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### **Assessment of the attractiveness and problems of the Territorial Natural Recreational Systems of North-East Kazakhstan by the population**

#### **Abstract**

**Object:** To do the assessment of territorial resources, recreational services for their development by the population and consumers, to formulate proposals for their development and preservation of the natural environment.

**Methods:** A review of scientific literature on the topic of research, sociological methods to obtain the necessary information based on research sample. This kind of research has not previously been carried out on the objects under study.

**Results:** As a result of a sociological survey, the influence of the population on the preservation of the natural environment was revealed, the awareness of the population about the prospects for the development of these systems and possible options for improvement were identified. The opinion of the population and vacationers about the degree of importance of the problems was revealed.

**Conclusions:** It was found that the population and vacationers, as a strong third-party territorial natural recreational system, noted the uniqueness of the natural environment of the Katon-Karagay Natural Park and the flow of vacationers. The population and vacationers were unanimous in identifying measures to improve this natural area so that recreation and tourism are closer to international standards. Useful advice and the need to develop a Comprehensive State Program for Territorial Natural Recreational System can ensure the preservation of the natural environment and comprehensive, effective development.

**Keywords:** natural recreational system, tourism, natural environment, factors of attractiveness, sociological survey, comprehensive development program, ecology, population, vacationers.

#### **Introduction**

The Republic of Kazakhstan has the unique natural parks on its territory, which have been developed to varying degrees and are objects of tourism and recreation, a preserved natural environment for many generations of Kazakhstanis. The uniqueness of Kazakhstan's national parks dictates the need to solve a complex problem. There is, on the one hand, the formation and development of territorial natural recreational systems, their involvement in economic activities, as components of the national tourist cluster and health complex; on the other hand, it is the preservation and maintenance of the unique natural environment (World Tourism, 2017; Spenceley et al. 2019; Spenceley et al. 2016; Dunets et al. 2019).

The state policy of Kazakhstan, as in many other developing countries of the world, is aimed at the rational, integrated use of the resources of natural parks: the creation and development of the tourism industry in the region (internal and external tourism); creation and development of health-improving hospitals using unique resources (mineral waters, therapeutic mud, kumis therapy, pantoherapy, etc.); preservation of the unique natural environment (Lisin, 2018; Castillo-Eguskiza et al. 2019; Nurmukhanova et al. 2018; Altaibayeva et al. 2020).

An effective solution to the problems of the development of territorial natural recreational systems has a significant impact on the socio-economic development of the territory, the level and quality of life of the local population. The programs for the development territorial natural recreational systems (TNRS) largely

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depends on the reliability and completeness of the initial information, which can be obtained from sources of official statistics, research by scientific organizations, operational information of natural parks, scientific reports (research institutes, UNDP), scientific publications, materials of environmental audit (Vogt, July 2020; Reinhold, 2017; Dudek, 2020; Benetti, 2021).

An important role in the development of such programs can be played by organizing feedback on the state of natural parks and obtaining effective information on its basis. Thus, in his State's of the Nation Address "Constructive Public Dialogue is the Basis of Stability and Prosperity of Kazakhstan", President of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev notes the need to organize effective feedback with the population in order to ensure a response to the needs of people (Address, 2019).

The assessment of the attractiveness and development problems of the TNRS was made on the basis of the use of a sociological survey of the population and vacationers of the Katon-Karagay TNRS. In 2018, a sociological survey of recreational workers (30 people) and entrepreneurs (10 people) was carried out in the Bayanaul NRS (Alimkhanova, 2019, 82).

### **Methods**

In the Katon-Karagay TNRS, a survey of the local population and vacationers was conducted in July 2021 in order to identify the attractiveness of natural parks and the problems associated with the involvement of this TNRS in economic activity, preservation and maintenance of the natural environment (Shelomentseva, 2021). 200 respondents of the local population and 200 respondents of vacationers were interviewed, the questionnaires were processed in the SPSS program. The representativeness of the sample of our survey is much higher; the composition of the stratum (population and recreants) also differs.

The study involved respondents of different age and social groups, men and women. 64 % of men and 36 % of women took part in the population survey. The distribution of respondents by age was: from 18 to 29 years old — 34.0 %, from 30 to 45 years old — 32.0 %, from 46 to 60 years old — 24.0 %, from 61 and older — 10.0 %. The distribution of respondents by education was: incomplete secondary — 6.0 %, secondary — 32.0 %, specialized secondary — 21.0 %, incomplete higher — 6.0 %, higher — 35.0 %. The distribution of respondents by ethnicity was: Kazakhs — 64.0 %, Russians — 24.0 %, others (Ukrainians) — 6.0 %. The distribution of respondents by social status was as follows: student — 10.0 %, pensioner — 6.0 %, entrepreneur — 6.0 %, education and health worker — 21.0 %, law enforcement officer, serviceman — 11.0 %, a worker in trade, services — 21.0 %, worker in industry, construction, transport and communications — 13.0 %, agricultural worker — 6.0 %, unemployed, temporarily unemployed, housewife — 6.0 %.

46.0 % of men and 54.0 % of women took part in the survey of vacationers. The distribution of respondents by age was: from 18 to 29 years old — 30.0 %, from 30 to 45 years old — 32.0 %, from 46 to 60 years old — 23.0 %, from 61 and older — 15.0 %. The distribution of respondents by education was: incomplete secondary — 5.0 %, secondary — 23.0 %, secondary specialized — 17.0 %, incomplete higher — 5.0 %, higher — 50.0 %. The distribution of respondents by ethnicity was: Kazakhs — 59.0 %, Russians — 41.0 %. The distribution of respondents by social status was: student — 14.0 %, entrepreneur — 3.0 %, education and health worker — 14.0 %, worker in trade, services — 23.0 %, worker, industry, construction, transport and communications — 19.0 %, agricultural worker — 19.0 %, unemployed, temporarily unemployed, housewife — 8.0 %.

### **Results and Discussion**

A number of questions were asked to assess the attractiveness and development problems of TNRS by the population living in the territory of national parks. To the question "How has the location on the same territory with the Katon-Karagay natural and recreational system (NRS) influenced and affected your life?" respondents gave the following answers (Table 1).

Table 1. Impact on the life of the population, location on the same territory with TNRS

No.	Option	Unit measurements	Indicator value
1	Parents worked	%	6,0
2	I am working	%	-
3	Development of the rural district	%	-
4	Availability of recreation at low financial costs	%	13,0
5	Negative influence	%	6,0
6	Doesn't affect in any way	%	43,0
7	It is difficult to answer	%	32,0

Note: Compiled by author

The high percentage of answers “Doesn't affect in any way” and “It is difficult to answer” are explained by the fact that there have been no rapid and significant changes in TNRS in recent years and people often associate the degree of influence on them by city-forming objects with employment at these facilities.

From our perspective, it is important to find out the opinion of the population about the impact of investments in TNRS on the preservation of the natural environment. The respondents were asked the question “Do investments in the development of the Katon-Karagay NRS preserve the natural environment?”. The results of the answers indicate that the population does not have full confidence in the positive impact of investments on the preservation of the natural environment, 21.0 % of respondents believe — *rather yes than no*, the overwhelming number of respondents (52.0 %), due to their lack of awareness, answer — *rather no than yes*, and *I find it difficult to answer*. 27.0 % of respondents are sure that investments do not contribute to the preservation of the natural environment. This answer may be due to ignorance of investment directions, the real state of affairs.

Territorial natural recreational systems are city-forming objects for settlements located on their territory. Therefore, it was significant to establish the opinion of the population on how the influence of TNRS on the development of their places of residence is manifested. For this purpose, the respondents were asked the question “What is the influence of the Katon-Karagay NRS on the development of the rural district?”. The results are demonstrated in Table 2.

Table 2. Influence of TNRS on the development of the rural district

No.	Option	Unit measurements	Indicator value
1	Employment of the population of the rural district	%	16,0
2	Creation of social infrastructure facilities in the rural district	%	-
3	Possibility of the population to create SME facilities on the territory of TNRS	%	6,0
4	Doesn't affect in any way	%	9,0
5	I don't know	%	48,0
6	It is difficult to answer	%	21,0

*Note: Compiled by author*

The answers of the respondents are largely determined by the fact that the respondents do not sufficiently know the plans for the development of TNRS and their implementation in the territory of the rural district.

The population could assess the impact of TNRS on the development of a rural district in several directions:

- the creation of new economic entities of small and medium-sized businesses in the rural district, which can provide the creation of new jobs;
- increasing tax revenues to the budget;
- improvement of the level and quality of life of the population of rural districts;
- improving the infrastructure of rural districts.

Therefore, the respondents were asked the question “Are new SMEs being created in your rural district, which will meet the needs of TNRS?” and only 20.0 % of respondents provided their answers.

When assessing the attractiveness of TNRS, it seems important to identify the strengths of the objects under study. We asked the respondents to answer from the population the question “Please, name the strengths of the Katon-Karagay NRS”. The answers are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Strengths of the Katon-Karagai NRS

No.	Option	Unit measurements	Indicator value
1	Unique natural environment	%	79,0
2	High quality of service	%	-
3	Developed infrastructure	%	-
4	Compliance of the arrangement with world standards	%	-
5	Vacationers flow	%	21,0
6	It is difficult to answer	%	-

*Note: Compiled by author*

Most of the respondents were unanimous in their answers (79.0 %) by noting the uniqueness of the natural environment, and 29.0 % noted a high flow of tourists.

The respondents were asked to answer the question “Do you plan your employment in the future in the Katon-Karagay NRS?”. Considering the social status of the respondents, the answers of the respondents were predictable: 15.0 % of the respondents believe that in the future they can associate their employment (more likely than not) with TNRS. These are young people and those who do not see themselves in the future in their profession.

When assessing the attractiveness and development problems of TNRS, it was important to identify the awareness of the population about the prospects for the development and development of the territories of national parks. Answers to the question “Do you know the prospects for the development of the Katon-Karagay NRS?” give an idea of this. The answers to this question indicate a low awareness of the population about the prospects for the development of TNRS. Only 27.0 % of respondents gave the answer “More likely yes than no”, 43.0 % — a confident answer — “No”.

When determining the prospects for the development of TNRS, the opinion of the population about development and preservation of national parks was identified (Table 4).

Table 4. What, in your opinion, needs to be improved in the Katon-Karagay NRS to bring the recreational services closer to international standards?

No.	Option	Unit measurements	Indicator value
1	Improve the level and quality of the arrangement	%	21,0
2	Ensure the preservation of the natural environment	%	12,0
3	Improve service	%	37,0
4	Modernize existing recreation centers	%	21,0
5	Organize winter holidays	%	-
6	It is difficult to answer	%	9,0

*Note: Compiled by author*

The answers of the respondents deserve close attention and can be taken into account when planning the development of TNRS and testify to the understanding of the population of the problems of their development. The respondents noted the need to improve the level and quality of arrangement (21.0 %), improve service (37.0 %), modernize existing recreation centers (21.0 %) and ensure the preservation of the natural environment (12.0 %).

The population living in the territory of the national park also rests in their place of residence. For this purpose, the respondents were asked the question “How often have you rested in the Katon-Karagay NRS?”. The answers to which were distributed as follows: *annually I rest in recreation centers* — 27.0 %; *rested several times in recreation centers* — 53.0 %; *I have a rest in a “wild” way* — 6.0 %; *did not rest* — 6.0 %; *find it difficult to answer* — 8.0 %.

To the question “Why do you like the vacation in Katon-Karagay?”, the respondents' answers designated the attractive aspects of recreation in the studied TNRS: natural conditions — 79.0 %; prices correspond to the quality of services — 0 %; service availability — 0 %; good service — 9 %; find it difficult to answer — 21.0 %.

The respondents were asked the question “How is it possible to improve recreation?” the answers to which can be used in the development of TNRS development programs (Table 5).

Table 5. “How is it possible to improve recreation?”

No.	Option	Unit measurements	Indicator value
1	Lower prices	%	21,0
2	Improve service	%	27,0
3	Expand the list of services	%	11,0
4	Develop winter recreation	%	11,0
5	Develop infrastructure	%	6,0
6	Upgrade facilities	%	24,0

*Note: Compiled by author*

The answers of the respondents indicate that the prices for the services provided by TNRS do not correspond to the quality and level of services.

As studying the problems of national parks, it seems important to establish the opinion of the population towards the problem of ecology, the respondents were asked the question “What is the condition of ecology and nature conservation in Katon-Karagay?”. The answers of the respondents about the state and ongoing economic activities in the TNRS regarding the conservation of nature demonstrate the concern of the population: 43.0 % of respondents consider — “There are problems, but insignificant”, 27.0 % — “Problems are significant”, 9.0 % — “It is difficult to answer” are those people who are convinced that they are right, or have not seen other positive examples and find it difficult to foresee the future. Only 21.0 % of respondents believe that “Everything is fine”.

To assess the attractiveness and development problems of TNRS, vacationers who came to rest were asked a number of questions. The geography of the respondents' residence is different: the Republic of Kazakhstan (Nur-Sultan, Almaty, Kostanay, Pavlodar, Semey, Ust-Kamenogorsk, Ekibastuz, Karaganda, etc.), the Russian Federation, foreign countries (Germany, France, USA, China, etc.)

The respondents were asked the question “Why do you like the vacation in Katon-Karagay?”. The respondents' answers give us an idea of the attractive aspects of recreation in the studied TNRS: natural conditions — 87.0 %; prices correspond to the quality of services — 0 %; availability of services — 5.0 %; good service — 4.0 %; it is difficult to answer — 4.0 %.

In studies of this kind, it was important to identify the frequency of one's rest in the TNRS data in order to determine the probable recreational load in the future and take measures to improve the conditions of rest. The frequency of visits to the TNRS is reflected in the answers of the respondents to the question “How often have you rested in Katon-Karagay?”. The respondents' answers give us an idea of the attractiveness of the Katon-Karagay TNRS for recreation. Most of the respondents came for the second time (37.0 %), more than twice (44.0 %).

Along with the determination of the frequency of visits, information on the length of stay in the TNRS on vacation is important. An idea of the duration of the rest is given by the respondents' answers to the question “What is the duration of your rest in Katon-Karagay?”. The distribution of respondents to this question is characterized by the data: up to three days — 55.0 %; from three to seven days — 32.0 %; from seven days or more — 9.0 %; others (several visits per year with different duration of rest) — 4.0 %. A short duration of stay is typical for holidaymakers from settlements located within a radius of 200 kilometers, and many come several times over the summer.

To examine the opinions of vacationers about improving recreation in TNRS, they were asked to answer the question “What kind of activities need to be done to improve recreation in NRS?” (Table 6).

Table 6. What kind of activities need to be done to improve recreation in NRS?

No.	Option	Unit measurements	Indicator value
1	Lower prices	%	23,0
2	Improve service	%	59,0
3	Expand the list of services	%	9,0
4	Develop winter recreation	%	9,0
5	Develop infrastructure	%	19,0
6	Upgrade facilities	%	32,0

*Note: Compiled by author*

According to vacationers, in order to improve recreation, it is necessary to: improve service (59.0 %), modernize facilities (32.0 %), develop infrastructure (19.0 %), develop winter recreation (9.0 %), expand the list of services (9, 0 %) and lower prices for vacations.

When studying the problems of national parks, it seems important to establish the opinion of vacationers to the problem of ecology, the respondents were asked the question “What is the condition of ecology and nature conservation in Katon-Karagay?”. Almost a third of vacationers (32.0 %) believe that there are no problems in the environment in the surveyed TNRS, 59.0 % of vacationers see minor problems (the presence of garbage in some places, unkempt areas for recreation and tourist routes) and 9.0 % — the problems are significant.

Satisfaction with their recreation in TNRS was expressed by 64.0 % of the respondents and 6.0 % of the respondents expressed dissatisfaction with the rest. The respondents who were dissatisfied with the recreation were asked to determine the reasons (Table 7).

Table 7. What are the negative aspects of recreation in NRS?

No.	Option	Unit measurements	Indicator value
1	Bad weather	%	6,0
2	Bad service	%	19,0
3	Outdated interior and equipment	%	12,0
4	Leisure activities are not organized	%	19,0
5	Nutrition is not satisfied	%	6,0
6	Prices do not match the service	%	25,0
7	Other	%	13,0

*Note: Compiled by author*

Attention is drawn to the discrepancy between prices and quality of provided services, low level of service and disorganization of leisure activities.

The opinion of vacationers and the population about what should have to be done in the studied TNRS can be determined based on the answers to the question "What is needed to change for the development of the Katon-Karagay TNRS?" (Table 8).

Table 8. What is needed to change for the development of the Katon-Karagai TNRS?

No.	Option	Unit measurements	Vacationers	Population
1	Economic (investments, subsidies, promotion of services)	%	28,0	43,0
2	Social (healthcare, education, law enforcement)	%	9,0	6,0
3	Environmental (security, additional fees from tourists for nature protection, expertise, new technologies)	%	37,0	43,0
4	It is difficult to answer	%	28,0	8,0

*Note: Compiled by author*

Vacationers, assessing the state of recreation areas in TNRS and comparing the quality of services and the equipment of other recreation areas (Almaty, Borovoe, foreign objects), consider it necessary to resolve economic, environmental and social issues.

Despite the restraint of the population's responses to assessing the development of TNRS, the respondents in their answers to this question note the need to address economic (43.0 %) and environmental (43.0 %) issues that determine the search for sources of investment for development and measures to preserve the natural environment.

We were interested in the opinion of vacationers and population about how it can improve the situation in the studied TNRS (Table 9).

Table 9. What kind of activities are needed for the development of the Katon-Karagay resort area?

No.	Option	Unit measurements	Vacationers	Population
1	A comprehensive government business development program is needed	%	5,0	11,0
2	A comprehensive state program for business development + ecology is needed	%	5,0	16,0
3	A comprehensive state program for business development + ecology + solution of social issues is needed	%	23,0	21,0
4	A comprehensive state program for business development + ecology + solution of social issues + infrastructure development is needed	%	14,0	27,0
5	A program isn't needed	%	25,0	6,0
6	Other	%	23,0	19,0
7	It is difficult to answer	%	5,0	

*Note: Compiled by author*

Vacationers and the population support the need to develop a Comprehensive State Program on TNRS, which can ensure the preservation of the natural environment and the comprehensive, effective development and development of unique natural recreational systems, the development of populated areas located on their territory.

To improve the situation in the resort areas of TNRS, the overwhelming majority of respondents note the need to develop a Comprehensive State Program for the Development of TNRS, covering all aspects of its functioning.

### **Conclusions**

This research can be used by state agencies in programs for the development of the relevant TNRS, determining the directions and the program for the development of the tourism cluster of the Republic of Kazakhstan. It is a feedback on the state of development of natural parks, which is necessary as an important channel for obtaining information from the population and users of services.

It has been established that the population and vacationers, as the strengths of this territorial natural recreational system, note the uniqueness of the natural environment of the Katon-Karagay natural park and the flow of vacationers. The population and vacationers are unanimous in identifying measures to improve these natural areas so that recreation and tourism are closer to international standards.

The respondents note the need to improve the level and quality of the arrangement, ensure the preservation of the natural environment, improve service, modernize existing recreation centers, and organize winter recreation.

Vacationers and the population support the need to develop a Comprehensive State Program on Territorial Natural Recreational Systems, which can ensure the preservation of the natural environment and comprehensive, effective development.

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**Ж.К. Алтайбаева, Н.Э. Пфейфер, В.П. Шеломенцева, Ш.Ш. Хамзина**

### **Қазақстанның Солтүстік-Шығыс аумақтық табиғи рекреациялық жүйелерінің проблемалары және тартымдылығын тұрғындардың бағалауы**

#### **Аңдатпа**

**Мақсаты:** Халықтың және тұтынушылардың аумақтық табиғи рекреациялық жүйелердің қызметтеріне тартымдылық пен оларды дамыту проблемаларына бағалау жүргізу, оларды дамыту және табиғи ортаны сақтау жөнінде ұсыныстарды тұжырымдау.

**Әдістері:** Зерттеу тақырыбы бойынша ғылыми әдебиеттерге шолу, таңдамалы зерттеу негізінде қажетті ақпаратты алуға арналған әлеуметтік әдістер пайдаланылды. Мұндай зерттеулер бұрын зерттелген объектілер бойынша жүргізілмеген.

**Нәтижелері:** Әлеуметтік сауалнама нәтижесінде халықтың, олардың өміріне аумақтық табиғи рекреациялық жүйенің әсеріне қатынасы анықталды, инвестициялардың табиғи ортаны сақтауға әсері, халықтың осы жүйелердің даму перспективалары туралы хабардар болуы және оларды жақсартудың ықтимал нұсқалары, халық түсінігінің күшті жақтары анықталды. Тұрғындар мен демалушылардың аумақтық табиғи рекреациялық жүйелерде шешілуі қажет проблемалардың маңыздылығы туралы пікір сарапталды және осы табиғи аймақтарда шешуге болатын шаралар анықталды.

**Қорытындылар:** Тұрғындар мен демалушылар осы аумақтық табиғи рекреациялық жүйелердің мықты жақтары ретінде Катонқарағай табиғи паркінің табиғи ортасының бірегейлігін және демалушылар ағынын атап өтеді. Тұрғындар мен демалушылар демалыс пен туризмнің халықаралық стандарттарға жақын болуы үшін осы табиғи аймақтарды жақсарту шараларын жүргізуді бірауыздан келіседі. Демалушылар мен халық аумақтық табиғи рекреациялық жүйелер бойынша кешенді мемлекеттік бағдарламаны әзірлеу қажеттілігін қолдайды, бұл табиғи ортаның сақталуын және кешенді, тиімді игерілуін қамтамасыз ете алады.

**Кілт сөздер:** аумақтық табиғи рекреациялық жүйе, туризм, табиғи орта, тартымдылық факторлары, әлеуметтік сауалнама, дамудың кешенді бағдарламасы, экология, халық, демалушылар.

**Ж.К. Алтайбаева, Н.Э. Пфейфер, В.П. Шеломенцева, Ш.Ш. Хамзина**

### **Оценка населением привлекательности и проблем территориальных природных рекреационных систем Северо-Восточного Казахстана**

#### **Аннотация**

**Цель:** Произвести оценку населением и потребителями услуг территориальных природных рекреационных систем привлекательности и проблем их развития, сформулировать предложения по их развитию и сохранению природной среды.

**Методы:** Обзор научной литературы по теме исследования, социологические методы для получения необходимой информации на основе выборочного исследования. Такого рода исследования ранее не проводились по исследуемым объектам.

**Результаты:** В результате социологического опроса выявлено отношение населения к влиянию на их жизнь территориальной природной рекреационной системы, определен эффект инвестиций на сохранение природной среды, изучена информированность населения о перспективах развития этих систем, выявлены возможные варианты их улучшения, а также сильные стороны в представлении населения. При этом учтены мнения населения и отдыхающих о степени важности проблем, которые имеют место в территориальных природных рекреационных системах. Кроме того, определены меры, которые целесообразно предпринять в этих природных зонах.

**Выводы:** Установлено, что население и отдыхающие в качестве сильных сторон этих территориальных природных рекреационных системах отмечают уникальность природной среды Катон-Карагайского природно-парка и поток отдыхающих. Население и отдыхающие единодушны в определении мер по улучшению этих

природных зон, чтобы отдых и туризм в большей мере были близки к международным стандартам. Отдыхающие и местное население поддерживают необходимость разработки Комплексной государственной программы по территориальным природным рекреационным системам, что может обеспечить сохранение природной среды и ее комплексное эффективное освоение.

**Ключевые слова:** территориальная природная рекреационная система, туризм, природная среда, факторы привлекательности, социологический опрос, Комплексная программа развития, экология, население, отдыхающие.

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