

**ORGANIZED SESSION AT THE 9TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON
MONITORING AND MANAGEMENT OF VISITORS IN RECREATIONAL AND
PROTECTED AREAS**

***Observation, monitoring and management of recreational activities in marine
protected areas***



The aesthetic value of preserved marine and coastal environment, with the increased social demand of “nature”, contribute to the development of recreational activities in marine protected areas (MPAs). Thus, MPAs’ managers face paradoxical situation where they must consider both conservation needs and growing attractiveness of MPAs. The aim of this session is to foster reflections about how to improve our knowledge on human dimensions in order to support decision making processes related to the management of recreational activities in MPAs. Social science research has a great potential to contribute to the knowledge base necessary for improving conservation.

Two key questions will be addressed in this context:

(i) What human dimensions must be considered according to the main management issues? It is necessary to highlight needs (and gaps) of knowledge about recreational activities: recreational practices, visitor flows, user’s profiles, perceptions, attitudes and values, understanding of conflicting situations, excluded or invisible user groups in the governance process, economic valuation of recreational activities...

(ii) How to observe and monitor these human dimensions, and with which means? In particular, what are the methodological innovations (ICT, ...) and difficulties encountered in studying open (maritime and coastal) areas and unframed activities? How to transfer these scientific observation systems to MPAs managers (cost-effectiveness, ...)? How to consider the ethical dimensions of user observation?

This will generate valuable insights for the managers and researchers in MPAs.

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