

ŠKOCJANSKI ZATOK NATURE RESERVE AS OPPORTUNITY FOR DEVELOPMENT OF ECOLOGICAL TOURISM

UDC 338.48:711.2:504](497.4)

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Received 23 February 2011
Revised 4 May 2011
5 September 2011

Abstract

Protected nature reserves represent one of the measures to preserve natural environment. In Slovenia 12.57 % of the total area is environmentally protected. One of those areas is the Škocjanski zatok Nature Reserve in the immediate vicinity of Koper/Capodistria. It is the largest brackish wetland in Slovenia with a unique environment for thriving flora and fauna. The manager of the nature reserve, which is open to the public, is DOPPS – BirdLife Slovenia that manages the nature reserve and organises guided tours for visitors. The reserve is due to its location and a great variety of specific plant and animal species an ideal opportunity for a development of environmentally and ecologically oriented tourism activity. The environmental planning has to be therefore strictly in line with nature protection measures as only sustainable development of the nature reserve can enable its successful development in the sense of ecological tourism forms.

With the help of the SWOT analysis this paper tries to establish the potentials of the development for ecological forms of tourism in the nature reserve, and attempts to give suggestions for some suitable forms of interpretation. It also states a critical reflection on the prospective reserve management and provides some suggestions on visiting issues and sustainable development of the area.

Keywords Škocjanski zatok Nature Reserve, Interpretation, Ecological tourism, SWOT analysis