories of the nature reserve fund, support of the traditional way of life of the local population – social aspect. The purpose of the work is to find out the features of the present state, to determine the problems and perspectives of the organization of recreation within the natural reserve areas of the state level in the Odessa region. Recreational and tourist attraction of the region for visitors are not only a wonderful climate and water resources but also available on territory of the region objects of the nature reserve fund, among which there are 16 objects of national importance. According to the recommendation of the International Union of Conservation of Nature and Ukrainian legislation, most of the categories of objects of the nature reserve fund provide for tourist and recreational activities within their territories in specially designated areas. Thus, the Danube Biosphere Reserve and two national natural parks, «Nizhnednistrovsky» and «Tuzlovsky Limany», joined the tourists for both short-term and long-term recreation. With the purpose of ecological education, the abovementioned objects of the nature reserve fund of national importance are used to create ecological trails and organize tourist routes. Thus, the most popular water tours in the Danube Delta to the mouth of the river with a visit to the symbolic «0 km» of the Danube, as well as tours for the observation of birds. On the river Dniester are popular sport fishing trips, as well as landscape tours. On the relatively untouched coast of the Black Sea, including the territory of the national park «Tuzlovsky Limany» lies one of the most interesting and cognitive routes of the Odessa region, which includes elements of ecological, rural, ethnic and extreme tourism. It is established that at the present time, organizational and recreational activities within the protected areas of Ukraine, as well as the Odessa region are at the stage of formation, the result of which is that its economic efficiency is extremely low.

Key words: recreation, ecotourism, nature reserve fund, national natural park, biosphere reserve, biotic diversity.

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Introduction. In the Odessa region, unique natural complexes and ecosystems, highly valued wetlands of international importance are concentrated in the territory of which a large number of rare and endangered species of plants, mammals and birds are registered, which determines the development of ecological tourism in the region. Ecotourism is a trip to places of relatively untouched nature that do not lead to a violation of the integrity of ecosystems in order to get an idea of the natural and cultural and ethnographic features of this territory, which creates such economic conditions, when nature protection becomes beneficial to the local population, which subsequently becomes conscious, that nature is the main value of the territory and the source of their own profits. Recreational and tourist attraction of the region for visitors, in addition to the natural conditions (water objects, climate, scenic landscapes, diversity of flora and fauna, etc.), also make available on its territory objects of the nature reserve fund. **The purpose of the work** is to find out the features of the present state, to determine the problems and perspectives of the organization of recreation within the natural reserve areas of the state level in the Odessa region. Analysis of previous researches shows that various aspects of recreational and tourist activity in protected natural territories are covered in the works such authors as Boreyko V., Kotenko T., Mironov L., Stilmark F., Kekushev V., Sergeyeva T., Stepanitsky V., Lyubitseva O., Dmytruk O. and others. However, some issues remain controversial and require further study.

Data and methods. The materials of the study served as literary sources, as well as individual developments of modern domestic and foreign scientists on the study of recreation and tourism activities within the protected areas of the world. The cartographic method was used to assess the territorial peculiarities of the recreational activity organization in the Odessa region within the boundaries of nature-protected territories of national importance; The method of field research was used to gather material on the organization of recreational activities on the territory of the Danube Biosphere Reserve, Nizhnednistrovsky National Nature Park and the Tuzlovsky Limani National Nature Park.

Results of the study and their discussion. By definition of The International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) the nature protection (nature reserve) area is «a land and / or

sea area specifically designated for the conservation of biodiversity, natural and related cultural resources, an environmental protection regime, within which it is provided by legislative and other effective means». Since 1992, IUCN has identified six categories of protected areas (Lausche, 2011). These categories are determined depending on the direction of the management objectives (Table 1).

As can be seen from Table 2, recreational activities are foreseen for practically all international categories of the organization of protected areas (except category I). Priority recreational activity is defined for categories , , V.

In Ukraine, all protected areas are united into the Nature Reserve Fund (NRF), which is divided into 11 categories, three of which are national natural parks (NNPs), natural and biosphere reserves – have a national status (Pro prirodno, 1992). The category «Biosphere Park» is included in the list of categories of the nature reserve fund of Ukraine – as an analogue of the international category «Biosphere Reserve» and combines the functions of biodiversity conservation and sustainable socio-economic development. Tourist and recreational activity in the territory of biosphere parks of Ukraine may be conducted within the zone of anthropogenic landscapes and an area of regulated reserve regime.

National nature parks of Ukraine perform the same functions and pursue the same management objectives as National Parks under category II of IUCN. At the same time, large areas of economic zones of Ukraine's NPPs show that they have elements of category V «Protected landscape / marine water», and the fact that each of the Ukrainian NPPs includes a protected zone allows us to speak about the presence of an element of the first category of IUCN here. Although, unlike natural reserves, according to Art. 21 of the Law of Ukraine «About the Nature Reserve Fund of Ukraine» (Zakon, 1992) in the national nature parks, in order to preserve nature, the implementation of health improvement, scientific and educational work, environmental education, in addition to protected areas and economic zones, it should be distinguished zones of regulated recreation and zone of stationary recreation. Within the regulated recreation zone, short-term rest and improvement of people are carried out also an overview of especially picturesque and memorable places.

Table 1. Categories of IUCN Natural Reserves (Dudley, 2008)

Index of categories	Name		The features of management and protection
	<i>in english</i>	<i>in ukrainian</i>	
category	Strict Protection		—
	Strict Nature Reserve	-	management is directed mainly to scientific research
	Wilderness Area		Wildlife protection is carried out without interference with natural processes
category	National Park		management for the conservation of ecosystems and for recreational purposes
category III	Natural Monument	,	management to protect specific natural features
category IV	Habitat/Species Management Area		the protection of certain types of natural environments and / or certain species of flora and fauna or their groups is carried out
category V	Protected Landscape/Seascape	/ -	combined with the preservation of landscapes and / or water areas and recreation
category VI	Managed Resource Protected Area	-	preservation of natural values is ensured through the sustainable use of natural resources

As we can be seen from the objectives of the management of the nature reserves of different categories of IUCN, these objectives coin-cide for

many categories. However, they have a different degree of importance to them (priority). Table 2 gives an idea of these relationships.

Table 2. Objectives of the management of natural protected areas

Purpose of management	IUCN Category						
		b			V	V	V
Scientific research	1	3	2	2	2	2	3
Wildlife protection	2	1	2	3	3	—	2
Preservation of species and genetic diversity	1	2	1	1	1	2	1
Maintenance of ecological services	2	1	1	—	1	2	1
Protection of specific natural / cultural features	—	—	2	1	3	1	2
Tourism and recreation	—	2	1	1	3	1	3
Education	—	—	2	2	2	2	3
Sustainable use of natural ecosystem resources	—	3	3	—	2	2	1
Support for cultural / traditional values	—	—	—	—	—	1	2

Symbols: 1 – the main purpose, 2 – secondary purpose, 3 – potential purpose, – the goal is not put.

This area is equipped with ecological trails and tours are organized. In the zone of stationary recreation, there is a long rest, organized tourism, sanatorium and spa treatment.

The natural reserve fund of the Odessa region as of 01.01.2018 consists of 123 territories and objects with a total area of 159970,847 hectares. Of these, 16 objects of national importance with a total area of 112718.67 hectares and 107 local objects with an area of 47252.17 hectares (Perelik, 2018). Thus, the area of the natural reserve fund is 4.57% of the area of the Odessa region. At the same time, normative state documents provide for an increase in the share of

reserves in Ukraine to 15% in 2020, and in the Odessa region – up to 10,4% – on January 1, 2021 year (Zakon, 2004, Zakon, 2010).

The author's team analyzed the territories suitable for the further formation of the ecological network within the administrative districts of the Odessa region (Javors'ka, Sych, Kolomijec', 2015). As a result of the study, the authors devised a mapping diagram showing areas with insufficient (0–25%), optimal (26–35%) and high (36–70%) of the areas that may be included in the regional eco-network (Figure 1), and therefore interested in ecotourists.

Fig. 1. Regional potential of the ecological network in the Odessa region and the actual area of the nature reserve fund (as of 2015)

An important issue is the reservation of territories for further granting them the status of the reserve. Yes, according to (Programa, 2005) in Odessa oblast the area of natural territories is worth to obtain reserve status are almost 80 thousand hectares. These include large massifs such as the Yalpug Lake, Kitay, and Kugurlui, as well as insignificant plot areas – slopes of river valleys, gullies, ravines where steppe vegetation is preserved. Again, without the regulated use of

these territories today, then it will soon be possible to lose them altogether.

At present, the largest percentage of the reserve (the ratio of the area of the nature reserve fund to the total area of a certain territory) has areas, except Savransky belonging to the Seashore Zone, that is, they have access to the Black Sea – in Kilia 37.89% of the total area of the district, Tatarbunary 16.18% and Savran 13.62%. These areas are considered the most promising for the development of ecological tourism. There are no

objects of the nature reserve fund in the Krasnoknyansky, Lyubashevsky, Reniysky and Saratsky districts.

Of the 123 objects of the Nature Reserve Fund, only 16 belong to state status objects, of which only 1 is represented by a biosphere re-serve

(Danube Biosphere Reserve), and two are national parks (Nizhnednistrovsky and Tuzlovsky Limany National Nature Park). For recreational zones of the objects of the natural reserve fund of the Odessa Oblast, the possible types of ecological tours are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Basic types of ecotourism

Types of tourist and recreational activities	Main goals
Scientific and educational tours and student practices	Geographic, ornithological, botanical, ichthyological, hydrological, ethnographic, birdwatching, photo and video tours
Passive recreation	Camping, picnics, walks, rural tourism, wellness tourism, boat trips, picking berries
Active recreation	Water tourism (kayaking, paddle-boarding), hiking, horseback riding, cycling tourism, diving
Business tourism	Trips to environmental conferences, symposiums, participation in environmental education work

Features of recreational activities within the Danube Biosphere Reserve. On the territory of Ukraine, the lower lands of the Danube are marked by their biological diversity. It is worth noting that the Kilia Delta, on which the Danube Biosphere Reserve is located, is the youngest creation of the river. Among all the large Mediterranean and Black Sea deltas, it has suffered the least from human activity. Today, the sea delta sleeves from the city of Vylkove to the confluence of the Black Sea are the most valuable part of the Reserve. Here dominate vast wetlands, represented by reed plumes, covered with a network of ducts, canals, with numerous lakes. In addition, there are diverse terrestrial ecosystems in the region. On a relatively small territory there are areas of floodplain forests, meadows, salt marshes, sands, remnants of the steppes. In densely populated and highly developed Europe, the Delta of the Danube is a real oasis of wildlife among the plowed and broken steppes of southern Ukraine, attracting numerous tourists. To ensure the protection of natural complexes in the Danube region, in accordance with the Decree of the President of Ukraine of August 10, 1998, No. 861/98, the Danube Bio-sphere Reserve was created on the basis of the Danube Plavni Nature Reserve.

The zones of the biosphere reserve included:

- marine delta of the Kilia arm of the Danube (below the city of Vylkove) – the reserve, buffer zone and zone of anthropogenic landscapes;
- Zhebryansky ridge – zone of anthropogenic landscapes;
- Stenzovo-Zhetrayanovsky floodplain – zone of regulated reserve regime;
- Ermakov Island – one of the largest islands in the Ukrainian Danube Delta – is 9.6 km long and 3.6

km wide; the area is about 2300 ha – the buffer zone and the zone of anthropogenic landscapes; – the territory of the nearby non-operating fishery plant – is a zone of anthropogenic landscapes.

The structure of the institution corresponds to the decision of the main tasks, namely: the scientific department, the Department of protection and rational use of the nature reserve and the sector of environmental education and tourism operating. The legal field of the functioning of the Biosphere Reserve allows us to combine nature conservation with the rational use of natural resources. The practical implementation of the mechanism of rational and ecologically balanced use of the natural resource potential of the biosphere reserve is the provision of recreational services.

The development of ecological tourism and excursion activities for Biosphere Reserves is a very promising form of environmental propaganda, an effective means of forming a sense of pride and a desire to preserve the natural heritage in the population.

In its potential, the Danube Biosphere Reserve not only does not yield to other international reserves, but also has many advantages over them. An increasing interest in the reserve is observed not only by the international scientific community. He gains considerable popularity among domestic and foreign tourists, which requires paying special attention to such a type of tourism as ecological.

In order to attract tourists to take part in the nature protection of the region in various ways (scientific monitoring, projects for the restoration of degraded areas, financial assistance, etc.) and providing them with the necessary information, as well as their education, the Information and Tourist Center in the city of Vilkove was created. It is here

that visitors are informed about the status of the protected area, measures that ensure the diversity of the animal and plant world, how to reduce the impact on vulnerable natural complexes and provide a lot of other useful information about the history of the land and nature use.

Ecological education of ecotourists is an opportunity to influence their behavior by increasing understanding of natural and cultural values, gaining unforgettable impressions by tourists. This is also a guarantee that the natural and cultural values that are very important for the locals will survive not only for the present generation, but for the descendants. Every year more than 3000 tourists visit the information and tourist center (more than 5,000 in 2015 and 2017 yy) – those who have chosen a place of rest and gaining new knowledge and pleasant impressions of the pearl of the Danube Region – the Danube Biosphere Reserve.

Tourist enterprises of the region have developed a number of various tourism programs for the promotion of ecological tourism, which were created on the basis of tourist and recreational potential of the regions of the Ukrainian Danube. Among the offered programs are day-to-day and multi-day excursions, photo tours, bird-watching tours, since in the Danube Biosphere Reserve 255 species of birds (62% in Ukraine) were identified, including 124 species, 196 flying nests. The Red Data Book of Ukraine includes 41 species: cormorant, white-tailed eagle, Pelican curly, Pelican pink, Black stork, Gargary ordinary, etc. The European Red List includes 7 species. Water conservation is also offered, 90 species of fish are registered in the reserve area, of which 15 are included in the Red Book of Ukraine (Sterlet, Danube Salmon, Black Sea Salmon, Atlantic Sturgeon, Umpa, Ruffe Striped, Beluga, etc.), and 7 in the European Red List. Also in the areas of regulated recreation for tourists is the possibility of swimming beach recreation. Due to the combination of sand dunes, pine forests, swamps and steppe vegetation on a relatively small area in the lower lands of the Danube, tourists can observe landscapes biodiversity.

The uniqueness of the Nizhnednistrovsky National Nature Park and its biotic diversity. The National Park is also widely used in the recreational activities of the region. Favorable climatic conditions of the lower land of the Dniester River, the presence of unique natural landscapes and biodiversity have created a recreational attraction and have become the basis for the creation of a national natural park on its territory. The appropriate conditions for creating a

world-view, recreation and well-being of the population are created here.

An abundance of large and varied biotopes of the wetland complex, a developed network of natural, artificial, permanent and temporary delta rivers and reservoirs that feed the Dniester water territory of the Nizhnednistrovsky National Nature Park, provide shelter and living space for more than 1500 species of representatives of the animal and plant world. In addition to natural and man-made biotopes of wetlands, one more type of natural habitats for the Lower Dniester basin should be noted – these are the small remains of steppe biocenoses on the floodplain terraces of the river and the Dniester estuary. Their total area is extremely small and does not exceed several hundred hectares. However, these lands are important as the habitats of a number of steppe species of small mammals and birds.

Determination of directions of recreational activities within the Nizhnednistrovsky National Nature Park was carried out in accordance with the requirements of the Order of the Ministry for Environmental Protection of Ukraine dated June 22, 2009 No. 330 «On Approval of the Regulation on Recreational Activities within the Territories and Objects of the Nature Reserve Fund of Ukraine». Recreational activities are carried out in accordance with the zoning of the territory.

As of January 1, 2018, 4 ecological routes, length from 7 to 58 km and 1 ecological path were developed and approved in the Nizhnednistrovsky National Nature Park.

The «*Gontarenko Island*» ecological trail, length 3.5 km, runs through the island of Gontarenko, which is located on the right bank of the Dniester River, between the Oleksandrivsky and the Festival, near the village of Mayaki. The island, which passes the ecological trail, was named after the hydrologist and ecologist – Vadim Mikolayevich Gontarenko, who spent many years devoting his life to preserving the nature of the Dniester. During the tour, visitors will get acquainted with the natural complexes of the lower Dniester, typical representatives of flora and fauna, rich history of the region. Visit one of the last floodplain meadows, reedbeds and see the floodplain forest. Guests of the tracks learn about the difference between the reeds and deergrass, the great importance of these plants for the river ecosystem, how people have used them in their lives from time to time. See many medicinal plants and learn about their purpose and ways of using it. From the island there is an open landscape on the opposite bank of the river, where the village of Mayaki is located. The boat will deliver tourists to

the last stop of the route, where they will be able from the observation tower on the shore of the Old Turunchchuk to see the entire Dniester estuary and the immense reed beds. The back road runs along the Aleksandrovsky Channel and along the Dniester to the village of Mayaki.

«*Dniester Amazonia*» – a river tourist route runs in the zone of regulated recreation along the Dniester River, the channel of Turunchchuk, the picturesque strait «Amazonka», introduces the mysterious and unique floodplain forest and a huge array of reed bed. On the route there is White Lake, which can be reached on the craft from the city of Bilyaivka and from the village of Mayaki. The length of the route from Bilyaivka – up to 8 km, from village Mayaky – 20 km. Duration of the route is from 3 to 6 hours. This ecological trail introduces tourists with the surrounding landscape and diversity of wet-lands, beautiful vegetable creatures – white lilies, yellow jugs and walnut. The tourists on the route constantly accompany the Aboriginal birds of the Dniester and Turunchuk rivers – swans, herons, gulls, etc.

«*Kingdom of birds*» – a water tourist route in the zone of regulated recreation, which starts from the village Mayaki, runs along the Dniester, then along the channel of the Deep Turunchchuk with access to the Dniester estuary. Back – along the «Kiliary» Strait with the entrance to the Deep Turunchchuk, and then along the Dniester to the village of Mayaky. The length of the route is about 20 km. Duration of the route is from 3 to 5 hours. On the route there are giant pelicans, graceful swans, numerous small and large cormorants, graceful herons, wailing marsh tusks, thickets of the most rare plants – fringed water lily (*Nymphoides peltata*), as well as the largest in Europe, the plantation of yellow water-lily (*Nuphar lutea*). The shallow areas of the estuary are attractive for summer swimming, both adults and children.

«*Brilliant Ibis*» car (bicycle, pedestrian) route, which passes through the economic zone and the zone of regulated recreation along the Mayaky – Palanka motorway. Its length is 10 km. Duration of the route is 3 to 4 hours. Among the many inhabitants of the delta can be called dozens of species that can give people the opportunity to assess the environmental situation in their presence or absence. However, the most interesting object is a brilliant bird or birdhouse. This graceful and sophisticated bird is the closest relative, probably known to many tourists, the sacred ibis, worshiped by ancient Egyptians. Korovayka is included in the Red Data Book of Ukraine. If the Dniester dam does not hold the water during the spring flood, it does not nest, or it has very little nesting. It breaks

in reindeer thickets away from human eyes. You can watch these mysterious birds on flood plains during the flood period – in April – May.

«*Yevsey's Trail*» is an excellent pedestrian tourist route in the zone of regulated recreation on the slopes of the Dniester estuary. The length of the route is 5 km and the duration is from 3 to 5 hours. The trail passes through the steppe landscape and picturesque forest, formed by a tireless enthusiast – forestry Yevsey Pavlovich Kostetsky. This route will introduce the rare birds of the steppe zone and forest-steppe. In the shallow waters of the Dniester estuary there are numerous clumps (over a thousand specimens) of large cormorants, resting pelicans, and in the air the white-tailed eagle is steaming.

The uniqueness of the National Nature Park «Tuzlovsky Limany» and the organization of recreational activities within its borders. The Black Sea landscapes have suffered the most because of its great recreational attractiveness. As a result, in fact, in their natural form, there were only individual fragments, one of which is the area of the so-called Tuzla estuaries. In January 2010 was created Tuzlovsky Limany National Nature Park. Its territory includes: the water area of the lakes Burnas, Alibey, Hadjider, Shahany Lagoon, Karachaus, Malyi Sasyk and Dzshantshey, the Black Sea sandspit, the mouths of the wetlands of the Alkaliy rivers, the Hadjider and the small rivers flowing to the lakes Shahany and Karachaus, as well as the forest tract «Lebedivka» – artificially planted forest area.

As one of the most interesting and informative routes of the Odessa region, which includes elements of ecological, rural, ethnic and extreme tourism, are offered a pedestrian ecotourist route «Reserve coastline of Odessa region», which runs from the resort of Serhijivka to the village Primorsk (Kiliysky district), which is located 18 km from the city of Vilkoovo. The total length of the route is 85–90 km, part of the trail passes through the territory of the national nature park «Tuzlovsky limany».

The area is a plain-wavy steppe (South Bessarabsky steppe), dissected by ravines and beams, and is also characterized by diverse flood landscapes, specific flora and fauna. The heights of the surface are reduced here from north to south, to the sea. The flat surface is disturbed by valleys of rivers, gullies, ravines. Hydrography is represented mainly by the river Danube and the Black Sea coast. In the marine part of the Danube plain there are lake-estuaries between the rivers of the Danube-Dniester, according to the accepted typing, to periodically closed estuaries. These reservoirs have a number of shallow branches, which are

highly saline and swampy floodplains of small steppe streams. With the exception of the lake Sasyk (Kunduk), the axis of other reservoirs is parallel to the seaside, sandspit. From the sea, periodically closed estuaries are separated by a sand dune (bar). The total length of the bar from the estuary of Sasyk to the Dniester estuary is 55 km, and the width varies from 50 to 400 m. Among the estuaries of the Danube–Dniester rivers, the estates of the Tuzlov group – Shagans, Alibey, Burnas – occupy a special place. They have an international status (included in the so-called Ramsar List of wet-lands), as they play an important role in the natural functioning and interaction of coastal ecosystems around the Black Sea. Tuzla estuaries are important for maintaining the biodiversity of the region; provide wintering of many species of birds. Here about 1 thousand pairs of waterbird nest and up to 120 thousand individuals form seasonal clusters, which are especially appreciated by bird watchers. Generally, 243 species of birds are found in the park, of which 28 are included in the Red Data Book of Ukraine.

Since the park has been functioning quite recently so recreational activity is almost not developed. Its borders are not yet identified on the ground, there are no barriers, no sign indicating the value of this territory, the park remains unprotected on weekends when there is a mass arrival of hunters and fishermen. There are no good tracks connecting large settlements or Ukraine with neighboring countries, which is why it significantly influences the number of tourists who could visit the park. There are, of course, roads that connect district centers, but it is worth turning aside and the roads disappearing altogether. Therefore, despite the unique places suitable for recreation, the number of tourists by an order of magnitude less than it could be, because of the unsuitability of roads, only fans of fishing, despite the impassability come here to fish. And if the leadership of the national park is actively starting to introduce various measures – to create tourist routes, excursion and walking ecological and educational paths, to equip places for overnight stays for recreation and to work full time, the park area will attract more tourists, which in turn will attract funds to the local budget.

Conclusions. The development of natural tourism in protected areas can carry a whole range of different consequences – both positive and negative. On the one hand, the development of tourism in many parts of the world was a powerful incentive for the protection of rare species and unique ecosystems, since natural tourism is one of the few forms of economic activity that is «inexhaustible», which does not involve the

removal of wildlife objects (with the exception of hunting and fishing tourism). But without proper control and management successes in the development of natural tourism can quickly turn into a «reverse side». An unprecedented increase in the number of supporters of natural tourism has created a complex of problems that fifty years ago nobody could imagine. Excessive and uncontrolled flow of tourists is often the cause of degradation of the natural environment, reducing biological and cultural diversity. Negative effects from tourism can extend beyond the boundaries of protected areas, affecting the interests of local settlements. It is noted: those places where the inflow of visitors has increased significantly, may subsequently suffer a rapid decline in tourism business – because the participants of natural tours attracts the very opportunity to feel «far from all». Strong flows of tourists, causing the destruction of natural areas and reducing their attractiveness for future visitors, «switch» to other regions, leaving behind polluted beaches, frustrated local residents and ruined local economies. In this case, we can say that along with the destruction of the environment on which it depends, tourism kills itself. Therefore, when planning regional development, including tourism, priority should be given to preserving its natural «base», including the identification of recreational opportunities of nature resources and the determination of the value of recreational loads on the landscape complexes of nature reserves.

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