



PILOT ACTION AREA	Zicker Berge area in the Biosphere Reserve Southeast-Rügen, Germany
REASONS TO START THE PILOT ACTION	<p>1. Limited knowledge of the visitor profile in terms of number, origin, behaviour, mobility preferences, awareness of being in a protected area and knowledge of the specific code of conduct.</p> <p>2. Inappropriate behaviour of visitors and poor respect for the place, due to insufficient knowledge of natural values of the area.</p>
OBJECTIVES	<p>1. To acquire a better knowledge of characteristics, choices, and the degree of awareness of Zicker Berge visitors regarding the natural characteristics of the Biosphere Reserve Southeast Rügen.</p> <p>2. To improve visitors' behaviour by conveying knowledge about peculiarities of the Zicker Berge area, informing about paths and safety, correct rules of conduct and adequate behaviour within the Biosphere Reserve.</p>
MONITORING TOOLS USED	<p>1. Installation of electronic people counter at the two main entrances of Zicker Berge, to be able to monitor the in- and out-flowing numbers of visitors.</p> <p>2. Manual survey of Zicker Berge visitors by counting and conducting flash interviews by Biosphere Reserve Rangers. The survey distinguishes the type of visitor (hiker, excursionist with a dog on a leash, hiker with a dog not on a leash, mountain biker / cyclist riding their bikes, mountain bikers / cyclists who push their bike, jogger), with the intent to monitor the behaviours that violate the access rules to the protected area (for example, the cycling activity and to lead dogs without a leash).</p> <p>3. Manual survey of Zicker Berge visitors by in-depth interview oriented to know: i) general visitor's profile; ii) tourist behaviour; iii) the reasons for the visit; iv) awareness of the natural specificity of the Biosphere Reserve Southeast Rügen and, in particular, of Zicker Berge, as well as the current protection regime and the existence of a code of conduct for its protection; v) the frequency of visit and the particular interest for the Biosphere Reserve; vi) knowledge of the reference terminology for the definition of protected areas; vii) the degree of visitor's satisfaction, with particular attention to tourist pressure in the area.</p>
MEASURES AND ACTIVITIES	<p>Mentioned monitoring tools were developed together with the University in Greifswald. As a first step, the evaluation was performed in form of a master thesis, by a University student. He found, that touristic pressure in this area seems to be acceptable. The pressure point has not been reached, as long as visitors behave correctly according to the access rules to the protected area.</p> <p>The results were then discussed at a participatory workshop together with different stakeholders and where further visitor management activities were decided (e.g. the implementation of an audio guide, setting up garbage cans, improving signage, implementation of rescue routes etc.). Existing monitoring tools were improved, especially manual surveys, by adding further questions concerning new actions, and the data has been continuously collected until 07.10.2019, to find out if there is a change of behaviour of visitors over the time.</p>



<p>USE OF ACQUIRED DATA</p>	<p>In the first phase, the evaluation of the initial state of affairs was used to find out the degree of touristic pressure, and subsequently to be able to decide on visitor management activities to be implemented in the area.</p> <p>In the second phase, after the implementation of visitor management activities and adjustment of monitoring tools, newly obtained data are used to compare visitors' behaviour before and after the implementation of visitor management activities and to evaluate the effectiveness of those activities.</p>
<p>CONCLUSION</p>	<p>It is believed that by involving local people in all of the actions, local acceptance and sensitization for the natural characteristics of the area, as well as adequate behaviour within the Biosphere Reserve Southeast Rügen, will rise. For example, local school kids were involved in defining the garbage cans' surface layout.</p> <p>To find out if there is a change in visitors' behaviour, data should be collected and compared again in 3 to 5 years if possible, because such changes may happen slowly.</p> <p>For data to be useful and correct, one must anticipate and allow more time for refining and readjusting in the initial phase, because of possible malfunctions in technical electronic equipment (for example, audio guide and electronic people counter).</p>