

## PROTECTED AREAS IN THE DISTRICT OF DIBRA AND ASSESSMENT OF THEIR TOURIST

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### ABSTRACT

There are six categories of protected areas in Albania, according to the classification system of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), set out in law no. 8906, dated 06.06.2002 "On protected areas". There is an important part of the territory or threatened that declared protected areas under this law. Dibra district appears as one of the richest natural areas in the country, although with not too large surface, which consists of four categories of protected areas. Their presence provides a real opportunity for the development of tourism and support local economies where they are located. These tourist resources are not used properly and it is not considering about the principle of sustainable development, which seriously is threatening the tourist and offer that was passed on to future generations. The main objectives of this article relating to the identification of tourism values of protected Dibra district and the presentation of an overall management and problems that characterize them. The methodology for conducting the study is mainly the use of literature, material from various institutions, cartographic methods and direct observations on locations. On the assessment of natural tourist of Dibra district, and of the lack of published scientific articles in the tourism branch, so this was one of the main reasons for selecting this theme.

**Keywords:** Protected area, tourist potential, tourist rating, landscape, management.

### INTRODUCTION

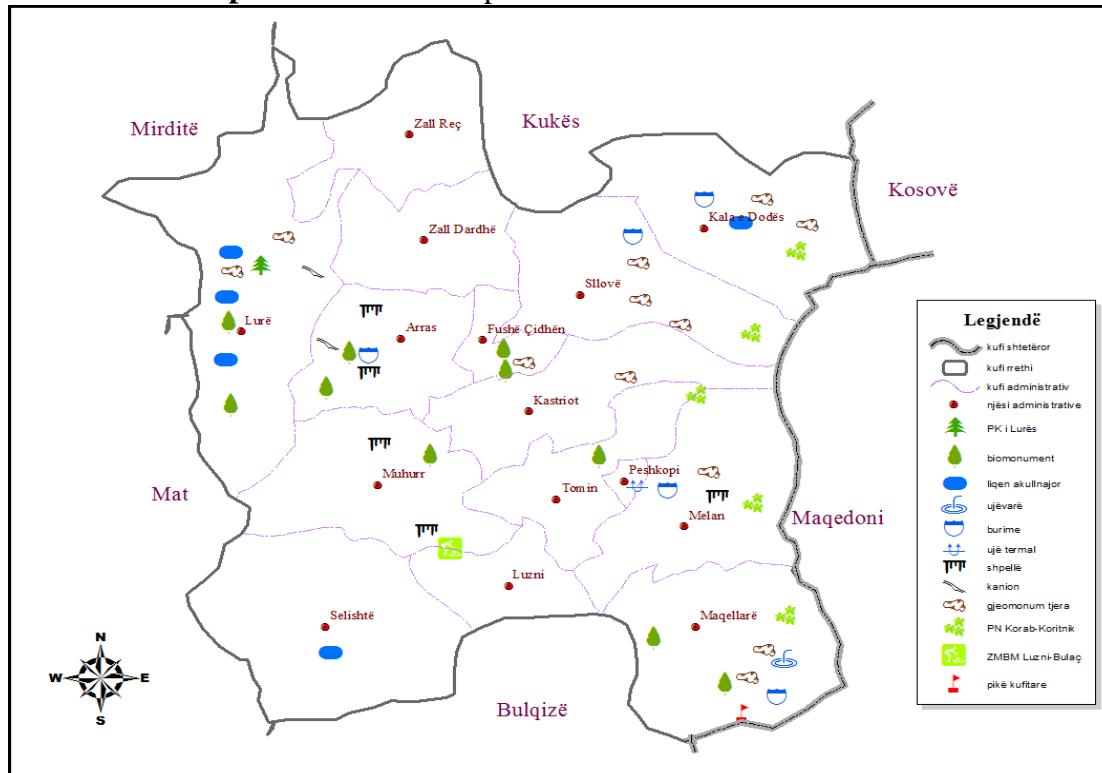
Dibra district located in the northeast of Albania, on both sides of the valley of the Black Drin, between on east of Korab ranges and on west Lura them. It has an area of 1010 km<sup>2</sup> (*Dibra Regional Council*) and a population 78662 inhabitants (*Directorate General of Civil Status, January 2016*). Based on the classification by the IUCN system, Dibra is represented by four categories of protected areas. In this area just lacking strict nature reserve and protected landscape. We present below these in the declaration of protected areas and the area they occupy.

- Lura national park, declared by DCM no. 96, dated 21.11.1966, with a total area of 1280 hectares (category II).
- 41 natural monuments, published by DCM no. 676, dated 20.12.2002, "On declaration of a protected area of monuments of Albanian nature" (category III). Their area ranges from a few square meters to several hectares.
- Natural park "Korab-Koritnik", declared by DCM no. 898, dated 21.12.2011, with a total area 55550.2 hectares, of which only part 20663.4 hectares in the district of Dibra (category IV).
- Protected area of managed resources "Luzni-Bulaç", declared by DCM no. 102, dated 15.01.1996, with a total area of 5900 hectares (category VI).

The largest area in the district of Dibra about protected areas of natural park occupies "Korab-Koritnik", then the area "Luzni-Bulaç" and finally the national park of Lura. These three categories together, occupying an area of 27843.4 hectares. Undoubtedly, areas with the largest tourism potential appears in massif of Korab and national park of Lura. They are

distinguished by rich hydrographical network as numerous glacial lakes, fountains, waterfalls, numerous natural monuments, rich vegetation, large areas of forest and meadows, rugged and attractive mountainous etc. In recent years are being made more accessible and more frequent in infrastructure improvements of these areas for tourists. Also quite interesting and attractive appear also other protected areas in this district. Nature monuments are scattered across the territory, but the majority of them located in the ridge of Korab and Lura.

**Map 1.** Distribution of protected areas in the Dibra district



Work: Fatbardh Cena, Software Arc GIS 10

### Lura national park

Lura was declared national park in 1966, with an area of 1280 hectares. The largest part of the area are forests and pastures. It is part of the administrative unit of the same name. Lura is about 44 km from the city of Peshkopi and about 135 km from Tirana traveling the road from Rrësheni ([google.com/maps](http://google.com/maps)). The population of the administrative unit of Lura in january 2016 was 1398 inhabitants, distributed in 478 families (*Directorate General of Civil Status*).

Geographic and tourist element that makes known the area are definitely glacial lakes. The area where the lake located at heights over 1500 m. The lakes have rounded shapes, the largest of which is the Great Lake, after his coming of Pine Lake, Black Lake, Flower's Lake, Gallabës, Hoti, Dry Lake, Bruçi etc. The lakes are formed in the quaternary geologic period about 4-5 million years ago, when the highest mountains in Europe were covered with thick ice, and other regions too, up to hundreds of meters (*Ajazi, 2002, pg.9*). Lura is crossed by two rivers, Malla and Seta, who have the charm characteristic and some streams that flow from the lakes.

Lura national park is a place of rare beauty tourism, situated on the ultra-basic stratified formation of Lura. On the slopes of the Crown of Lura distinguished glacial tracks on height 1650-1800 m over sea level. In the area of geopark Lura amphibolites stripped of middle Jurassic ophiolites floor. It is a rare Mediterranean strip, similar to Oman (*Serjani, A., etc., 2003, pg.65*). At Gjergj Fishta was appreciating the beauty of this area and he said: "Who has not seen Lure, he has never seen Albania".



**Figure 1.** The Great lake, July 2014



**Figure 2.** Bruçi's lake, July 2014

Lura is characterized by very rich natural and cultural heritage. Thus are revealed several natural monuments such as: gryka e Madhe, morenat e Fushë Lurës, cirku i Kunorës së Lurës, fusha e Pelave, hartinat e Lurës, rrobulli i Lurës, Flower's Lake, Black Lake and Great Lake (*DCM 676, dt. 20.12.2002*). Cultural monuments have been declared apartment of Zef Doçit and apartment of Selman Tolla in the village of Fushë Lurë (*Institute of Cultural Monuments*). There are some endemic animals and plants that are endangered or extinct.

The climate offers opportunities for tourism development in every season. Heavy snowfalls during the winter with about 3-4 months are snowfalls, closely linked with its layer thickness that there are cases that runs more than 1.5 meter, provides conditions for winter sports fun. During the summer, we have cold climate that combined with the shadows of the all-pervading presence about forests of beech and pine and are creating opportunity for relaxation and rest. At the same time in the areas surrounding of lake offered conditions to realize sunbathing (*Axhemi, 1997, pg.184*).

National park of Lura affected by many problems, mainly with human nature with all the beauties of nature. Indiscriminate human intervention are too often, particularly in cutting and burning of forests deliberate. This has led to damage and loss of large territories of beech, oak and pine. Road infrastructure is presented in very bad condition and recommended moving SUV type vehicles. Inappropriate interventions in lakes are building embankments, irrigation canals, water pollution from waste many visitors have created serious environmental problems. The end of the lake has been filled with various materials and woody near the lakes. Cutting them around the lakes he has spoiled many appearance. Activities in the national park, collide with the status of approved or carried out of control and without any scientific criteria. Also many endemic species are extinct or endangered.

## Nature monuments

Natural monument is the object of nature with one or more unique values, scientific, ecological, cultural, historical, aesthetic, religious that is a habitat of a rare type, endemic and threatened or of special importance and area up to 50 hectares (*Law 8906, dt. 06.06.2002*). Nature monuments bear witness to the legacy of the people who lived and made history in the past. Some of these values are unique and inalienable.

In the list of monuments of nature by DCM no. 676, dated 20.12.2002 "On declaration of a protected area the Albanian monuments of nature", in the district of Dibra are 41 listed monuments of nature. Natural monuments classified in this region such as: in 20 geo-monuments, 11 hydro-monuments and 10 bio-monuments. In this category it applied the first level of protection. By the decision for the entire Republic of Albania, based on the list of monuments of nature we have only the districts of Vlora, Gjirokastra and Shkodra that have the largest number of monuments in the district level ranking among the richest natural areas in the country.

The geographical distribution of natural landmarks in the district of Dibra is uneven and varies according to the administrative units and the height over sea level. Administrative units that have distinguished many natural monuments such as Lura with 9 monuments, Arras and Maqellara with 6 natural monuments, Kalaja of Doda and Sllova with 4 natural monuments as well as units that have no natural monument as Luznia, Zall Reçi or Zall Dardha. Peshkopi represented by the thermal spas. The majority of natural's monuments found in the high altitudes over sea level, as seen from the above date, mainly in the Korab mountain ranges and Lura.

Most popular and most visited natural monuments are: thermal waters of Peshkopi, where their presence is built and the curative center, glacial lakes of Lura, Balgajt and Black Lake in Radomira, waterfall of Pocesti, the canyon of the River Seta, the cold water of Vlesha, the Grama Mountains where there are monuments such as: statements of Grama, the Ladies and karsts of White Mountain, numerous caves, bio-monuments of various kinds etc.

## Natural park "Korab-Koritnik"

Korab-Koritnik natural park has a total area of 55550.2 hectares of which 20663.4 hectares belong to the district of Dibra. The main part of the territory occupied by pasture surfaces, followed by forest area of forest vegetation, unproductive areas, agricultural areas and urban areas and mixed land with agricultural and forest land. One of administrative units of Dibra, which is the largest area of the park occupies Kalaja of Doda, followed later by Melan, Maqellara, Sllova, Kastrioti, Fushë Çidhna and Tomini (DCM 898, dt. 21.12.2011).

Peak of the Korab mountain, that is the highest in Albania, are in the queue and have a rare beauty. Ridges of these mountains are limestone and plaster covered with grasses and alpine pastures with different types of flowers and greenery of these lands during the spring and summer. Different kinds of flowers, cold water springs, waterfalls, natural and artificial lakes, evergreen trees offer great opportunities to enjoy every detail of mountain tourism, during the winter as well as summer. The tourist offer also includes clean air, cool water and delicious, dairy products, such as meat and dairy products the best quality (*Ministry of Environment, 2014, pg.33*).

The area of the park includes a variety of high terrestrial habitats ranging from different types of forest due to the slope and slope run north, east, south and west. Korab-Koritnik natural park preserves a large variety of mountain landscapes, including forms of relief after glacier, deep mountainside and rock formations. Alpine pastures are rich in rare and endemic species. Timber communities are also present in the area of alpine pastures with the typical plant associations. Alpine and sub alpine meadows offer a wide range of species, most of which are used for their curative values. The slopes below the mountain meadows are mostly covered with deciduous forests (*Ministry of Environment, 2014, pg.9*). Stratigraphic cutting of paleozoic formations in full graptolites of Korab area that constitutes the oldest formations in Albania (*Serjani, A., etc., 2003, pg.41*).



**Figure 3.** Statements Grama



**Figure 4.** Lake of Grama

Alpine pastures are rich in rare and endemic species such as: Hallers Primel, Foetid Juniper, Yellow monkshood bersheni, akonit of Lamark, Vettstein's clover, Lesser cendaline and Vettstein's crowfoot. Rich vegetation of the natural park is an important habitat of several threatened species of fauna and the common European importance that require large undisturbed ecosystems, including large mammals. At least 37 species of mammals found in the area Korab-Koritnik (*Ministry of Environment, 2014, pg.40*).

There are some natural monuments on the territory of the park or surrounding it that are: waterfall of Pocesti, coastal of Pocesti, planetree of Kerçisht, stone of Kerçinit, karst's source of Kerçinit, boroviku of Begjuneci, cave of Qyteza, Shllinasi, cold water of Vlesha, statements of Grama, karst of White Mountain, pits of Panair, Korab's flush, Black Lake in Radomira etc. Most of these monuments are located in administrative units of Dibra and Maqellarë, Sllovë and Kalaja of Doda.

### **Protected area of managed resources “Luzni-Bulaç”**

Areas that include large areas of territory and relatively isolated and uninhabited that you can go in difficulties way, or areas that are still sparsely populated and can be under constant pressure to be populated and most widely used and return them to use intense is unclear or inadequate, and they are declared as protected areas managed resources (*Law 8906, dt. 06.06.2002*). Luzni-Bulaç area are declared as a protected zone by DCM no. 102, dated 15.01.1996, with a total area of 5900 hectares (*Ministry of Environment, 2015*).

The condition of forests in these municipalities in recent years has improved, while slightly degraded is the situation in Luznia, where such as a result of not protecting grazing terrain bare steep, often causing damage and flooding homes and land. The area has natural motifs such as attractive for new pastures and forests and a dense hydrographic network. It is not recognized as an frequented area by tourists and demanding. In 2008, the whole area has been protected zone status, with special government decisions were passed to the ownership about Luzni's administrative units and regardless Muhurr and their special status (*Directorate of Forest Service Dibra*).

### **Management of the natural heritage**

The legal basis for the protection stems from the Constitution of the Republic of Albania, article 59 there of it. The state, within its constitutional powers means, to supplement and initiative and responsibility with private, aimed at a healthy and suitable ecologically for nowadays generations and future generations about the rational use of forests, water, pasture and other natural resources on the principle of sustainable development (*Constitution of the Republic of Albania, article 59, pg.14*).

Declaration of a protected area about her made zoning by the Council of Ministers, on the proposal of the minister responsible for the environment, after obtaining the opinion of the specialized institutions and local government units, which have previously received the opinion of private owners, whose properties will be included in the protected area. Council of Ministers approves the procedures for nomination and declaration of protected areas about buffer zones. They are prepared by the Ministry of Environment in support of the biodiversity convention criteria, of relevant EU guidelines and national environmental plans and strategies (*Law 8906, dt. 06.06.2002*). Protection of nature about especially of flora and fauna can not be an end in itself. It must be done in order to use for various educational purposes, research, exploration, the eco geo-tourism, agro-tourism, entertainment etc. (*Serjani, 2009, pg.92*).

Natural heritage has a management, which is implemented by relevant institutions and laws are in place to protect the property about its maintenance. Natural heritage has a management, which is implemented by relevant institutions and laws are in place to protect the property about its maintenance. There are a number of laws and institutions so for the district of Dibra that deal exactly for managing its natural heritage. Protection about preservation is seen as necessary recognition and enforcement of existing legislation in this field. So below we present some of the laws the most important decisions related to protected areas and nature protection in Albania.

*Establishments that perform heritage management are:*

Ministry of Environment about some directories that are subject to its Directorate of Environment; Departament of Forest Protection and the Forest Treatment; Directorate of Biodiversity and Protected Areas; State Inspectorate of Environment, Forestry and Water Management; National Agency of Protected Areas; The National Environment Agency.

Ministry of Economic Development, Tourism, Trade and Entrepreneurship and the General Directorate of Tourism Development.

Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Water Administration and the General Directorate of Water and the Land Management.

Regional Environmental Agency of Dibra.

Forest Service Regional Directorate of Dibra.

Albanian Geological Survey, Branch of Dibra.  
Municipality and the its administrative units of Dibra, etc.

*Laws or the most important decisions on protected areas and the nature conservation in Albania are:*

Law no. 8093, dated 21.03.1996 “On water reserves”.  
Law no. 8906, dated 06.06.2002 “On protected areas”.  
Law no. 8990, dated 23.01.2003 “On impact assessment about environment”.  
Law no. 9385, dated 04.05.2005 “On forests and the forestry service”.  
Law no. 9587, dated 20.07.2006 “On the protection of biodiversity”.  
Law no. 9693, dated 19.03.2007 “On the pasture fund”.  
Law no. 10006, dated 23.10.2008 “On the protection of wild fauna”.  
Law no. 10120, dated 23.04.2009 “On the protection of the medicinal herbs, etero-oils and tannin natural”.  
Law no. 10253, dated 11.03.2010 “On hunting”.  
Law no. 10431, dated 09.06.2011 “On environmental protection”.  
Law no. 64/2012 “On fisheries”.  
Law no. 111/2012 “On the integrated management of water resources”.  
Law no. 7/2014 “On the announcement of the moratorium hunting in the Republic of Albania”. Law no. 107/2014 “On the planning and development of the territory”.  
Law no. 93/2015 “On tourism”.  
DCM no. 266, dated 24.04.2003 “On administrations of protected areas”.  
DCM no. 676, dated 20.12.2002 “On declaration of a protected area the Albanian monuments of nature”.  
DCM no. 898, dated 21.12.2011 “On declaration of natural ecosystem mountain of Korab-Koritnik natural park”.

### **Problems of the natural heritage**

Dibra district consists of numerous categories of protected areas and appears complex and problems too in these areas. By the observations and the use of literature too we can give below some of the main problems of protected areas.

- Although legislation about the preservation of protected areas is improved and aligned with the EU, and the situation on the ground shows us that they are abandoned and unmanaged properly, so everything is just on paper.
- These natural resources are threatened more by human activity than the geological and geomorphologic hazards, especially that monuments such as karst's caves, glacial lakes, forests, surfaces etc.
- Research about inventory and determination of natural landmarks in the study region is not at the right level in many ways. Also, it happened by the fact that have worked some inadequate specialists and they have incomplete knowledge in this area, or there is no cooperation between specialists from different directions.
- Based on the DCM no. 676, dated 20.12.2002 “On declaration of protected area about the Albanian natural monuments” noticed some mistakes in nomination of Dibra district that are creating confusion to tourists.
- Most of the valuable monuments has no infrastructure to see by tourists and they are impossible to visit, during winter especially when the snow drifts.
- Generally it is missing tourist signs and directional signs that are leading to the protected areas and natural monuments. Also provided no description for protected areas.

- It has lack of management plans about national park of Lura and protected area as Luzni-Bulaç.
- Also, there are identified many of other problems such as erosion, overgrazing, deforestation, fires caused by human, and illegal hunting or fishing too in the territory of protected areas.
- Another problem is also the lack of an environmental education and lack of information on the importance and the values that brings to preserve this natural heritage.
- Many monuments of nature are not included in the tour guides that takes place in this region etc.

## CONCLUSIONS

Research of this article concluded that Dibra district consists of a variety of protected areas. These protected areas included some objects with the great tourist values such as: glacial lakes, waterfalls, underground and curative sources, surface runoff, numerous mountains, mountain slopes and canyons, caves, glaciers part, karsts relief, forests and pastures, different types of bio-monuments, rich flora and fauna etc. Protected areas are important support for the local economy in which they live.

These protected areas encountered by numbers of problems, especially human nature. Among the main problems are deliberate fires and burning of forests and pastures too, overgrazing, erosion, road infrastructure that is in serious condition, the host insufficient structure and has no quality, lack of cooperation between institutions, lack of implementation of the legal framework for offenders etc.

It should be done for an concrete strategy of presenting tourism resources and should not be allowed that tourism be a "dream" of economic and tourist development of the Dibra district. It is necessary to have cooperation of all central and local institutions, business and residents of this area itself too.

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