

Do protected areas achieve the objectives defined for the protection of processes, functions and diversity and where are the limits?

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Abstract

Along with the considerable increase of conservation areas over the last decades, the initial mission of protected areas has expanded (NAUGHTON-TREVES et al. 2005). The pristine purpose to maintain biodiversity, to protect rare or endangered species and ecosystems as well as the allowance of ecological processes remain unquestioned. It's the fulfillment of demands on human welfare which gained growing importance in the management of conservation areas. The range of these assignments is wide and depends, among others, on economic- and sociopolitical issues, or the history of local conservation efforts. Central challenges in newly established conservation areas in developing countries, for example, are to incorporate socioeconomic matters like land use in order to sustain local livelihoods. A more general and quite conventional challenge is to merge recreational as well as educational demands without loosening conservation efforts. In order to meet all those challenges the system of different types of protected areas was established by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

The question whether protected areas achieve their conservation objectives depends very much on the purpose (category) of the reservoir and its management regulations. The more important question to be asked is, whether and how the whole range of conventional and newly emerged tasks can be fulfilled without crossing the borders of protecting biological diversity. In this context the development of research based, best practice management solutions should be highlighted as an useful tool to establish conservation areas as exemplary models, to apply research based management strategies according to the type of protection area and to generate science based knowledge for educational purposes.

References

NAUGHTON-TREVES, L., HOLLAND, M. B., BRANDON K. 2005. The Role of Protected Areas in Conserving Biodiversity and Sustaining Local Livelihoods. *Annual Review of Environment and Resources* Vol. 30:219-252. DOI: 10.1146/annurev.energy.30.050504.164507

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