

ECOTOURISM ACTIVITIES IN TURKEY; SAMPLE OF GOKSU VALLEY

¹ABDURRAHMAN DINC, ²ABDULLAH KARAMAN, ³KURSAD SAYIN

Necmettin Erbakan University, Tourism Faculty, Selcuk University Tourism Faculty, Selcuk University Silifke – Taşucu Vocational School

Email: a.dinc@konya.edu.tr, akaraman@selcuk.edu.tr, kursadsyn@selcuk.edu.tr

Abstract: Tourism which is the most rapidly developing sector has also brought new searches. As a consequence ecotourism activities become important. Ecotourism is a tourism activity which is harmonize the natural environment with tourism activities, has responsibility for at least negative effects on the environment and not disrupting the social structure. Ecotourism has benefited the formation of many types of tourism as a policy. Ecotourism has a special interest in Turkey's 2023 tourism vision. Strategic plannings have been made for the development of it and ecotourism areas have been identified. One of these fields is the area where the Taurus Mountains.

Göksu which is the third biggest river falling into Mediterranean located on Mediterreanean Coast of Adana part in the Eastern Mediterranean Basin. Göksu is important in terms of the separation of the Taurus Mountains as Western and Central Taurus Mountains. It provide it's sources from Geyik Mountains placed in Taurus Mountains and many karst sources in Taşeli Plateau. Göksu River generally fed by snow melt and rain waters,) flows in the narrow and deep (notch and throat) valleys. Göksu River consits of by combining the two main branches and many small arms.

It prepared a suitable place for doing ecotourism activities in the field from summit of Taurus to sea level. This field is poised to become a major ecotourism regions if required infrastructure, advertising and promotional be done where may do many ecotourism activities as trekking, rafting, bird watching, camping caravan and wild life. In this study the region will be evaluated all aspects and ecotourism potential of it.

Keywords: Turkey, Ecotourism, Vision, Göksu Valley

I. INTRODUCTION

In recent years ecotourism has advanced in the rapidly developing tourism sector as an alternative of sea-sand-sun tourism. There are many different definitions of ecotourism and the most accepted among them is The International Ecotourism Society's (IET) definition. According to this definition: it is environmentally sensitive travel to natural areas in order to protection of environment and improving the well-being of local people. WWF's definition: Ecotourism is the type of tourism that has least impact on the natural environment around the wilderness and in the meantime provides economic benefits to local communities (Yücel,2002).Also ecotourism activities may be defined as activities which has ability of having direct impact on the life of participants with education and developing programs by themselves. Eco-tourists have different perceptions and beliefs about their experience. They are different from those who walk or picnic in nature by chance at weekends (Fiona Burton, 1998: 757).

Ecotourism demand has begun to improve since the late 1980s, not only with the growing trend in tourism demand has also begun to attract attention as the most compelling areas in the tourism industry. During this period, some changes have ocured from mass tourism to a direction where individually experience can be lived and developed. Since 1990, a significant demand intended natural parks has attracted attention and these areas are the major attraction of ecotourism (Havva J. Meriç 1998). So ecotourism trend,

promoting visits to natural areas and results of increased personal awareness on environmental issues has led to sit in the center of tourism.

Overview to Ecotourism

The concept of ecotourism has been used frequently in recent years with gaining importance of tourism-environment relations and discussing sustainability. Ecotourism is more comprehensive issue than movement of nature lovers and tourists who care for the environment. In fact this event is totality of environmental, economic and social relations.

In addition to rapid economic, political, technological developments and changes in the world, important changes in the tourism consumption forms are observed in recent years. Luxury tourism activity participation decreases, there is a tendency towards leaving from the usual tourist destinations. Thus, both changes in consumption habits and in the tourist profile caused using new concepts as 'eco-tourism' which include natural, cultural, environmental protection (Avcıkurt, 2003; Benzer, 2006). According to the International Nature Conservation Union's definition of ecotourism is a visit and travel to intact natural areas by understanding nature and cultural resources and supporting protections of them, having low visitor impact and providing socio-economic benefits to local communities.

Important Ecotourism Activities

Ministry of Tourism evaluates ecotourism under various headings such as plateau tourism, ornithology (bird watching) tourism, photo safaris, river sports (canoe-rafting), farm tourism, botanical (plant study)

tourism, cycling tours, trekking with horses, camping-caravan tourism, cave tourism, mountain tourism and nature hiking (trekking). United Nations Sustainable Development Commission has declared 2002 the International Ecotourism year and has commissioned The World Tourism Organization on this subject. Also, 2002 has been declared as International Mountains Year with taken a decision by The United Nations in 1998.

Ecotourism components of World Tourism Organization:

- ❖ Contributing to the conservation of biological diversity,
- ❖ Protection the welfare of the local people, ensuring awareness of tourists and the local people,
- ❖ Serviced to small groups of tourists by small-scale businesses,
- ❖ Providing responsible act of tourists and local people about tourism industry,
- ❖ The minimal consumption of nonrenewable resources,
- ❖ Caring about the participation to tourism management at the local level,
- ❖ Observance of development job opportunities and ownership in favor of local residents.

The World Conservation Monitoring Centre (WCMC), World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF-International), and many experts identified more than 100 forest areas majority of them within the ecological regions in and around Europe and in urgent need of protection in 1999. These areas are designated under the WWF's Gift Project have been selected considering specific features such as European unique forest types and areal size. These areas called "Hotspots of Forests in Europe" 9 of them are Turkey. World Wildlife Foundation and the National Organization of Turkey started to work in cooperation with relevant organizations and institutions to protect effectively these areas: Küre Mountains-Kastamonu, Amanos Mountains-Hatay, Babadağ-Fethiye, Datça Peninsula and Bozburun, Fırtına Valley-Rize, İstanbul Forests, Karçal Mountains -Artvin, Yenice Forests-Karabük and İbradi Forests-Antalya.

Ecotourism in Turkey

Around 12,000 seedy and seedless plant species are grown in our country and 3,000 of them are endemic. In all European countries, a total of 2,500 endemic plant species are grown.

561 species all over the world have been reported living at one point in Turkey and coming to the point of extinction there. Factors that allow for ecotourism in Turkey: located on bird migration routes, cultural richness, abundance of historical monuments,

geological and geomorphological wealth, ranging from 0-5000 m altitude difference.

Tourism Centers In The Study Area

Göksu river valley begins from Taurus Mountains and ends at seaside. Two different tourism development fields have been recognized by the tourism ministry.

Beginning and ending at seaside the beach of the Taurus mountains Göksu river valley constitute our field of in two main studies in this field This tourist centers:

1. Silifke- Taşucu - Bogsak Tourism Center

It was declared as tourism center in 19.10.2006 and covers 1159 hectares with 0-250 meters high. It has 15100 meters coastal length. The distance to the city center is 96 km and 16 km from the district center. It is 5 km to Taşucu by sea and 186 km away to Adana airport. Reconstruction plan studies are ongoing.

2. Silifke - Kargıcak Tourism Center

It was declared as tourism center in 19.09.1989 and covers 72 hectares with 0-155 meters high. It has 2700 meters coastal length. The distance to the city center is 120 km and 35 km from the district center. It is 18 km to Taşucu by sea and 205 km away to Adana airport.

II. STUDY AREA GÖKSU RIVER VALLEY

Göksu which is the third biggest river falling into Mediterranean located on Mediterranean Coast of Adana part in the Eastern Mediterranean Basin. Göksu is important in terms of the separation of the Taurus Mountains as Western and Central Taurus Mountains. It provide its sources from Geyik Mountains placed in Taurus Mountains and many karst sources in Taşeli Plateau. Göksu River generally fed by snow melt and rain waters,) flows in the narrow and deep (notch and throat) valleys. River basin has a carstic structure where found formations of mainly Paleozoic limestone and the whole geological era. River an important source of life for town and the villages where it flows through. Göksu valley is also an important gateway between the Mediterranean and Central Anatolia (Belen passage). Two main branches called. Gökçay (Let Göksu) and Gökdere or Ermenek Stream (Ermenek Göksu) provides the formation of the Göksu river. Göksu extend in northwest - southeast direction and empties its waters to Mediterranean forming meanders over the delta near Silifke. Göksu Delta covers two large lagoons that Akgöl and Paradeniz is protected by the Ministry of Environment and Forests.

Göksu river regime is irregular because of feeding by rain and snow water. Likewise flow (flow rate) varies. While a lower current value is seen in the arid summer months, rising current value since the autumn months. In April, the beginning of the snow melt water reaches the highest level. With seasonal

difference average flow rate is 118-130 m³ / sec. This creates a favorable flow characteristics and regime ground for amateur rafters in Göksu.

Mediterranean climate is seen in South of Göksu River Basin, and continental climate features in the northern high cut, this situation also affects plant and animal species. Plant species in the Mediterranean basin is dominated by Iranian-Turan.

There are many finished or ongoing construction dams and hydroelectric power plant on the rivers. The most important of these Gezende Dam, Ermenek Dam and Bağbaşı Dam. Göksu river has a special importance for the Konya Plain. It is the most important actor of the Blue Tunnel project in KOP. When ongoing projects finished, a portion of the water brought from Goksu river used as drinking and utilizing will also be used in the Konya Plain Irrigation

III. ECOTOURISM ACTIVITIES IN GÖKSU RIVER VALLEY

1. Historical and Cultural Tourism: The study area has an old history and is rich in cultural tourism. The most important historical and cultural areas are Uzuncaburç which was built between Lemas watercourse and Göksu river, Adamkayalar, Olba ancient city, Narlıkuyu Three Graces mosaic, Çolakkız Hittite reliefs, Işıkkale, Kanlıdivane.

2. Trekking: Trekking activities can be made through the valley in Goksu Valley and Mut district. Most preferred hiking trails; Hisar, Gedikdağ, Şahanlık and high part of the Taurus mountains. In recent years especially the walking starts from Kumneighborhood in the delta, continues along AkgölParadeniz and then ends where Göksu flows into sea. Other hiking trails are: walkings along Göksu valley from Kumneighborhood to İncecum, between İmambekirli village and Kara village, Ortaören, Pamuklu and Kargıcak route, from Ekşilerbridge to BükDeğirmen village.

3. Climbing: Taurus Mountains located in Alp-Himalayan mountain system extends generally from west to east. Climbing is done in this field, which is Turkey's largest mountain range. This mountainous area is the source of Göksu river. There are suitable areas for climbing especially in the era of the Göksu river.

4. Camping and Caravan Tourism: Our country has many natural areas for camp and caravan tourism. It offers great opportunities for people who want to spend time alone with nature away from eyes. Ideal places are: Taşeli Plateau, Göksu Valley, Akçakıl, Boğsakİncecum, Yeşilovacık, Ermenek Bazaar.

5. Fishing (Angling): In our country fishing is done on the almost every coast of sea, lake or river. Fishing also is done along the Göksu river and in the Tasucu, Silifke and Susanoğlu region.

6. Rafting: Göksu river regime in the Mediterranean climate zone is irregular which is fed by rain and snowmelt. In April, with the start of the snow melt water reaches the highest level. This flow regime and characteristics, creates a favorable ground for amateur rafters in Göksu. Rafting is done usually in 20 km area Göksu. Most preferred route starts from Hocalı village in Mut in trail a 10 km and ends near Haydar village or the Kargıcak village.

7. Tableland Tourism: Transhumance in Turkey is done for two main purposes as a economic activity and as recreational purposes. Transhumance activities is mostly done in this study area in Turkey. Mostly known areas are Gökbelen, Mara, Uzuncaburç, Kirobası, Balandızplateaus.

8. Mountain Bike and Motorcycle: Areas between Ekşiler village and sand quarries also Göksuregülatör and Söğütlü are usually used for this activities.

9. Wildlife Monitoring (Fauna watching) Sports: Wildlife monitoring is one of the fastest growing types of tourism in recent years has made significantly higher parts of Taurus. Examples places for fauna watching are Hisar and Gedik mountains. This region is also breeding ground for Mediterranean monk seals, green sea turtle(cheloniamydas) and caretta caretta.

10. Nature Photography: Regions are admired for their natural beauty. Certain groups especially at weekends and in the summer make amateur photography in the field. This activity can be done in Göksu delta in Dalyan region and in Taurus.

11. Birdwatching: Bird watching is newly developing in our country. Turkey is Europe's richest country in terms of breeding birds where there are 466 different bird species. There are a lot of bird species in study area and it is more important that purple gallinule observed only Göksu delta. Marbled teal, heronshaw, flamingos, pelicans, ruddy shelduck are other species may seen in region.

12. Scuba Diving: Our country is surrounded by sea on three sides, has risen position in the underwater diving in recent years. Scuba diving can be made with professional tourist guides in Boğsak, Tisan, between Tisan and Dana island in this area.

13. Botanical Tourism: Mediterranean climate is seen in the south of the theGöksu River Basin and continental climate in the northern part of it. This case also affects plant and animal species. In the basin, the Mediterranean and Iranian-Turan plant species are dominant. So it is possible to see many plant species in the region. Almost all groups of plant flora of the Mediterranean basin is seen in the field. Some of them are laurel, oleander, heather.

14. Cave Tourism: It is known that there are more than forty thousand caves which have different sizes and features in our country. Most of the cave is in the Mediterranean Region, which has a karstic terrain. Caves in Göksu valley are:

Aydıncık Aynalıgöl cave, Narlıkuyu cave, Asthma (dilek) cave, Heaven and Hell hole, Yerköprü cave, Aşağıdünya sink-hole.

15. Yacht Tourism: Yacht tours are organized in the region where the river meets the sea near Goksu basin. Especially daily and weekly tours are done in Tasucu, Sisa, Susanoğlu.

16. Hunting Tourism: The presence of Taurus mountains makes the region rich in terms of animal diversity. The area between Taurus and Hisar mountain is the habitat of the wild goats. So an important opportunities appear for hunting tourism.

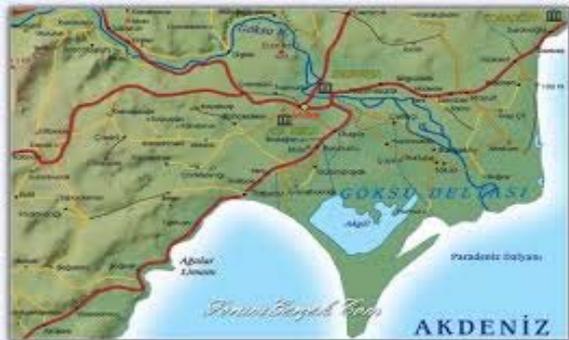
17. Festival Tourism: Every year between May 20-26 festival is held as Silifke cultural week. Along Göksu valley various sporting activities are done and famous singers are singing in the concert in this region every year.

18. Crafts and Local Dishes: If in the region has been made local dishes and crafts displayed enough, these activities will contribute to the promotion of the region values and unique as well as the local people would have achieved financial gain. Sıkma, Silifkebatırık, Silifkeyoğurt are the some examples of local dishes. Famous crafts are wooden spoon, haircloth. Nomadic culture is also another value for the region.

19. Other Activities: There are lots of activities may be done in region as Off-Road, Jeep Safari, Photo Safari, Agro Tourism, Paragliding and Riding.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Göksu valley has significant values in terms of ecotourism. Ecotourism potential is high with wealth of flora and fauna in the mountainous areas and plateaus. However, the ecotourism potential of the area is not considered enough. It requires the development of ecotourism activities in the area. Thus, the whole area will be able to provide a balanced use of resources. So that an important activity area will be created for the ecotourist who want to learn something about culture and experiences something in nature. Göksu valley covers an area which has both mountainous and flat terrain. Especially with its mountainous terrain it has a significant potential for mountaineering, hiking (trekking), transhumance, cave tourism and sport tourism.



REFERENCE

- Akpınar, E, Bulut, Y., Ülkemizde alternatif turizm bir dalı olan ekoturizm çeşitlerinin bölgelere göre dağılımı ve uygulama alanları, III. Ulusal Karadeniz Ormancılık Kongresi, 20-22 Mayıs 2010, Cilt: IV Sayfa: 1575-1594*
- Buldur. A.d., Pınar, A., Başaran, A., 05-07 Mart 2004 Tarihli Göksu Nehri Taşkını ve Silifke'ye*

Etkisi,
SelcukUniversitySocialSciencesInstituteJournal .
2007, Vol. 17, p139-160. 22p.

Demirtaş, D., *Türkiye’de sürdürülebilirlik turizm kapsamında su altı dalış turizmi ve rafting turizmi, 13.Ulusal TurizmKongresiBildiriKitabı, s.1081-1104, Antalya, 2012*

Dinç, A., *Göksu Nehri maddesi; Konya Ansiklopedisi, 3.cilt, Kültür Yay. No:178, s.9-10, Konya, 2012.*

Rahemtulla, Y.G. ve A.M. Wellstead,
2001:*Ecotourism: UnderstandingCompetingExpertandAcademicDefinitions*. Infor. Report Nor-X-380 Canada
www.goksudogaokulu.com
www.ntvmsnbc.com
http://www.edebiyadvesanatakademisi.com/forummesaj/361-g%C3%B6ksu_vadisi.html
<http://goksudeltasi.com>
<http://plajlar.net/goksu-deltasi-kus-cenneti.html>
http://silifke.gov.tr/silifke/goksu_deltasi.html

★★★