

# Nature-Based Tourism in National and Natural Parks in Europe: A Systematic Review

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**Abstract:** Considered among the fastest-growing industries in the world, tourism brings immense benefits but also creates certain challenges. Conservation of natural resources is a stringent necessity, without which the extraordinary ecosystems' attributes that create the premises for nature-based tourism would reduce, alter, and subsequently disappear. The aim of the present review is twofold: gaining a general understanding of what nature-based tourism is and providing a systematic literature review of articles on nature-based tourism in European national and natural parks, with emphasis on their applicability. The articles included in the present review were selected based on the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) statement. The review accounts for research conducted between 2000 and 2021 and is divided into two sections: articles aimed at understanding tourists' behaviour and articles that are focused on other stakeholders or have the local communities in the foreground. While many studies are aimed at understanding tourists' behaviour as a means of improving parks' management, participatory strategies including local communities are often indicated as beneficial. The results of this paper can facilitate future research in the field and provide valuable knowledge to policymakers and any interested parties.

**Keywords:** protected area; tourism; local communities; sustainable development



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## 1. Introduction

The challenges that the world is facing nowadays are tremendous, and humanity must continuously find new ways to adapt and improve its practices and way of life as the only means to survive and thrive as a species. Climate change is rapidly taking a toll on nature, biodiversity, and ultimately society. Natural disasters that gravely endanger communities, often coming as an effect of disrupting the natural balance of ecosystems; growing food demand along with fast urbanisation; the need for water and air quality; and addressing and overcoming socio-economic inequality are only a few of the main themes of concern that Europe must face, according to the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) [1].

To counteract some of the destructive effects that modern society's development creates, organisations, institutions, and people all over the world collaborate with the goal of creating a synergy that would decrease the pressure of some of our greatest challenges. The environmental, social, and economic pillars of sustainable development under focus through various proposed measures concern not only the environment and biodiversity but also the economic and social development of communities, as the fragile balance between natural and anthropic dimensions must be carefully maintained [2,3].

Among the measures designed to safeguard the natural ecosystems and ensure a balanced utilisation of resources to the benefit of present and future generations, creating protected areas (PAs) is vital. While the critical need for such areas is conspicuous, they fulfil two main purposes concerning multiple actors in different sectors: conserving biodiversity and ensuring a place for recreational activities.

With the increasing level of urbanisation and the progressively faster and more alert way of living, an increasing number of people are trying to find comfort in unspoiled and raw nature in the search for tranquillity and the pursuit of happiness, well-being, and exciting or unique experiences. Thus, naturally, the demand for recreational opportunities in unaltered environments is increasing exponentially [4]. And what better setting for such a quest than the protected areas that contain, among other things, the precise subject of interest?

Tourism is one of the fastest-growing industries [5–7], with a business volume that today is easily comparable with the oil exports, agri-food, or even automotive industries, according to the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO). Hence, with such growth comes the need for a deeper understanding of one of the leading socio-economic phenomena of the 21st century.

Understanding how nature-based tourism can be placed in connection with other forms of tourism and how it is situated relative to the industry in general helps in identifying the right approach and strategies for the sustainable development of this activity.

As illustrated by Cater et al. [8] and Metin [9] in their works, one potential approach for positioning nature-based tourism in comparison with some of its related forms of tourism is to understand how it overlaps with already established concepts, such as ecotourism, wild-life tourism, and sustainable tourism, all placed under the same umbrella—using natural areas as the main stage for touristic activities.

With the global strive for action aimed at sustainable development and the 17 Goals [10] adopted by all United Nations Member States as a shared canvas model, a great opportunity and necessity arise for studying and shaping new practices focused on nature-based tourism.

The aim of the present review is twofold: gaining a general understanding of what nature-based tourism is and providing a systematic literature review of articles on nature-based tourism in European national and natural parks, with emphasis on their applicability. The synthesis of the existing state of knowledge was performed in two main categories: (1) articles aimed at understanding tourists' behaviour; and (2) articles that are focused on other stakeholders or have the local communities in the foreground.

The existing gap in the specialised literature is vast, with currently no similar review, and the need for a thorough recognition of the main stakeholders involved determined the current direction of study. This approach provides a first insight into the studied subject and helps in understanding how, through research, valuable knowledge can be revealed and further used by policymakers, service providers, local communities, and future specialists in the studied field.

## **2. Nature-Based Tourism: Concept and Forms**

### *2.1. The Concept of Nature-Based Tourism*

Nature-based tourism could be generally seen as touristic activities that take place in a natural environment. While the previous statement remains valid, some authors bring into perspective the importance of the natural setting, placing it as a key factor rather than ancillary [11]. At the same time, nature-based tourism is determined and modelled by both anthropic and natural factors such as socio-demographic attributes (of both consumers and residents), cultural values and financial aspects, biotic and abiotic elements (unique fauna, flora, often spectacular geology and hydrography of an area, etc.), infrastructure (access, utilities, and services), as well as objectives (endemic species, pristine wilderness, serene landscapes, monuments of nature, and man-made elements of touristic attraction within a natural setting).

Different actors have different perspectives and impose a specific approach regarding the concept of nature-based tourism. While tourists are interested in the benefits obtained through a nature-based experience (improved health and well-being, positive memories and social interactions, exciting experiences, social status, etc.) [9,12,13], service providers are interested in the financial benefits that can be obtained by quantifying and embodying nature elements into profitable products [14]. Therefore, it could be stated that nature oversteps the role of a setting for touristic experiences and becomes the actual product.

Although it may not seem hard to gain a general idea of what nature-based tourism could refer to, a consensus when defining this specific type of tourism has not yet been achieved. There appears to be an increasing interest in the subject in the last 15 years, with various articles focusing exclusively on nature-based tourism or analysing it as part of broader tourism studies. While understanding and defining the concept is one objective, correlation with general sustainable development is often being made in the search for better and more efficient solutions for managing and increasing the attractiveness of protected areas and communities residing within them.

Several review articles [9,13,15,16] investigate the concept of nature-based tourism, trying to gain a deeper understanding and shed some light on the theoretical aspects that surround this form of tourism (existing definitions, epistemology, and how to measure and analyse it), but the research gap is yet to be diminished. The scientific literature is rather focused on trying to identify, understand, and improve various concrete issues, often through specific study cases. Therefore, the concept of nature-based tourism is not always the focus. This generates a paucity of publications in the research literature that aim to create the premises for a common definition that would be generally and officially accepted.

Trying to define nature-based tourism has implications not only for the research environment but also for society at large. Finding accurate and reliable ways to measure demand (e.g., perception, motivations, preferences, attitudes, behaviour, and expenditure) and supply (e.g., offers, natural resource valuation, generated income, and the labour market) can enable scholars in their studies. Where locals, different stakeholders, and suppliers need to cooperate to meet different needs and goals (biodiversity and conservation, preserving cultural heritage, sustainable development, improving the living standard of communities, achieving economic growth, and financial gains for both private and public institutions involved), a commonly accepted definition of nature-based tourism can help in achieving the best results.

Although the UNWTO has set a defining frame for what a visitor is—a person travelling “outside his/her usual environment, for less than a year, for any main purpose [...] other than to be employed by a resident entity in the country or place visited” [17] (p. 10), whether domestic, inbound or outbound, classified as a tourist (overnight visitor), or as an excursionist (same-day visitor)—even in this situation, there can be ambiguity when it comes to what every country understands by “usual environment” of a person. Subsequently, when trying to measure aspects related to nature-based tourism specifically, equivocation raises difficulties in understanding and delimiting the concept and nature-based tourism practitioners.

While no universal definition has been formulated, the literature pushes the often-mentioned nature-based tourism as an umbrella term under which different forms of tourism can be included.

As mentioned before, nature can play different roles in tourism, and Valentine [11] points out three main levels of implication: certain types of touristic experiences are fully dependent on nature (e.g., observing wildlife in the wilderness, such as bird-watching), some activities are only enhanced by the natural setting (e.g., camping), while others can be achieved with similar levels of satisfaction even in the absence of nature (e.g., satisfying the need to cool off by taking a swim). After identifying multiple definitions in the existing literature, Valentine [11] (p. 108) proposes a simplified version: “nature-based tourism is primarily concerned with the direct enjoyment of some relatively undisturbed phenomenon of nature”.

More recently, Fredman and Tyrväinen [14] state: “the nature-based tourism industry represents those activities in different sectors directed to meet the demand of nature tourists”.

In a 2019 study, nature-based tourism is defined as “visitation to a natural destination which may be the venue for recreational activity [...] where interaction with the plants and animals is incidental, or the object of the visit to gain an understanding of the natural history of the destination [...] and to interact with the plants and animals”, where “the interactions [...] can be non-consumptive or consumptive” [18].

Also in 2019, Fossgard and Fredman [19] stated a direct link between nature-based tourism and adventure tourism and chose to base their study on a minimalistic definition of nature-based tourism from a previous study, without any mentions of the type of touristic activity that is to be practised, the risks or requirements, or the environment and satisfaction expected.

In 2020, the World Bank Group [20] reported the definition given by Leung et al. [21] (p. 99) for nature-based tourism: “forms of tourism that use natural resources in a wild or undeveloped form. Nature-based tourism is travel for the purpose of enjoying undeveloped natural areas or wildlife”.

Thus, a very broad spectrum can be comprehended without imposing any clear limitations on the definition of “human activities”, “natural areas”, or “usual surroundings”.

Without a clear definition regarding the conservation of nature—a constant goal of nature tourists and stakeholders alike—transportation, accommodation, and certain activities could be excluded unless closely linked to nature, including swimming pools, golf courses, and downhill ski slopes (which may not meet the criteria of what is generally viewed as nature-based tourism [22]).

Recurring themes in many studies correlate nature-based tourism with tourists traveling into a nature area to experience the natural environment, involving a nature-related activity, and considering sustainability principles in the process.

## 2.2. Forms of Nature-Based Tourism

While found in the literature under different terms—“nature based tourism”, “nature-based tourism”, “nature tourism”, “nature travel”, “natural area tourism”, “nature-orientated tourism”, “ethical tourism”, “responsible tourism”, “environmental-friendly travel”, “environmental tourism”, “green tourism”, “sustainable tourism”, and “conservation tourism”—nature-based tourism is widely considered to coincide with multiple forms of tourism and touristic activities. This guided the approach of the present review in addressing the concept of nature-based tourism.

Among the commonly recognised forms of nature-based tourism are the following:

- Ecotourism/Eco-tourism/Ecological tourism—While one of the most popular and widely studied forms of tourism of the century, there is still a wide plethora of definitions to describe it. For example, Fredman and Tyrväinen [14] identified 42 recognised definitions mentioned in one paper alone.

According to the International Ecotourism Society, ecotourism is defined as “responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment, sustains the well-being of the local people, and involves interpretation and education” [23]. UNWTO describes it as “all nature-based forms of tourism in which the main motivation of the tourists is the observation and appreciation of nature as well as the traditional cultures prevailing in natural areas” [24].

- Wildlife tourism is a form of nature-based tourism “that includes, as a principle aim, the consumptive and non-consumptive use of wild animals in natural areas”. [25] (p. 3).
- Geotourism is an abiotic nature-based tourism that, according to some definitions, is “a form of natural area tourism that specifically focuses on geology and landscape. It promotes tourism to geosites and the conservation of geodiversity and an understanding of earth sciences through appreciation and learning”. [26].

- Rural tourism is “a type of tourism activity in which the visitor’s experience is related to a wide range of products generally linked to nature-based activities, agriculture, rural lifestyle/culture, angling and sightseeing”, according to UNWTO [27].

Other mentions include adventure tourism (hard and soft; not always taking place in the wilderness), mountain tourism, outdoor tourism/outdoor recreation, active tourism, wilderness tourism, dark sky tourism, and botanical and garden tourism.

Some usual nature-based activities are hiking, trekking, birdwatching, photography, camping, hunting, fishing, park touring, skiing, mountain biking, safaris, stargazing, etc.

When it comes to the tourism industry, efficient collaboration and understanding between all actors involved are vital to achieving positive effects and the highest results [28]. The administration, groups with scientific expertise, local communities, and companies offering touristic services and products, along with their consumers, are all equally important and should be included in the decision-making process. If one of the aforementioned groups is not acknowledged in the creation of administrative frameworks and development processes, maximising the best outcome will be impossible, leaving room for the possibility of creating negative effects along the way.

The correlation between research in the field with various scientific results and the actual implementation of tangible actions is scarce and needs to be addressed. This is where organisations such as IUCN come in cooperation with governments and local authorities in the struggle to apply practical solutions: “In Europe, the IUCN European Regional Office works closely with EU institutions, EU member states and other key stakeholders to ensure that the concept of nature-based solutions is well-known, accepted, and reflected in policies across different sectors and levels of government”. [29].

Other notable mentions of institutions, organisations, and projects that contribute to and influence directly or incidentally the nature-based tourism industry are the Federation of Nature and National Parks of Europe (EUROPARC Federation)—the largest network of European Protected Areas, the European Environment Agency, the European Greendead, the BIOTOUR research project, Horizon2020 (e.g., “Enabling Low carbon, clean access to National Parks”), Natura2000, and the European Commission’s Biodiversity Strategy for 2030.

### 3. Methodology

While narrative reviews can be very comprehensive on a given subject, the limitations and lower efficiency in presenting the findings [30] led to the use of the systematic literature review model. Systematic literature reviews have several important qualities that influenced the decision to conduct the present research accordingly, such as a clearly defined methodology, a comprehensive and structured collection of research articles, and the opportunity to pursue related studies [30]. Hence, the present review is based on the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) statement revised in 2020 [31], with its 27-item checklist and recommendations to support a thorough review.

The search for the present review was conducted from February–April 2022, using Clarivate Analytics’ online database, Web of Science™ (WoS).

Within the identification process, only articles, proceeding papers, and early access papers written in English between 2000 and 2021 with the main interest of obtaining an overview of the subject reflecting the 21st century were included.

Based on the purpose of this research and the foray into understanding the defining elements of tourism outlined above, the main labels associated with nature-based tourism were selected, and the Boolean operators AND/OR and “\*” were used to avoid unintended exclusions based on terminology.

The final syntax used for this study is the following:

“Nature-based tourism\*” OR “Nature Tourism\*” OR “Nature \* tourism” OR “Nature based activ\*” OR “recreat \* activ\*” OR “Ecotourism\*” OR “Eco-tourism\*” OR “Adventure Tourism\*” OR “Wildlife Tourism\*” OR “Wilderness Tourism\*” OR “Mountain Tourism\*” OR “Outdoor Recreation” OR “Outdoor Tourism\*” OR “Rural Tourism\*” (TOPIC) AND “National Park\*” OR “Natural Park\*” (TOPIC) NOT “Marine” (TOPIC) NOT “Coastal” (TOPIC).

During the selection process, all results were scanned and assessed against the chosen criteria to determine the best selection relevant to the present study. The screening process consisted of analysing the search results by title content, abstract, and keywords and, based on certain criteria, eliminating the articles that were not of interest for further consideration.

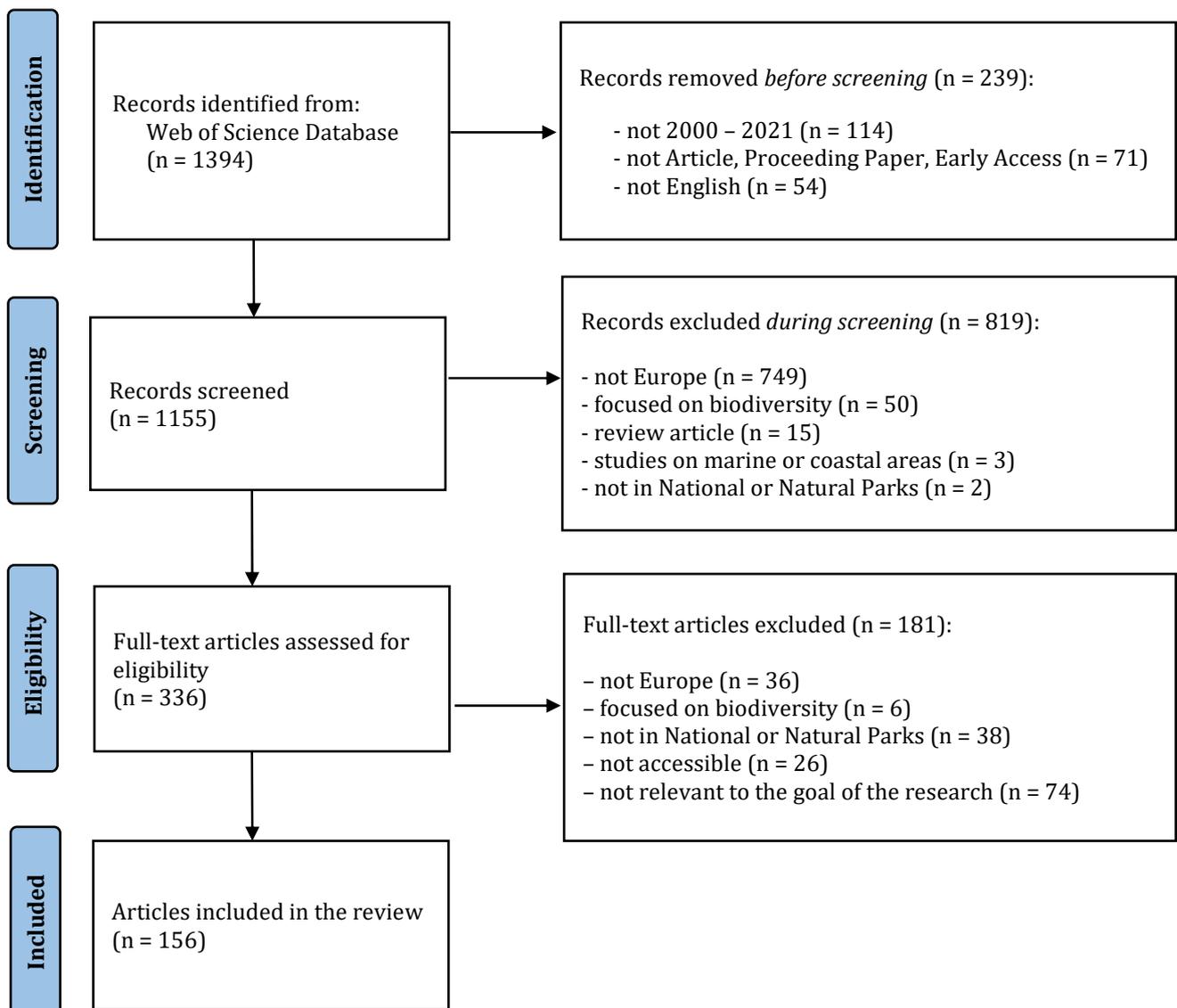
This process was followed by an in-depth assessment of eligibility based on the full text of articles that passed the screening procedure.

The inclusion criteria were as follows: (1) articles, proceeding papers, or early access papers written in English and published between 2000 and 2021; (2) research papers focused on various forms of nature-based tourism concepts, practices, effects, and perspectives; (3) case studies addressing tourists’ preferences and behaviour, locals’ perceptions and attitudes, as well as papers dealing with managers’ and policymakers’ points of view.

The exclusion criteria were as follows: (1) review papers (traditional, systematic, mixed); (2) conceptual frameworks without applied methods; (3) study cases outside Europe; (4) articles that are not mainly related to national or natural parks; (5) articles that were not relevant to the goal or the research (e.g., focused on the touristic potential of a certain area, biodiversity); (6) articles that were accepted during the screening process but were not accessible in full-text version.

The information retrieved included the author’s name, the title and year of publication, keywords, journal of publication, WoS category, citation number, country/countries of study, research methods applied (qualitative/quantitative/mixed), main objectives of the research, applicability of the results, and funding of the study. These elements help identify the most common research directions concerning European national and natural parks.

The flow process of the systematic review is depicted in Figure 1. Based on the designed syntax, 1394 results were returned before applying three conditions: only papers published between 2000 and 2021; only articles, proceeding papers, and early access papers; and only studies written in English, leaving a total of 1155 papers to undergo the next phase of the selection. Following the screening process, all remaining results were analysed by title, abstract, and keywords for testing against the exclusion criteria established at the beginning of the research. Based on the findings, 819 papers were excluded, of which 749 studies were conducted in countries outside Europe, 50 articles addressed biodiversity aspects as their main point of interest, 15 papers were review articles, 3 studies were conducted on marine or coastal areas, and 2 studies were not conducted in a national or natural park. The screening phase was passed by 336 articles, which were further assessed for eligibility by full-text analysis. In some articles, it was not clear from the abstract that the studies were not conducted in Europe or national or natural parks, and this was only discovered during the second phase. In this final stage of selection, 181 articles were excluded: 36 studies were conducted outside Europe; 6 papers were focused on biodiversity; 38 studies were not in national or natural parks; 26 articles were not accessible; and 74 were not relevant to the goal of the research. After evaluating the eligibility, a total of 156 articles were accepted and included in the present review: 66.67% addressed tourists’ perceptions, attitudes, behaviours, and motivations; 33.33% were focused on different stakeholders (the local community, park management, policymakers, service providers, etc.).



**Figure 1.** Flow diagram for research articles included in the present review based on PRISMA.

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Description of Research Papers Focusing on Tourists

In the following paragraphs, the 104 research papers focusing on tourists (Table 1) are accounted for and analysed. The information gathered refers to the methodology and instruments used for collecting and analysing data, the main objectives of the articles, the applicability of the results, and whether the studies have been funded by institutions or organisations.

**Table 1.** Research papers included in the review that focus on tourists.

Nr. Crt.	Year and Reference	Country	Method	Main Instrument of Data Collection	Objectives	Applicability	Funding
1	2021 [32]	Sweden	Qualitative	Instagram (n = 360 posts from 30 national parks (NPs))	Determine tourists' perception of nature and their perceived value of the human–nature relationship	Management implications—understanding tourists' attitudes towards NP development	No
2	2021 * [33]	Portugal	Quantitative	Questionnaire (n = 185); observation; interview with park managers for assessing facilities	Understand tourists' attitudes and behaviour towards the natural environment and assess these attitudes and the link to behavioural intentions	Research implications—understanding tourists' attitudes; Management implications—understanding tourists' willingness to pay (WTP)	Yes
3	2021 * [34]	Poland	Mixed	-	Develop practice guidelines promoting sustainable tourism planning for NPs	Management implications—guidelines for planning tourism in PAs; Community collaboration	No
4	2021 [35]	Spain	Quantitative	Questionnaire (n = 349 respondents)	Determine the perceived value of ecotourism; analyse the predictive relationships between the perceived value and the satisfaction and loyalty of ecotourists	Management implications—understanding tourists' perceived value for natural park development	No
5	2021 [36]	United Kingdom	Qualitative	Interview (n = 11 respondents)	Understand tourists' decision-making process	Management/service provider implications—understanding tourists' decision-making process; justifying the need for professional guides in NPs	Yes
6	2021 [37]	Poland	Quantitative	Questionnaire (n = 357 respondents)	Determine tourists' preferences and opinions	Management implications—understanding tourists' preferences for NP development	No
7	2021 [38]	Spain	Quantitative	Questionnaire (n = 341 respondents)	Determine tourists' perceived value; analyse dimensions that predict satisfaction and ecotourists' intentions to return or recommend a destination	Management/institution/service provider implications—guidelines for planning tourism in PAs and developing products according to tourists' perceived value	No
8	2021 [39]	Germany	Mixed	Photographs	Test the applicability of camera traps for visitor monitoring	Management implications—monitoring visitors and understanding tourists' behaviour	Yes

Table 1. Cont.

Nr. Crt.	Year and Reference	Country	Method	Main Instrument of Data Collection	Objectives	Applicability	Funding
9	2021 [40]	Romania	Quantitative	Questionnaire (n = 137 respondents)	Determine tourists' preferences, understand their motivation, and determine their level of satisfaction regarding the quality of facilities and services	Management/service provider implications—developing adventure tourism and addressing tourists' level of experience and expectations	No
10	2021 [41]	Spain	Quantitative	Questionnaire (n = 349 respondents)	Examine demand segmentation and motivations in ecotourism	Institution/service provider implications—assisting the improvement of tourism service offers and an efficient marketing plan	Yes
11	2021 [42]	Denmark	Quantitative	Questionnaire (n = 719 respondents)	Identify tourists' motivations and segmentation based on experience	Management implications—targeting tourists' level of experience for campsite development	Yes
12	2021 * [43]	Norway	Quantitative	Questionnaire (n = 487 respondents, of which 219 follow-up)	Understand wildlife-related behaviours based on the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)	Management implications—deciding what wildlife watching tourism (WWT) activities to allow in NPs and PAs	No
13	2021 [44]	Romania	Quantitative	Questionnaire (n = 131 respondents)	Identify opinions and suggestions regarding tourism in PAs and the impact of the tourist flows on the surrounding communities	Management/community implications—considering an integrated approach (natural and cultural resources) for NP development	No
14	2021 [45]	Croatia	Quantitative	Questionnaire (n = 277 respondents)	Analyse the contribution of the attributes of a PA to the prices of hotel services and visitors' satisfaction; analyse the economic effects of the PA	Service provider implications—designing pricing systems; Institution implications—developing governance, fiscal policies, and marketing strategies for tourism destinations	No
15	2021 [46]	Ukraine	Mixed	Questionnaire (n = 87 respondents); interview (n = 8 experts)	Analyse components of NP brands, their market positioning, and the development of proposals for eco-brand formation of the NP	Management/institution/service provider implications—measuring the brand positioning of NPs (framework of the eco-brand concept)	No
16	2021 [47]	Turkey	Mixed	Questionnaire (n = 30 respondents); interview (n = 20 experts)	Determine the potential of forest roads as hiking routes	Management implications—assessing infrastructure suitability for recreational activities, ensuring sustainable use of NPs and PAs	No

Table 1. Cont.

Nr. Crt.	Year and Reference	Country	Method	Main Instrument of Data Collection	Objectives	Applicability	Funding
17	2021 [48]	Norway	Mixed	Questionnaire (n = 487 respondents, of which 219 follow-up); on-site observations on 14 safaris; interview (n = 49 respondents)	Understand the relationships between tourists' experiences, product delivery, and the setting	Research implications—contributing to the WWT literature; Service providers—understanding tourists' experiences; Management—developing PAs that feature wildlife as an attraction	Yes
18	2020 [49]	Germany	Mixed	The photo sharing site Flickr (Application Programming Interface (API) for research) (n = 15,993 Flickr photo-user-days (PUDs))	Evaluate the crowd-sourced travel cost method (CTCM) using geotagged photographs as an alternative data source to primary surveys; calculate the correlation between the results	Management/research implications—understanding tourists' perceived value; offering a complement to the present suite of evaluation options (either monetary or not)	Yes
19	2020 [50]	Norway	Qualitative	Questionnaire; interview (n = 13 respondents)	Understand tourists' attitudes and behaviour towards the natural environment	Management implications—understanding tourists' behaviours for sustainable development of PAs	No
20	2020 [51]	Iceland	Quantitative	Questionnaire (n = 565 respondents)	Assess climate effects on visitation demand and examine the heterogeneity of tourists' responses to these implications for visitation	Management implications—understanding tourist segmentation for sustainable development of PAs	Yes
21	2020 [52]	Italy	Quantitative	Questionnaire (n = 532 respondents)	Assess the role of animals in creating a satisfactory experience at a NP	Management implications—understanding tourists' preferences for the development of PAs	No
22	2020 [53]	Scotland	Mixed	Interview (n = 100 respondents); Flickr (API)	Explore how and where people who visit a NP experience tranquillity	Management implications—understanding tourists' perceptions of landscape management in PAs	Yes
23	2020 [54]	Sweden	Qualitative	Instagram; interview (n = 12 respondents)	Explore the role of online photography in creating experience value in nature-based tourism and what types of experience value are conveyed	Management/service provider implications—understanding tourists' perceived value	Yes

Table 1. Cont.

Nr. Crt.	Year and Reference	Country	Method	Main Instrument of Data Collection	Objectives	Applicability	Funding
24	2020 [55]	UK	Quantitative	Global Positioning System (GPS) tracking (n = 1563 tracks)	Develop a methodology to estimate the impact of management actions on visitor densities	Management implications—understanding tourists' behaviour and preferences for the sustainable development of PAs	Yes
25	2020 [56]	Italy	Quantitative	Questionnaire (n = 1452 respondents)	Propose a framework to analyse how goal pursuit influences choices and if the important goals make individuals less sensitive to distance	Management implications—understanding tourists' preferences and perceived value for developing effective policies	Yes
26	2020 [57]	Norway	Quantitative	Questionnaire (n = 498 respondents); interviews with visitors, managers, and tourist operators in the area	Determine tourists' motivations and spatial preferences	Management implications—understanding tourists' preferences for regulating their behaviour	Yes
27	2020 [58]	Spain	Mixed	Flickr (n = 12,949 records); GPS tracking (n = 5064 tracks); secondary statistical data on visitor numbers	Explore the potential of geotagged data from social networks to analyse tourists' behaviour in NPs	Management implications—understanding tourists' behaviour for the development of new facilities (e.g., information stands) in PAs	Yes
28	2019 [59]	Norway	Quantitative	Questionnaire (n = 13434 respondents)	Analyse tourists' preferences and develop a methodology to quantify their behaviour in the NP territory	Management implications—understanding tourists' profile for balancing between nature conservation and tourism development in NPs	Yes
29	2019 [60]	Italy	Quantitative	Questionnaire (n = 432 respondents)	Determine tourists' preferences; predict congestion levels in NPs; explore the advantages of adopting choice experiment models	Management implications—understanding tourists' preferences for regulating their behaviour (overcrowding)	Yes
30	2019 [61]	Poland	Quantitative	Questionnaire (n = 165 respondents)	Compare birdwatching-related revenues with revenues from other tourists visiting a NP to analyse the economic justification for logging	Management implications—accounting tourism revenues for justifying sustainable development of PAs	Yes

Table 1. Cont.

Nr. Crt.	Year and Reference	Country	Method	Main Instrument of Data Collection	Objectives	Applicability	Funding
31	2019 [62]	Spain	Quantitative	Questionnaire (n = 493 respondents); focus group and test responses to validate it	Develop a tool to assess the recreation susceptibility of PAs to fire by integrating economic valuation, vegetation resilience, and potential fire behaviour	Management/institution implications—evaluating investments for fire protection based on a dynamic cost–benefit framework	Yes
32	2019 [63]	Czech Republic	Mixed	Interview with managers; GPS tracking (n = 22 tracks)	Identify the effect of trail attributes on visitor numbers in NPs	Management implications—assessing trail characteristics; understanding tourists' preferences	Yes
33	2019 [64]	Norway	Quantitative	Questionnaire (n = 123 respondents, n = 25 completed the last step); GPS function similar to the Public Participation Geographic Information System (PPGIS)	Evaluate previous attempts to use applications for monitoring recreation and tourism in PAs as an alternative to other methods, and present a pilot study	Management implications—monitoring tourists in PAs	Yes
34	2019 [65]	Romania	Quantitative	Questionnaire (n = 188 respondents)	Analyse tourists' preferences regarding the demand for eco-sustainable goods and services in tourism	Management/service provider implications—understanding tourists' preferences for sustainable development of PAs	No
35	2019 [66]	Norway	Mixed	Questionnaire (n = 377 respondents); PPGIS mapping	Identify areas highly valued by locals and domestic and international visitors to assess the potential management challenges of attracting tourists to PAs	Management implications—understanding tourists' perceived value to minimise intergroup conflict	Yes
36	2019 [67]	Spain	Quantitative	Questionnaire (n = 470 respondents)	Develop a method to assess tourists' perceptions of recreational activities and how they depend on the type of visitor	Management/research implications—understanding tourists' perceptions; validating other measurement instruments	Yes
37	2019 [68]	Poland	Mixed	Questionnaire (n = 2120 respondents)	Identify the profiles of tourists at a heavily used destination	Management/research implications—profiling tourists for addressing mass tourism in PAs; highlighting the Self-Organising Map (SOM) technique as a valuable tool	Yes

Table 1. Cont.

Nr. Crt.	Year and Reference	Country	Method	Main Instrument of Data Collection	Objectives	Applicability	Funding
38	2019 [69]	Greece	Quantitative	Questionnaire (n = 2981 respondents)	Understand the profiles of tourists that visit islands with PAs, such as NPs or Natura 2000 areas	Management/institution implications—understanding tourists' perceptions for strategic planning of PAs	No
39	2019 [70]	United Kingdom	Quantitative	Questionnaire (n = 107 respondents)	Identify the motives and constraints for visiting NPs in relation to age, education level, and employment status	Management implications—understanding tourists' preferences for the development of NPs	Yes
40	2018 [71]	Scotland	Mixed	Flickr (API) (n = 29,336 photographs from 933 users = 4699 visitor days)	Validate the use of data from Flickr as an indicator of nature-based tourism on a national scale and at several regional spatial and temporal resolutions	Management/research implications—validating the use of Flickr data as a research method	Yes
41	2018 [72]	Germany	Quantitative	Questionnaire (n = 514 respondents)	Determine tourists' perceptions and preferences	Management implications—understanding tourists' preferences for the development of NPs	Yes
42	2018 [73]	Poland	Mixed	GPS tracking (n = 427 tracks)	Use GPS tracking to monitor a spatially independent recreational activity; focus on tourists' behaviour concerning management measures in the NP	Management implications—understanding tourists' behaviour for NP development	Yes
43	2018 [74]	Italy	Qualitative	Survey—data collection sheets	Analyse the impact of a natural park on accessibility and usability; propose an indicator: "environmental accessibility of the pedestrian network"	Management/research implications—evaluating the social impact of a natural park in terms of accessibility and usability	Yes
44	2018 [75]	Sweden	Quantitative	Questionnaire (n = 1425 respondents)	Analyse income elasticities among visitors to see if the analysed tourism product is a luxury or not	Management implications—understanding tourists' income elasticity for NP development	Yes
45	2018 [76]	Turkey	Quantitative	Questionnaire (n = 2637 respondents); interviews (n = 100 respondents)	Identify the constraints regarding local people's use of NPs and investigate the effects of demographic features on these constraints	Management/community/institution implications—understanding local people as tourists for developing NP strategies	Yes

Table 1. Cont.

Nr. Crt.	Year and Reference	Country	Method	Main Instrument of Data Collection	Objectives	Applicability	Funding
46	2018 [77]	France	Quantitative	Questionnaire (n = 174 respondents); follow-up interviews (n = 23 respondents)	Define the outdoor recreation profiles of users of the areas	Management implications—profiling tourists for the development of PAs	Yes
47	2018 [78]	Croatia	Quantitative	Questionnaire (n = 514 respondents)	Examine the recreational trail preferences of tourists	Management/service provider implications—understanding tourists' preferences to prioritise activities and maximise their experience	No
48	2018 [79]	Turkey	Quantitative	Questionnaire (n = 150 respondents)	Investigate user characteristics, participation level in activities, and recreational demands	Management/service provider implications—profiling tourists for urban development plans	No
49	2018 [80]	Slovakia	Quantitative	Questionnaire (n = 190 respondents); GPS tracking; post-trip interviews	Determine tourists' profiles based on the characteristics of socio-demographic and spatial behaviour	Management implications—understanding tourists' behaviour for the development of PAs and the management of cable car destinations	Yes
50	2017 [81]	Albania	Mixed	Questionnaire (n = 136 respondents); participant observation	Support the development of sustainable rural tourism in mountainous areas	Management implications—considering the sustainable development of PAs	No
51	2017 [82]	Poland	Quantitative	GPS tracking (n = 609 tracks)	Evaluate the structure and use of designated zones in PAs by combining GPS tracking and analytical methods based on graph theory	Management implications—understanding tourists' preferences for planning tourist infrastructure	Yes
52	2017 [83]	Romania	Quantitative	Questionnaire (n = 756 respondents)	Explore tourists' behaviour in national and natural parks by understanding the tradeoff between benefits and costs as perceived by tourists	Management implications—understanding tourists' perceived value for national and natural park development	Yes
53	2017 [84]	Italy	Quantitative	Questionnaire (n = 790 respondents)	Analyse tourists' willingness to pay for conservation policies	Management/institution implications—understanding tourists' WTP for developing sustainable strategies	Yes

Table 1. Cont.

Nr. Crt.	Year and Reference	Country	Method	Main Instrument of Data Collection	Objectives	Applicability	Funding
54	2017 [85]	Romania	Quantitative	Questionnaire (n = 100 respondents)	Analyse tourists' preferences regarding eco-sustainable goods and services	Management/service provider/research implications—understanding tourists' preferences for sustainable development	No
55	2017 [86]	Germany	Quantitative	Questionnaire (n = 207 respondents)	Explore tourists' intentions to conserve natural landscapes based on their attachment to NP landscapes	Management implications—understanding tourists' perceptions and attitudes towards increasing visiting satisfaction and NP sustainable development	Yes
56	2017 [87]	Germany	Quantitative	Questionnaire (n = 1092 respondents)	Develop and empirically apply a conceptual framework for tourism products—the Product-based Typology for Nature-based Tourism (PTNT)	Management implications—discussing an adaptation of the NP for sustainable PA tourism products	Yes
57	2017 [88]	Portugal	Quantitative	Questionnaire (n = 779 respondents)	Propose an integrated model based on an expectancy–value theory and a decision-process framework for outdoor recreation	Management implications—understanding tourists' preferences and behaviour in NPs and PAs	No
58	2017 [89]	Austria	Quantitative	Questionnaire (n = 145 respondents); observation; photography	Examine the tangible and intangible visitor experience by exploring the applicability of an existing experiential consumption model	Management/research implications—understanding tourists' behaviour for the development of PAs	No
59	2017 [90]	Finland	Quantitative	PPGIS survey (n = 170 respondents)	Pilot new geographically explicit methods to study how visitor experiences are connected to certain setting types	Management implications—considering tourists' experience for the development of PAs	No
60	2017 [91]	Finland	Quantitative	Questionnaire on-site (n = 3152 respondents); internet survey (n = 1054 respondents)	Examine the health and well-being benefits perceived by tourists	Management/institutions implications—planning for sustainable development in NPs and PAs (infrastructure, accommodation)	Yes
61	2017 [92]	Germany	Quantitative	Questionnaire (n = 481 respondents); GPS tracking (n = 481 tracks); interview (n = 9460 respondents)	Investigate the spatial behaviour of demographic age groups and the potential effects of demographic change on the use of the area	Management implications—anticipating demographic change for NP development	Yes

Table 1. Cont.

Nr. Crt.	Year and Reference	Country	Method	Main Instrument of Data Collection	Objectives	Applicability	Funding
62	2017 [93]	Italy	Quantitative	Questionnaire (n = 1452 respondents)	Show that choice set formation is behaviourally relevant, even after controlling for preference discrimination	Management implications—understanding tourists' behaviour for analysing the impact of policies in PAs	Yes
63	2016 [94]	Finland	Quantitative	Questionnaire (n = 736 respondents); PPGIS survey (n = 170)	Integrate a geographical approach to producing evaluative information on the negative impacts of tourism in NPs	Management implications—evaluating negative tourism impacts for the sustainable development of PAs	No
64	2016 [95]	Turkey	Quantitative	Questionnaire (n = 390 respondents)	Correlate ecological-based tourism potential with concepts of intactness, conservation-use balance, and sustainability	Management implications—considering ecology-based recreation and approaches for tourism planning in PAs	No
65	2016 [96]	Czech Republic	Quantitative	Questionnaire (n = 857 respondents); GIS analysis	Analyse touristic demand and preferences; assess differences among components of the total travel costs	Research implications—studying travel–cost measurements	Yes
66	2016 [97]	Serbia	Quantitative	Questionnaire (n = 123 respondents);	Understand tourists' attitudes towards the management of the natural and recreational resources of the PA	Management implications—considering the sustainable development of PAs	Yes
67	2015 [98]	Scotland	Qualitative	“go-along interview” audio (n = 10 respondents) and video (n = 34 respondents)	Determine the “more-than-verbal” dimensions of tourists' attitudes; identify themes emerging from the verbal and gesture manifestations of participants	Management implications—regulating tourists' behaviour; managing the territory and accessibility within NPs and PAs	Yes
68	2015 [99]	Romania	Quantitative	Questionnaire (n = 850 respondents)	Emphasise the contrast between the preference for intense tourism and the reality of relatively reduced tourist influxes	Management implications—improving touristic activity in PAs	No
69	2015 [100]	Finland	Quantitative	Secondary data on visitor numbers and behaviour	Provide evidence on the direct linkage between biodiversity protection and the provisioning of ecosystem services in PAs	Management implications—improving touristic activity in NPs	Yes
70	2015 [101]	Turkey	Quantitative	Questionnaire (n = 390 respondents)	Determine the use potential of priority areas for tourism with consideration for sustainability	Management implications—considering ecology-based recreation and approaches for tourism planning in PAs	No

Table 1. Cont.

Nr. Crt.	Year and Reference	Country	Method	Main Instrument of Data Collection	Objectives	Applicability	Funding
71	2015 [102]	Czech Republic	Mixed	Data provided by guides	Understand the beneficial role of professional guides within the NP	Management implications—improving touristic activity in NPs	No
72	2015 [103]	Slovakia	Quantitative	Questionnaire (n = 211 respondents)	Determine standards of quality for outdoor recreation in NPs	Management implications—regulating tourists' behaviour	Yes
73	2014 [104]	Austria	Qualitative	GPS tracking (n = 482 tracks)	Provide a new methodology to evaluate hiking trails by combining GPS tracking and analytical methods based on graph theory	Management/research implications—assessing trail characteristics; understanding tourists' preferences	No
74	2014 [105]	Norway	Quantitative	Questionnaire (n = 1038 respondents)	Analyse the correlation between tourists' expenditure in a NP region and their typology and behaviour	Management implications—understanding tourists' behaviour and profile for NP development	Yes
75	2014 [106]	Turkey	Quantitative	Questionnaire (n = 192 respondents)	Determine tourists' profiles to provide views and attitudes on the existing potential for ecotourism	Management/community implications—involving local communities in the touristic development of natural parks	No
76	2014 [107]	European Alps	Mixed	Questionnaire (n = 1135 respondents)	Study the role of a PA for travellers selecting an alpine vacation destination	Management implications—understanding tourists' motivations	No
77	2014 [108]	Spain	Mixed	Questionnaire (n = 878 respondents)	Analyse the current value of each sector into which the NP can be divided to establish the territory's carrying capacity	Management implications—zoning in NPs considering tourists' demands	No
78	2013 [109]	Germany	Quantitative	Questionnaire (n = 312 respondents)	Provide insights into different aspects of crowding; analyse the factors that influence the perception of crowding in a high-use, low-mountain range	Management implications—understanding tourists' preferences for regulating their behaviour (crowding)	No
79	2013 [110]	Norway	Quantitative	Questionnaire (n <sub>1</sub> = 760 respondents, n <sub>2</sub> = 280 respondents)	Determine tourists' tolerance of potential negative ecological impacts from tourism activities and facilities in a NP context	Management implications—considering the sustainable development of PAs	Yes

Table 1. Cont.

Nr. Crt.	Year and Reference	Country	Method	Main Instrument of Data Collection	Objectives	Applicability	Funding
80	2012 [111]	Italy	Mixed	Questionnaire (n = 163 respondents)	Determine tourists' profile and perception and their ability to recognise climate change impacts and evidence	Management implications—offering more accurate materials for tourists	Yes
81	2012 [112]	Greece	Quantitative	Questionnaire (n = 322 respondents)	Identify and evaluate the multiple dimensions of perceived value for tourism and analyse how they influence satisfaction	Management/institution implications—developing the PA considering educating visitors, infrastructure, and pricing	No
82	2012 [113]	Turkey	Mixed	Interview (n = 30; visitors, locals, and stakeholders)	Determine how to approach the problems and solutions arising from plateau tourism and rural recreation	Management implications—considering ecology-based recreation and approaches for tourism planning in PAs	No
83	2012 [114]	Greece	Quantitative	Questionnaire (n = 114; visitors, locals, and stakeholders)	Investigate the current state of knowledge and perceptions of residents and tourists concerning the NP	Management implications—showing the importance of implementing participatory management in PAs	No
84	2011 [115]	Portugal	Quantitative	Questionnaire (n = 243 respondents)	Estimate the average consumer surplus (CS) for each day of visit	Management/institution implications—improving NP strategies and management; promoting nature-based tourism	Yes
85	2011 [116]	Spain	Mixed	Questionnaire (n = 180 respondents); laddering interview (n = 110 respondents)	Apply means–end chain methodology to reveal the cognitive structure of the decision-making process for the use and evaluation of the environmental good	Research implication—understanding tourists' motivations and decision-making process	No
86	2011 [117]	Serbia, Croatia	Quantitative	Secondary data on visitor numbers	Analyse the general framework of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) site designation; determine the effects of designations on tourists' presence	Management implications—demonstrating UNESCO designation benefits to tourism development in NPs	No
87	2011 [118]	Finland	Mixed	Interview (n = 30 respondents)	Examine the role of nature tourists in developing sustainable tourism	Management/service provider implications—developing sustainability in tourist destinations and companies	Yes

Table 1. Cont.

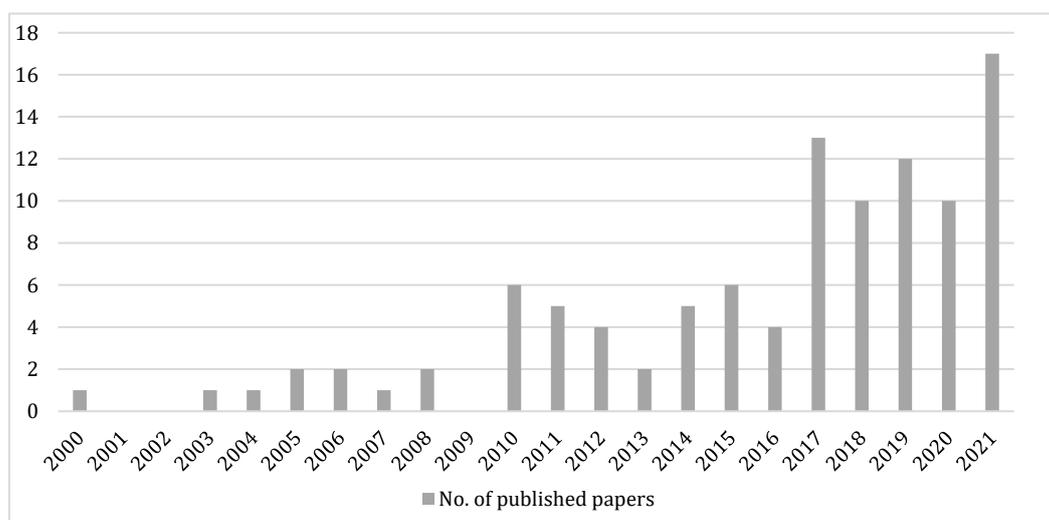
Nr. Crt.	Year and Reference	Country	Method	Main Instrument of Data Collection	Objectives	Applicability	Funding
88	2011 [119]	Finland	Quantitative	Questionnaire (n = 736 respondents)	Understand NP tourists' interests in using tourism services	Management/institution/service provider implications—understanding tourists' needs in PAs	No
89	2010 [120]	Finland	Quantitative	Secondary data on visitor numbers	Examine which factors of a NP are associated with the number of visits	Management implication—increasing visitor numbers in NPs	No
90	2010 [121]	Turkey	Quantitative	Questionnaire (n = 455 respondents)	Investigate tourists' profiles, preferences, and perceptions of crowding; evaluate tourists' suggestions for improvements	Management implications—understanding tourists' perceptions for improving touristic services (marking of trails, crowding)	Yes
91	2010 [122]	Austria	Quantitative	Questionnaire (n = 550 respondents)	Investigate factors influencing the attitude of on-site ski tourists towards ski tourism management measures	Management implications—understanding tourists' perceptions of management strategies	Yes
92	2010 [123]	Greece	Mixed	Questionnaire (n = 230 respondents)	Analyse tourists' behaviour through a gap analysis approach	Management implications—understanding tourists' satisfaction level for NP development	No
93	2010 [124]	Norway	Quantitative	Questionnaire (n = 762 respondents)	Examine the quest for facilities in association with visitation in NPs	Management/service provider implications—understanding tourists' preferences for developing strategies and policies in NPs and PAs	Yes
94	2010 [125]	Iceland	Quantitative	Questionnaire (n = 3160 respondents)	Find target groups according to the locations and show how more information and research can be used for managing nature destinations	Management implications—understanding tourists' preferences for the development of PAs	No
95	2008 [126]	Iceland	Quantitative	Questionnaire (n = 252 respondents)	Measure tourists' willingness to pay fees in areas where no such measurement has previously been undertaken	Management/institution implications—understanding tourists' WTP for fee implementation	No
96	2008 [127]	Germany	Quantitative	Interview (n <sub>1</sub> = 1666 respondents, n <sub>2</sub> = 3505 respondents)	Present the financial benefits derived from nature-based tourism in and around two NPs based on the value-added technique	Management/institution/community implications—implementing socio-economic monitoring; improving acceptance of NPs	Yes

Table 1. Cont.

Nr. Crt.	Year and Reference	Country	Method	Main Instrument of Data Collection	Objectives	Applicability	Funding
97	2007 [128]	Austria	Quantitative	Questionnaire (n = 383 respondents)	Determine if tourists' level of experience influences their perceptions of crowding and their behaviour	Management implications—considering the sustainable development of PAs	Yes
98	2006 [129]	Czech Republic	Quantitative	Questionnaire (n = 646 respondents total; 523 tourists and 123 locals and administration representatives)	Obtain stakeholders' opinions and attitudes towards nature conservation, the NP, and tourism within the territory	Management implications—considering the sustainable development of PAs	No
99	2006 [130]	Spain	Quantitative	Questionnaire (n = 878 respondents)	Analyse tourists' attitudes towards the declaration, demarcation, and internal sectoring of the future NP	Management implications—considering sustainable NP development	No
100	2005 [131]	Greece	Quantitative	Questionnaire (n = 516 respondents)	Define predictors of visitors' awareness and attitude towards park designation and their willingness to pay a conditional entrance fee	Management/institution implications—understanding tourists' attitudes and WTP (fee implementation); educating the NP users	No
101	2005 [132]	Spain	Quantitative	Questionnaire (n = 796 respondents)	Analyse the recreational supply (trails) and demand (tourists' characteristics)	Management implications—considering the sustainable development of PAs	No
102	2004 [133]	Finland	Quantitative	Questionnaire (n = 1871 respondents)	Determine tourists' willingness to pay for services in parks to obtain an estimate of the value of outdoor recreation in monetary terms	Management implications—understanding tourists' WTP for fee implementation	No
103	2003 [134]	Greece	Mixed	Analysis of texts produced in the visitors' books	Analyse tourists' experiences and perceptions	Management/research implications—understanding tourists' experiences	No
104	2000 [135]	Scotland	Quantitative	Questionnaire (n = 300 respondents)	Analyse tourists' behaviour and preferences for recreation and attitudes towards environmental issues and management	Management implications—understanding tourists' preferences and behaviour for NP sustainable development strategy	No

Note: The objectives of the research are based on the authors' mentions and may partially duplicate their stated goals. Source: own elaboration. \* Year of Early Access as appeared on the WoS database at the time of data collection.

Figure 2 illustrates the number of published papers per year between 2000 and 2021 and indicates a clear growing interest in the subject in the past decade.



**Figure 2.** Published papers between 2000 and 2021 focusing on tourists. Source: own elaboration based on data provided by WoS.

The predefined Web of Science category with the highest number of articles focusing on tourists registered within the present study is “Hospitality, Leisure, Sport, and Tourism” (34%), followed closely by research areas focused on environment studies, as shown in Table 2. Out of the 104 articles included in the analysis, 55 were identified within two or more WoS categories.

**Table 2.** Top 10 WoS categories by the number of identified articles focusing on tourists.

Nr. Crt.	Web of Science Categories	No. of Articles
1.	Hospitality, Leisure, Sport, and Tourism	35
2.	Environmental Studies	28
3.	Environmental Sciences	24
4.	Ecology	15
5.	Green and Sustainable Science and Technology	14
6.	Geography	13
7.	Biodiversity Conservation	10
8.	Sociology	9
9.	Economics	8
10.	Management	8

While a very large number of different publication journals were identified (64 journal titles), the top three with the most publication articles analysed in the present review that focus on tourists’ behaviours and demands are: Sustainability (7%), Land (7%), and Eco Mont-Journal on Protected Mountain Areas Research (6%).

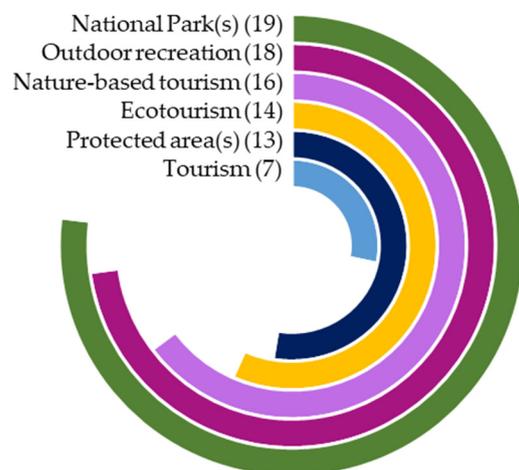
The 12 journals presented in Table 3 account for 51% of all articles focusing on tourists included in the review. The impact factor, the number of citations, the H-index, and the quartile that the journal or distinct categories of a journal belong to are accurate indicators for a publication, and when analysed together, they can provide a general overview of the academic quality of the content. As shown in Table 3, ten out of the twelve most encountered publications for the present research belong to Q1 or Q2, which raises confidence in the scientific standard and interest in the analysed subject.

**Table 3.** Top 12 journals with the highest number of published studies focusing on tourists.

Rank	Journal Title	% of Published Articles	5-Year Impact Factor (2020)	WoS Quartile
1	Sustainability	7%	3.473	Q2, Q3
2	Land	7%	3.235	Q2
3	Eco Mont-Journal on Protected Mountain Areas Research	6%	0.766	Q4
4	Environmental Management	5%	3.372	Q2
5	Tourism Management	5%	13.134	Q1
6	Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism	4%	4.924	Q1, Q2
7	International Journal of Sustainable Development and World Ecology	4%	3.855	Q2, Q3
8	Journal of Outdoor Recreation and Tourism-Research Planning and Management	3%	3.473	Q3
9	Journal of Environmental Management	3%	6.914	Q1
10	Tourism Economics	3%	3.099	Q1, Q2
11	Journal of Sustainable Tourism	3%	7.857	Q1
12	Applied Geography	3%	5.402	Q1

Source: own elaboration based on data provided by WoS.

A visual accounting of author keywords, as provided by WoS, with a frequency higher than 5 can be seen in Figure 3. It was determined that most appearances are for “National Park” and “National Parks” together—5% of all keywords. Representing a main point of interest in the research papers, they were used 19 times out of a total of 382 different items. The keywords “Ecotourism” and “Eco-tourism” were also considered summed entries.

**Figure 3.** Keywords with the highest frequency in articles focused on tourists. Source: own elaboration based on data provided by WoS.

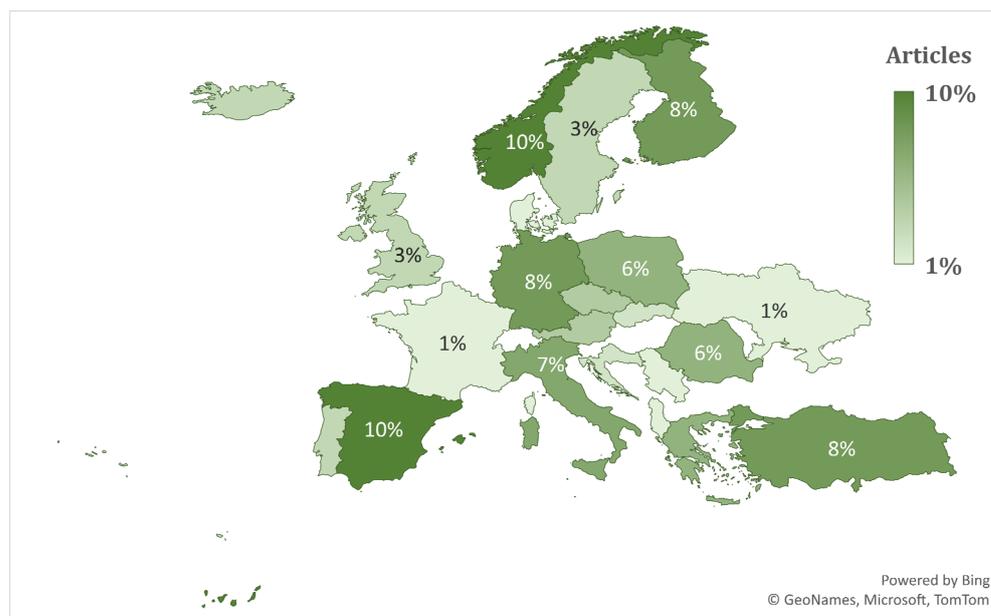
The analysis of citations places the articles titled “Willingness to pay entrance fees to natural attractions: An Icelandic case study” [126] (120 citations), “Visitors’ satisfaction, perceptions and gap analysis: The case of Dadia-Lefkimi-Souflion National Park” [123] (82 citations), and “Past on-site experience, crowding perceptions, and use displacement of visitor groups to a peri-urban National Park” [128] (74 citations) as the most influential papers with the highest contribution to the research in the field. The results are illustrated in Table 4.

**Table 4.** Top 10 most cited published articles focusing on tourists according to the WoS number of citations.

Rank	Year and Reference	Article Title	Times Cited, WoS Core *
1	2008 [126]	Willingness to pay entrance fees to natural attractions: An Icelandic case study	120
2	2010 [123]	Visitors’ satisfaction, perceptions and gap analysis: The case of Dadia-Lefkimi-Soufliou National Park	82
3	2007 [128]	Past on-site experience, crowding perceptions, and use displacement of visitor groups to a peri-urban National Park	74
4	2011 [116]	The influence of personal values in the economic-use valuation of peri-urban green spaces: An application of the means-end chain theory	59
5	2010 [120]	Visits to national parks: Effects of park characteristics and spatial demand	58
6	2010 [125]	Planning Nature Tourism in Iceland based on Tourist Attitudes	51
7	2015 [100]	Biodiversity attracts visitors to national parks	47
8	2010 [124]	Turning National Parks into Tourist Attractions: Nature Orientation and Quest for Facilities	46
9	2014 [104]	Evaluating the structure and use of hiking trails in recreational areas using a mixed GPS tracking and graph theory approach	45
10	2006 [129]	Attitudes of stakeholders towards the Podyji/Thaya River Basin National Park in the Czech Republic	41

Source: own elaboration based on data provided by WoS. \* As appeared on the WoS database at the time of data collection (April, 2022).

Accounting for the number of articles published by the country where the study was conducted (Figure 4), Spain (10%), Norway (10%), Finland (8%), Turkey (8%), Germany (8%), and Italy (7%) present the highest interest for studying tourists’ perceptions, attitudes, and behaviours related to nature-based tourism in national and natural parks.



**Figure 4.** Percentage of articles by country in Europe focusing on tourists as reviewed in this research. Source: own elaboration based on data provided by WoS.

Another indicator that helps emphasise the necessity and importance of research aimed at understanding tourist demand with all its attributes is the funding of studies. Within the 104 reviewed papers, 53% were financed by various institutions, showing that scientific knowledge on the subject is requested and can provide valuable insights with diverse implications and plausible applicability. This includes insights for the management and administrative units of protected areas, for governmental institutions and policymakers, for local communities and residents directly affected by the tourism industry and the designation of PAs, for service providers that continuously need to adapt and expand their offer to meet tourists' needs and tendencies, and for the academic world that is endeavouring to expand the knowledge and understanding of different aspects of tourism and create the premises for better practice.

Among the methods of data analysis identified, 71% of the studies were based on quantitative methods, 7% on qualitative methods, and 22% on mixed methodologies, using various techniques. The data collection instrument most used was a questionnaire (76%), but interviews, observation, and focus groups were also used as traditional tools for research. In the struggle to improve the research process, authors are striving to validate new methods, mainly to ease the process and reduce or overcome the limitations of traditional instruments (time-consuming, expensive, incomplete information, human error). Some authors choose to analyse information already available on social media platforms to understand consumer behaviour [32,49,53,71], while others take a different approach, analysing GPS/PPGIS tracks to study travel patterns [55,63,65,73,80,82,90,92,94,104], and a few authors, such as Barros et al. [58], use both methods.

Based on the main objectives identified across the reviewed studies, the recurring themes coincide with the main nature-based tourism topics stated by the World Bank Group: enabling policy environment, governance and institutional arrangements, concessioning and partnership models, destination management, infrastructure and facilities, visitor management, nature-based enterprise development, impacts of nature-based tourism, risk management and climate change, and monitoring and evaluation [20].

In general, the articles presented in this section (Table 1) provide valuable insight into the understanding of tourists' preferences, attitudes, or behaviours through various methods and techniques. Their applicability was found by exploring their particular methodology and examining the aim, objectives, and potential practical use of the findings. A few articles that have potential management implications for the sustainable development of parks and other protected areas focused on understanding tourists' willingness to pay for visitation fees [126,131,133]. Some authors attempted to develop guidelines for sustainable tourism planning [34,38]. As discussed earlier in the present review, nature can be viewed not only as the context for touristic activities but as a product itself. Visiting a national park can be seen as having its value and benefits without the consumption of other services or as a complete package where anthropic elements are complementary. Carvache-Franco et al. [35] and Carrascosa-López et al. [38] analysed the correlation between the perceived value of a touristic destination and the loyalty of tourists, or their desire to return. Monitoring visitors is also a subject of potential interest to park managers, and it is addressed by analysing various methods: camera traps [39], applications [64], and GPS tracking [73]. Kristensen et al. [42] analysed tourists' motivations based on their level of experience, information that can be used for potential campsite development. Pouwels et al. [55] tackled an important aspect of protected areas, trying to estimate the effect of management actions on visitor densities. Developing new facilities in national parks, such as information stands, is a decision that impacts visitors' experiences. Their most suitable location can be determined by analysing visitor behaviour using geotagged data from social media, as proposed by Barros et al. [58]. Overcrowding in national and natural parks is another subject of potential interest to park management. Several authors addressed this by predicting congestion levels [60] or identifying tourists' profiles [68] and their perceptions of the crowding levels [109,121,128]. Natural and national parks have hotspots or popular places that attract a wide variety of tourists and can even be part of an inhabited area. It can

be of interest to the park management to identify highly valued visitation areas to minimise potential conflicts [66]. Other articles attempted to evaluate hiking trails [63,78,104,132].

Another side of the potential implications of the reviewed articles for the management of parks is that of nature conservation. To successfully balance nature conservation and tourism, it can be of interest to determine the perceived value of the human–nature relationship, as Fälton aimed to do in his paper [32]. Understanding tourists' willingness to pay for conservation [84] and their behaviour concerning wildlife [43] can support park management in their decision-making. Assessing the suitability of the infrastructure for recreational activities in parks is another important aspect addressed by Turgut et al. [47] and Taczanowska et al. [82]. Dell'Eva et al. [52] tried to assess the perceived role of wildlife in creating a satisfactory touristic experience. When actors have different interests, financial gain can be achieved through methods that can cause harm to unaltered environments. Comparing the revenues of wildlife tourism activities with other resource exploitation could potentially justify the sustainable development of parks [61]. Although tourism activities can bring numerous advantages to an area, it is important not to overlook the negative impacts of tourism and try to evaluate them to improve the development measures of parks [94].

Some articles in the present review may have extensive research implications for understanding tourists' attitudes and behaviours towards nature [33] or for innovation. Mancini et al. [71] validated the use of Flickr data as a research method. Moreno-Llorca et al. [67] developed a method to assess tourists' perceptions of recreational activities, and Sinclair et al. [49] compared two research methods for the evaluation of perceived value to facilitate future research.

Service providers can gain valuable information from research in the field and improve their offer in accordance with demand and market conditions. Understanding tourists' expectations and level of experience can be used to develop tourism services [40]. It can be of interest to understand the role of professional guides in parks [102] and tourists' decision-making processes to justify the need for this service [36]. Carrascosa-López et al. [38] created guidelines to develop products based on tourists' perceived value of them and predicted behaviour. Another practical aspect is analysing the effects of park attributes on the prices of services [45]. Other authors tried to analyse tourists' interests in "eco-sustainable goods and services" [65,85].

Although not focused solely on the local communities, some of the articles included in this section have potential implications for them. To achieve an integrated approach to park resources, Cozma et al. [44] analysed the impact of tourism on communities surrounding the parks. Çetinkaya et al. [76] tried to understand the potential difficulties of local people using park areas as tourists.

Some articles have been found to have potential implications for other institutions and for developing governance, fiscal policies, and marketing strategies for tourism. For example, Melnychenko et al. [46] measured the brand positioning of parks, and Molina [62] developed a tool that helps evaluate investments in fire protection in parks.

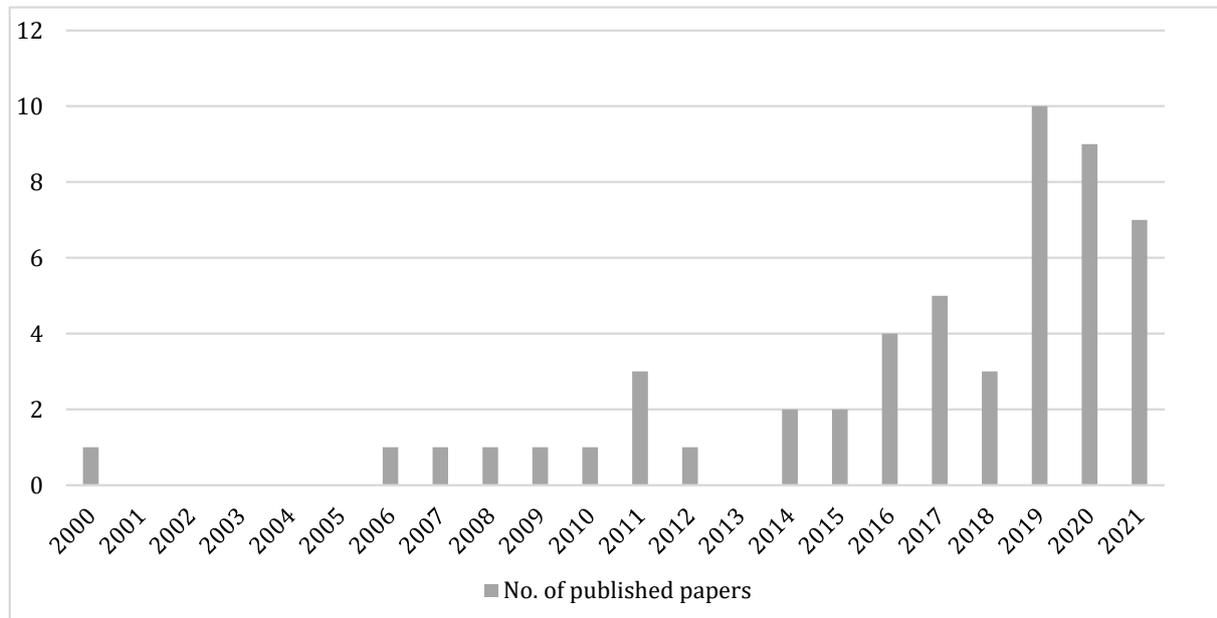
#### *4.2. Description of Research Papers Focusing on Local Communities and Other Stakeholders*

Similar to the previous section of this paper, a general review of the 52 selected articles can be seen in Table 5.

As mentioned earlier, synergy between all parties involved in the existence and governance of protected areas is vital for achieving efficient management, sustainable development, and peaceful coexistence [136,137]. While various stakeholders can be identified concerning nature-based tourism in national and natural parks, it is important to note that the local communities play a vital role and require careful consideration. Throughout the 52 reviewed papers included in this section of the present study, 42% are solely or partially focused on the people residing on the territory or in the immediate vicinity of the protected areas being addressed. Other stakeholders that are the subject of the research include national and natural park managers, local authorities, private

providers of touristic services, and business owners, as well as mass media operators that can influence public opinion and lobby on the matter.

Figure 5 illustrates the fluctuation in articles published between 2000 and 2021 and focused on different categories concerned directly or tangentially with the development and management of nature-based tourism in national and natural parks. Comparing different time frames, a slightly growing interest can be concluded.



**Figure 5.** Published papers between 2000 and 2021 focusing on other stakeholders. Source: own elaboration based on data provided by WoS.

**Table 5.** Research papers included in the review that focus on various stakeholders.

Nr. Crt.	Year and Reference	Country	Method	Main Instrument of Data Collection	Objectives *	Applicability	Funding
1	2020 * [138]	Finland	Qualitative	Thematic interview (n = 10 respondents)	Analyse the balance between tourism and nature conservation from a historical perspective	Management implications—improving the sustainable management of NPs	No
2	2021 [139]	Hungary	Mixed	In-depth interview (n = 76 respondents)	Analyse the balance between tourism and nature conservation in NPs	Management implications—improving cross-sector collaboration for managing and developing NPs	No
3	2021 [140]	Germany	Quantitative	Interview; secondary data	Estimate visitation data using a standardised methodology	Management implications—improving the sustainable management of PAs, with consideration for the carrying capacity	Yes
4	2021 [141]	Serbia	Mixed	Interview (n = 4)	Present the methodology for NP management decision-making	Management implications—improving decision-making processes in NP administration	Yes
5	2021 [142]	Serbia	Mixed	Survey	Prioritise management strategies for NP administration	Management implications—improving decision-making processes for the development of NPs	No
6	2021 [143]	Russia	Mixed	Survey; secondary data	Determine the economic value of PAs—case study on an NP	Management implications—balancing between the maximisation of the ecological and economic value of PAs	No
7	2021 [144]	Hungary	Mixed	Questionnaire (n = 146 respondents); semi-structured interview (n = 36 respondents); roundtable discussion (n = 40 respondents); focus group (n = 15 respondents); desktop study	Analyse the results of adaptive co-management	Management implications—stimulating adaptive co-management of PAs	Yes
8	2021 [145]	Turkey	Quantitative	Questionnaire (n = 366 respondents)	Analyse the involvement of local women in ecotourism activities—case study on an NP	Management/local community implications—understanding the role of women in the development of ecotourism for improving local people’s quality of life and the protection of NPs	No

Table 5. Cont.

Nr. Crt.	Year and Reference	Country	Method	Main Instrument of Data Collection	Objectives *	Applicability	Funding
9	2020 [146]	Spain	Mixed	Questionnaire (n = 363 respondents); interview (n = 95 respondents)	Analyse the effects of conservation and rural development policies on the offer of touristic services—case study on an NP	Management implications—improving environmental policies considering the benefit of local communities	Yes
10	2020 [147]	Italy	Quantitative	Questionnaire (n = 78 respondents)	Analyse the effects of ecotourism implementation—case study on an NP	Service provider implications—improving awareness of conservation issues and adapting economic practices accordingly	Yes
11	2020 [148]	France	Qualitative	Interview (n = 45 respondents); participant observation; logbooks; secondary data	Analyse cross-sector contributions to sustainable mountain tourism development	Management/service provider/local community implications—improving the sustainable management of NPs	No
12	2020 [149]	Poland	Quantitative	Quantifying the volume of waste per tourist	Analyse the amount of waste on tourist trails in a popular PA	Management implications—improving the sustainable management of PAs	No
13	2020 [150]	Poland-Slovakia-Ukraine	Quantitative	Questionnaire (for demographic data and tax revenues); secondary data	Analyse the development of ecotourism in relation to the demography, land use, and revenue of local stakeholders	Institution/service provider/local community implications—improving the development of ecotourism	Yes
14	2020 [151]	Italy	Quantitative	Questionnaire (n = 62 respondents)	Analyse the local people's attitude towards sustainable ecotourism development in PAs	Management/service provider/local community implications—developing eco-sustainable goods and services through ecotourism	No
15	2020 [152]	Spain	Quantitative	Questionnaire (n = 75 respondents)	Analyse local people's perceptions of the sustainability of tourism and the public exploitation of NPs	Management/institution/service provider/local community implications—improving coordination in the usage of resources in PAs	Yes
16	2020 [153]	Serbia	Quantitative	Questionnaire (n = 115 respondents)	Determine the tourism potential, the degree of utilisation of PA resources, and the level of awareness of the local population on this matter	Service provider/local community implications—improving the tourism offer in PAs	No
17	2019 [154]	Spain	Mixed	Semi-structured interview (n = 3 respondents); secondary data (e.g., census on local people)	Demonstrate the sustainability of the coexistence of a sports tourism event and a historical and cultural one	Management implications—improving the sustainable management of NPs	Yes

Table 5. Cont.

Nr. Crt.	Year and Reference	Country	Method	Main Instrument of Data Collection	Objectives *	Applicability	Funding
18	2019 [155]	Italy	Mixed	Interview (n = 17 respondents)	Analyse stakeholders' points of view on tourism development	Management/service provider implications—developing integrated tourism offers in PAs	Yes
19	2019 [156]	Finland	Mixed	Semi-structured interview (n = 11 respondents); visitor survey (n = 756 respondents); PPGIS survey (n = 170 respondents)	Analyse the potential of PPGIS use for visitor use planning—case study on an NP	Management/research implications—integrating PPGIS tools into planning processes and management of NPs	No
20	2019 [157]	Iceland	Qualitative	Workshop (n = 14 respondents in 3 groups)	Analyse the use of participatory scenario planning for adaptation planning in glacial mountain tourism	Management implications—reducing uncertainty for long-term planning and decision-making in PAs	Yes
21	2019 [158]	Germany	Mixed	Questionnaire (n = 12 respondents); semi-structured interview (n = 16 respondents)	Analyse the balance between tourism and nature conservation in the context of public participation—case study on an NP	Management implications—balancing between increasing tourism demand and biodiversity conservation	Yes
22	2019 [159]	Poland, Slovakia	Qualitative	Interview (n <sub>1</sub> = 14 Polish respondents, n <sub>2</sub> = 8 Slovak respondents)	Analyse NP authorities' attitude towards the organisation of mass sports events in PAs—case study on an NP	Management/service provider implications—developing and managing sports events in NPs	No
23	2019 [160]	Spain	Quantitative	Interview (n = 15 respondents)	Propose PA categories corresponding to the IUCN framework based on a participatory approach	Management implications—improving the management of PAs	Yes
24	2019 [161]	Turkey	Mixed	Interview	Analyse touristic value by highlighting cultural, historical, and natural viewpoints—case study on an NP	Management/research implications—applying visibility analysis and landscape assessment for NP tourism management	Yes
25	2019 [162]	Serbia	Mixed	Questionnaire (n = 112 respondents)	Analyse the local population's opinion on the sustainability of tourism development and its contribution to rural development in PAs	Management/local community implications—improving sustainable development strategies for tourism in PAs	Yes

Table 5. Cont.

Nr. Crt.	Year and Reference	Country	Method	Main Instrument of Data Collection	Objectives *	Applicability	Funding
26	2019 [163]	Spain	Quantitative	Questionnaire (n = 384 respondents); interview	Analyse the social demand for sustainable management of a PA	Management/local community implications—estimating the optimal distribution of the annual budget of PAs according to social demand	Yes
27	2018 [164]	Spain	Mixed	In-depth, semi-structured interview (n = 7 respondents); focus group (n = 13 respondents in 3 groups); secondary data	Analyse the conflict between tourism, nature conservation, and local economic development in NPs	Management implications—improving tourism management in PAs in the context of conflicting interests	Yes
28	2018 [165]	Serbia	Mixed	Workshops and meetings with local action groups (LAGs); brainstorming	Create and analyse scenarios for the future development of PAs—case study on an NP	Management implications—improving the decision-making process for environmental management in NPs	No
29	2018 [166]	Turkey	Mixed	Questionnaires (n = 9 respondents)	Determine suitable ecotourism activities in PAs—case study on a natural park	Management/service provider implications—improving the development of ecotourism	Yes
30	2017 [167]	Serbia	Mixed	Interview; secondary data	Develop and present the methodology for NP management decision-making	Management/service provider implications—improving the development of ecotourism	No
31	2017 [168]	Alps—examples in NPs included, different countries	Qualitative	Workshop (n = 45 respondents)	Analyse management strategies for winter mountain tourism in relation to biodiversity conservation	Management implications—administering visitors in PAs	No
32	2017 [169]	Spain	Quantitative	Interview (n = 194 respondents)	Analyse relations between local stakeholders in two historically touristic areas—a NP focused on ecotourism and a snow-tourism region	Service provider/local community implications—improving the collaboration between local stockmen in the area of NPs	Yes
33	2017 [170]	Turkey	Quantitative	Semi-structured interview (n = 31 respondents)	Analyse the local guiding activity and its effects on the sustainable management of PAs	Management implications—improving the sustainable management of NPs	No

Table 5. Cont.

Nr. Crt.	Year and Reference	Country	Method	Main Instrument of Data Collection	Objectives *	Applicability	Funding
34	2017 [171]	Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia	Quantitative	Consultation with administrations; secondary data	Analyse differences in tourism development in NPs based on the existing touristic offer	Management/service provider implications—developing the nature-based tourist offer in PAs; creating mutual tourist services through inter-park cooperation	No
35	2016 [172]	Turkey	Quantitative	Questionnaire (n = 59 respondents); in-depth interview (n = 5 respondents)	Analyse and define the ethical aspects of ecotourism activities	Management/local community implications—applying global ethical certification systems for the development of ecotourism	Yes
36	2016 [173]	Turkey	Quantitative	Survey (n = 959 respondents)	Analyse local people’s opinions regarding wildlife and its management, as well as the designation of PAs	Management/local community implications—improving the development of ecotourism	Yes
37	2016 [174]	Turkey	Qualitative	Secondary data from a previous study	Analyse the current state of the PA and make proposals for its sustainable development	Management implications—improving the sustainable development of rafting tourism and management in the PA	No
38	2016 [175]	Slovakia	Quantitative	Secondary data	Determine stakeholders’ socio-economic interactions, considering demography, land use, and revenues in relation to the PA	Management/local community implications—improving cooperation between population and nature conservation bodies and developing sustainable nature-based tourism	Yes
39	2015 [176]	Spain	Quantitative	Workshop (n = 29 respondents)	Analyse “differences in the perception of the spatial distribution of ecosystem services supply and demand between different stakeholders through collaborative mapping”	Management/service provider/local community implications—improving decision-making processes in PA administration	Yes
40	2015 [177]	Greece	Quantitative	Questionnaire (n = 170 respondents); interview (n = 1 respondent)	Analyse the local people’s attitude towards tourism development and their engagement in participatory opportunities	Management/local community implications—improving participatory approaches in PA management	No

Table 5. Cont.

Nr. Crt.	Year and Reference	Country	Method	Main Instrument of Data Collection	Objectives *	Applicability	Funding
41	2014 [178]	Sweden	Quantitative	Secondary data on employment	Compare the influence on the labour market between local communities around NPs and nature reserves	Management/local community implications—assessing the impact of nature protection on tourism labour market development	No
42	2014 [179]	Germany	Quantitative	Questionnaire (n = 197 respondents); interview (n = 25 respondents)	Present a complete cost-benefit analysis	Management implications—improving decision-making processes; analysing nature-based tourism benefits in NPs	Yes
43	2012 [180]	Czech Republic	Quantitative	Survey (n <sub>1</sub> = 181 respondents, n <sub>2</sub> = 200 respondents)	Analyse local people's perception of the success of NP management policies	Management/local community implications—improving PA management policies	Yes
44	2011 [181]	Finland	Quantitative	Questionnaire (n = 185 respondents)	Analyse the attitudes of tourism service providers and decision-makers regarding tourism development—case study on an NP	Management/service provider implications—improving collaboration between service providers and decision-makers for tourism development in NPs	No
45	2011 [182]	Turkey	Quantitative	Questionnaire (n = 500 respondents)	Analyse the carrying capacity of an NP with consideration for its natural and cultural resources	Management implications—improving the sustainable development of NPs with consideration for the carrying capacity	Yes
46	2011 [183]	Estonia	Mixed	Questionnaire (n = 273 respondents)	Present the impact of tourism on local communities	Management/local community implications—improving the communication between authorities of NPs and local communities	Yes
47	2010 [184]	Slovenia	Qualitative	Interview (n = 4 respondents); secondary data	Create a decision model for infrastructure development in NPs	Management implications—improving the sustainable development of ecotourism	Yes
48	2009 [185]	Finland	Qualitative	Semi-structured interview (n = 40 respondents)	Analyse the perceptions of stakeholders on the sociocultural sustainability of tourism—case study on an NP	Management/local community implications—improving the sustainable development of tourism in NPs	Yes

Table 5. Cont.

Nr. Crt.	Year and Reference	Country	Method	Main Instrument of Data Collection	Objectives *	Applicability	Funding
49	2008 [186]	Greece	Quantitative	Paper articles (n = 100 articles)	Analyse the representation of three main topics of environment policy in the local press—ecotourism, forest management, and environmental awareness	Management/institution implications—promoting and sustainably developing ecotourism in PAs	No
50	2007 [187]	Greece	Quantitative	Questionnaire (n = 276 respondents)	Analyse stakeholders' points of view on environmental policy for PA management	Management/institution/research implications—measuring the environmental policy beliefs of stakeholders involved in PA management; supporting participatory approaches	Yes
51	2006 [188]	Greece	Qualitative	In-depth interview (n = 23 respondents)	Determine the local people's perception and interpretation of "nature", "wildlife", and "landscape" in the context of a PA	Management/local community implications—improving participatory approaches in PA management, environmental conservation awareness, and quality of life in local communities	No
52	2000 [189]	Turkey	Quantitative	Survey (n = 15 respondents)	Create an ecosystem zoning procedure to determine its suitability for human activities	Management implications—improving the sustainable development of NPs	No

Note: The objectives of the research are based on the authors' mentions and may partially duplicate their stated goals. Source: own elaboration. \* Year of Early Access as appeared on the WoS database at the time of data collection.

The reduced number of articles focused on other stakeholders in comparison with the ones that address tourists directly could be explained not through reduced interest but rather through the increased complexity of the methodology. A significant number of studies involving stakeholders use qualitative methods, such as interviews, which can better capture their opinions. This implies a longer participation time; thus, data can be more difficult to obtain and the response rate can be lower [190] (p. 344).

The applicability of the research papers that have been reviewed resides in, among others, providing deeper insight into the commonly encountered challenges and helping decision-makers improve their management acumen while respecting all parties concerned.

Considering the Web of Science categories, as shown in Table 6, the ones concerning environmental studies and ecology have recorded the most articles focused on various stakeholders other than tourists. “Environmental Sciences” covers 48% with the highest number of articles, and of all 52 studies analysed, 28 were identified within two or more WoS categories.

**Table 6.** Top 10 WoS categories by the number of identified articles focusing on stakeholders.

Nr. Crt.	Web of Science Categories	No. of Articles
1.	Environmental Sciences	25
2.	Environmental Studies	14
3.	Ecology	11
4.	Green and Sustainable Science and Technology	9
5.	Hospitality, Leisure, Sport, and Tourism	6
6.	Economics	6
7.	Biodiversity Conservation	5
8.	Forestry	4
9.	Geography	2
10.	Management	2

Within the 37 different journals that published the 52 analysed articles included in this section, most papers are found in Sustainability (12%), Polish Journal of Environmental Studies (6%), and Forest Policy and Economics (6%).

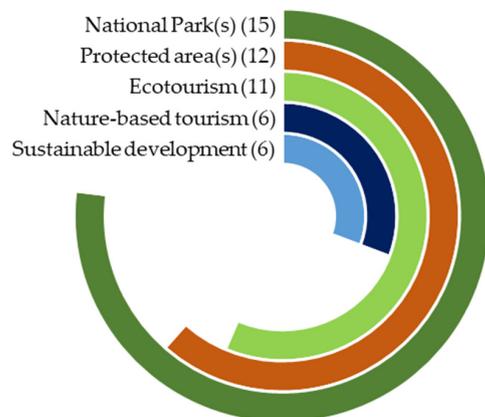
Almost half of all the papers focusing on various stakeholders that were included in the present study (46%) were published in one of the 9 journals presented in Table 7. Unlike the articles that focused on understanding tourists’ behaviours and preferences, most of the ones that address other categories appear in journals with a lower impact factor.

**Table 7.** Top 9 journals with the highest number of published studies focusing on other stakeholders.

Rank	Journal Title	% of Published Articles	5-Year Impact Factor (2020)	WoS Quartile
1	Sustainability	12%	4.089	Q2, Q3, Q4
2	Polish Journal of Environmental Studies	6%	1.845	Q4
3	Forest Policy and Economics	6%	3.954	Q1, Q2
4	Land Use Policy	4%	6.158	Q1
5	Eco Mont-Journal on Protected Mountain Areas Research	4%	0.84	Q4
6	Journal of Environmental Protection and Ecology	4%	0.538	Q4
7	Applied Ecology and Environmental Research	4%	0.897	Q4
8	Journal of Sustainable Tourism	4%	8.952	Q1
9	Environmental Management	4%	3.924	Q3

Source: own elaboration based on data provided by WoS.

The keyword with the highest frequency for articles focused on stakeholders other than tourists is again referring to an area of interest—the national parks, summing a 7% frequency, accounting for 15 entries out of 213 different keywords. Unlike previously analysed, “sustainable development” is also registered as an important label for this category of research (Figure 6).



**Figure 6.** Keywords with the highest frequency in articles focused on other stakeholders. Source: own elaboration based on data provided by WoS.

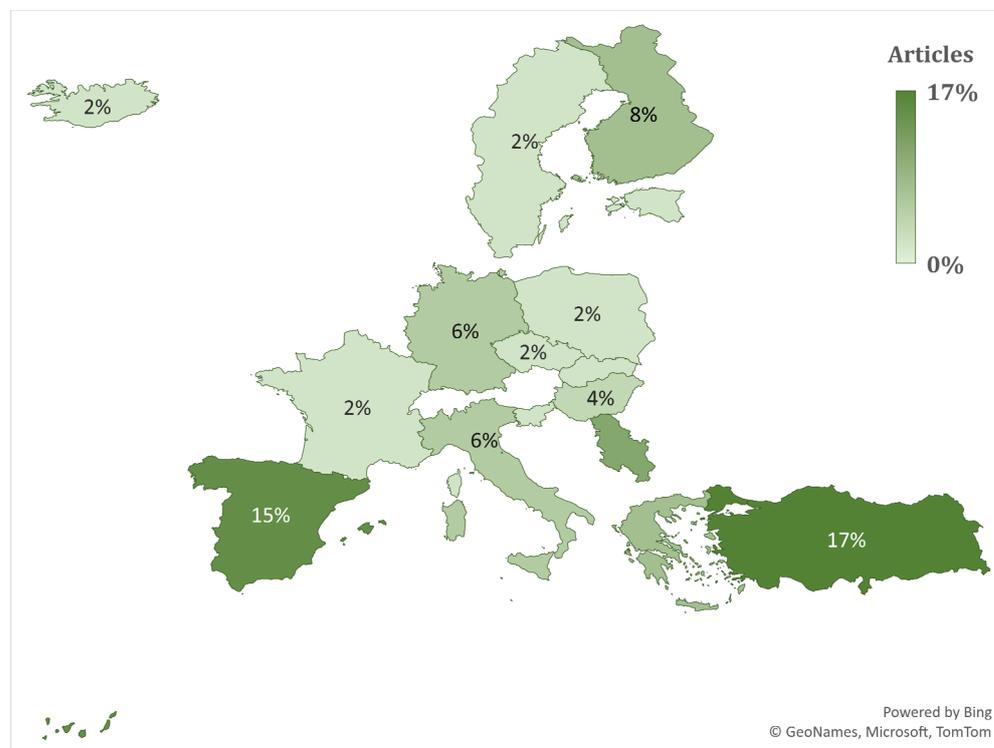
Among the articles that appear to have raised the most interest among other researchers, according to the number of citations registered on the WoS database, “Collaborative mapping of ecosystem services: The role of stakeholders’ profiles” [176] (81 citations), “Can nature-based tourism benefits compensate for the costs of national parks? A study of the Bavarian Forest National Park, Germany” [179] (52 citations), and “Hybrid SWOT—ANP—FANP model for prioritization strategies of sustainable development of ecotourism in National Park Djerdap, Serbia” [167] (50 citations) are the highest regarded. The top 10 most cited articles included in this section of the present review are illustrated in Table 8.

**Table 8.** Top 10 most cited published articles focusing on other stakeholders according to the WoS number of citations.

Rank	Year and Reference	Article Title	Times Cited, WoS Core *
1	2015 [176]	Collaborative mapping of ecosystem services: The role of stakeholders’ profiles	81
2	2014 [179]	Can nature-based tourism benefits compensate for the costs of national parks? A study of the Bavarian Forest National Park, Germany	52
3	2017 [167]	Hybrid SWOT—ANP—FANP model for prioritization strategies of sustainable development of ecotourism in National Park Djerdap, Serbia	50
4	2009 [185]	Local discourses and international initiatives: sociocultural sustainability of tourism in Oulanka National Park, Finland	37
5	2006 [188]	Structural and narrative reconstruction of rural residents’ representations of ‘nature’, ‘wildlife’, and ‘landscape’	34
6	2010 [184]	Towards the ecotourism: A decision support model for the assessment of sustainability of mountain huts in the Alps A New Approach Within ANP-SWOT Framework for	31
7	2018 [165]	Prioritization of Ecosystem Management and Case Study of National Park Djerdap, Serbia	26
8	2008 [186]	Framing environmental policy by the local press: Case study from the Dadia Forest Reserve, Greece	26
9	2007 [187]	Environmental policy beliefs of stakeholders in protected area management	26
10	2011 [182]	Recreation Carrying Capacity Estimates for Protected Areas: A Study of Termessos National Park	24

Source: own elaboration based on data provided by WoS. \* As appeared on the WoS database at the time of data collection (April 2022).

Most study cases and research scenarios have been developed and analysed throughout Europe, with a higher incidence in Turkey (17%), Spain (15%), and Serbia (12%), followed by Finland (8%) and Greece (8%), which can be observed in Figure 7.



**Figure 7.** Percentage of articles by country in Europe focusing on other stakeholders as reviewed in this research. Source: own elaboration based on data provided by WoS.

Funding plays a fundamental role in facilitating the study of the influence, approach, and attitudes of stakeholders involved in organising nature-based tourism in national and natural parks, as previously stated in connection with the research focused on understanding tourists. Out of the 52 papers included in the present section, 56% have received financial support from different institutions, which confirms the interest and need for research on the subject to improve the decision-making process at all levels (management and administration of protected areas, local communities, and service providers, as well as others concerned).

Although quantitative methods of analysing collected data still prevail (50%), the different nature of subjects approached while studying categories of stakeholders other than tourists requires different instruments. Thus, 17% of the papers used qualitative methods for data analysis, and 33% used mixed methodologies. Most often, the instruments used for data collection are a questionnaire or interview, but workshops and focus groups are also occasionally preferred, depending on the context and parties involved in the research.

Improving and innovating methodologies that enable and assist the sustainable management of protected areas are common goals among various stakeholders and the research community, as reflected in the objectives of numerous papers included in the present study. For example, Job et al. [140] analysed methods to estimate attributes and the volume of visitors, while other authors provided alternative approaches for the decision-making processes concerning protected areas [141,142,156,157,165,167,184].

Some of the articles presented in this section (Table 5) analysed cross-sector collaboration, where institutions, park management boards, service providers, and local communities can become involved for the general benefit of national and natural park administration and address conflicting interests. For example, analysing cross-sector contributions to sustainable mountain tourism development [148] can have implications not only for the

park management but also for the service providers and local communities. Analysing the development of ecotourism in relation to the demography, land use, and revenue of local stakeholders [150] can provide valuable knowledge to various institutions, service providers, and residents of parks. Research that can have implications for park management includes, but is not limited to, analysing the balance between tourism and nature conservation [138,139,158,164] or the amount of waste on tourist trails in popular parks [149]. Understanding the carrying capacity of parks with consideration for their natural and cultural resources [182] and creating an ecosystem zoning procedure to determine the suitability for human activities [189] are also important elements for the efficient and durable management of national and natural parks. Presenting a complete cost–benefit analysis for nature-based tourism in parks can help park administration bodies decide how to coordinate human activities within the protected areas [179]. Some articles provided resources to improve the park administration by presenting a decision-making methodology [141,167] or prioritising management strategies [142]. Welling et al. [157] analysed the use of participatory scenario planning for adaptation planning in glacial mountain tourism. Their results can help reduce uncertainty for long-term planning and decision-making in parks.

Involvement of residents and consideration of them in the decision-making process aims at improving their quality of life and the protection of parks at the same time. A few articles included in the present section have potential implications for the residents of national and natural parks and people living in their vicinity. Altunel [145] addressed a subject of potential sensitivity in some cultures—the involvement of local women in ecotourism activities. Other authors analysed the local people’s attitude towards sustainable ecotourism development in parks [151] and their engagement in participatory opportunities [177]. Ristić et al. [162] tried to understand the local population’s opinion on the sustainability of tourism development and its contribution to rural development in parks. Analysing residents’ opinions regarding wildlife and its management, as well as the designation of protected areas [173], can help mitigate the human–wildlife conflict in parks to the benefit of all parties. National parks have strict administration requirements to protect the natural environment, which can sometimes interfere with the lifestyle of residents and their quality of life. Comparing the influence on the labour market between local communities around national parks and nature reserves [178] can provide a better understanding of the degree of influence these conservation measures have on residents.

Applying certain methodologies to address a given subject can have implications for the academic environment, providing knowledge for future studies. For example, analysing the potential of using PPGIS for visitor use planning through a case study on a national park [156] can facilitate future research.

Service providers can improve their awareness and impact on conservation policies when they are included in collaborative actions. Analysing stakeholders’ points of view on tourism development can help create integrated tourism offers in parks [155]. Understanding park authorities’ attitudes towards the organisation of mass sports events in protected areas can address a potential conflict of interest. Suta et al. [171] analysed differences in tourism development in national parks based on the existing touristic offer. Through their research, they can help service providers develop nature-based tourist offers in protected areas and create mutual tourist services through inter-park cooperation.

Some authors deal with themes with potential implications for institutions responsible for tourism policies and regulations. Alcon et al. [163] analysed the social demand for sustainable management of a park to estimate the optimal distribution of the annual budget according to social demand. Hovardas and Poirazidis [187] investigated stakeholders’ points of view on environmental policy for park management, supporting participatory approaches. Hovardas and Korfiatis [186] analysed the representation of three main topics of environment policy in the local press—ecotourism, forest management, and environmental awareness.

## 5. Discussion

The necessity of a more thorough understanding of the ever-growing tourism industry and a durable approach to its development fueled the present research. With an essential need for exhaustive investigation, supported by an increasing focus on nature protection and defining the benefits of nature-based tourism in the context of today's global difficulties, this study aims to gather expansive knowledge on the matter that can further benefit researchers.

Although previous research of a similar nature exists, it is usually focused on particular aspects [49,51,54,191], while the results of the present study aim for a broader approach. It was beyond the scope of this article to focus on a certain subject in the sphere of nature-based tourism but rather to account for the existing literature and organise it according to different attributes, such as keywords, journal, the country of the case study, the type of research method applied and the main instrument of data collection, the objective and potential applicability of the study, and the funding status for the research.

The results of this paper show that, without a harmonised definition of nature-based tourism, the scientific community approaches the concept with a wide perspective, which can be concluded from the wide-ranging variety of objectives described in Tables 1 and 5. This is also emphasised by other authors [11,192]. While some authors focus explicitly on this form of tourism, in a quest to analyse the relevant literature, one should not exclude research that mentions other similar terms. For this reason, it becomes a necessity to place nature-based tourism in relation to other forms of tourism and understand what can be generally included under the same umbrella topic and can become a research pattern.

The data collected for the current study, presented in Tables 4 and 8, suggest a correlation between the relevance of certain research papers in the academic world and the main themes of interest in analysing the touristic activity in protected areas, such as the tourists' perception [123], willingness to pay [126], cost-benefit analysis [179], participatory management [176], the crowding effect [128], assessment of the sociocultural sustainability of touristic activities within a national park [185], and residents' perception of the surrounding natural environment with all its elements [188].

Even if there are profound cultural differences between countries, as well as different policy approaches and extremely varied behaviours, common objectives have emerged from the analysed articles, including testing the efficiency and benefits of cross-sector collaboration and participatory management actions. This finding suggests that conservation efforts can be shared between different actors, ensuring better cooperation, improving existing services, and yielding benefits. This was also supported by Jones et al. [114], Welling et al. [157], and Hovardas and Poirazidis [187].

Understanding the complex mechanisms driving the touristic offer and demand, along with its effects on the environment and the market, should be accompanied by a thorough comprehension of how the enactment of protected areas and the activities occurring within these special territories are influencing the living conditions of residents. While nature-based tourism with its profusion of activities can have both positive and negative effects on the local communities in protected areas, more consistent research is needed, as also emphasised by Thapa et al. [193]. Although most of the reviewed articles are aimed at analysing tourists' behaviour, the residents of protected areas make a complementary and equally important subject for achieving efficient adaptive management. Understanding both perspectives provides a more comprehensive and realistic basis for management purposes. The reduced number of research papers focused on local communities and various stakeholders other than tourists could raise questions regarding the level of implication or interest in the matter at hand. While the complexity of the subject and the means to tackle it could provide a reasonable answer, the subject is expected to witness an increasing trend in research in the following years, creating a good opportunity for future inquiry.

Research on the nature-based tourism subject is one step towards raising awareness of the economic, social, environmental, and cultural implications of the tourism industry in national and natural parks and creating and applying the best policies to minimise the

negative impact and maximise the great benefits it can generate. Covering this research gap in geographical areas where appropriate expertise is lacking, human activity and the incommensurably valuable treasures of nature have the chance to become consonant and balance each other, whether it is about land use, species conservation and research, or achieving a state of physical health and mental well-being as visitors.

Sustainability remains the goal of utmost importance when it comes to the administration of protected areas and their surroundings. In this context, future research can encourage and support better cooperation between the population and conservation bodies for human–wildlife co-existence.

## 6. Conclusions

This systematic review contributes to a clearer understanding of the concept of nature-based tourism as well as creating a centralised data collection of various research information published between 2000 and 2021 that can be used in future studies. The review indicates a wide variety of methods that can be used to obtain valuable practical information, which has been emphasised through the analysis of the papers' applicability. The information collected and systematised could also aid other researchers interested in investigating the results of case studies concerning a given topic in the context of nature-based tourism in European national and natural parks. The reliability of the collected data is impacted by the process of registering the full information of new articles, including publication dates. The results can only be generalised in the context of the chosen research database, Web of Science™. Due to the lack of consensus on officially defining nature-based tourism, the results are limited by the selected syntax, as decided by the authors of this paper. The methodological choices were primarily constrained by time and resources, making it difficult to expand the search criteria. Understanding the different interests and concerns of all parties affected can help avoid and mitigate potential conflicts. Therefore, a high potential for future research exists, where this review can be a commencement for deepening knowledge in the quest for understanding tourism in protected areas. Despite the limitations, the results provide new insight into the touristic activity and management of national and natural parks in Europe and can be used as starting material for other literature reviews focused on specific elements of interest. Such research opportunities include analysing the effects of tourism and park designation in balance with wildlife conservation, enriching research material that focuses on communities and their involvement in the administration of protected areas, and creating collaborative studies that include various economic actors and stakeholders in the tourism sector.

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