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SciELO

Current status, attractions, and obstacles for ecotourism in protected areas of Amapá, Brazil

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Abstract: Activities - such as ecotourism - capable of harmonizing income generation and environmental conservation have become increasingly important. The aim of the present study is to investigate ecotourism's status in protected areas (PA) of Amapá State. Interviews were conducted with managers of PAs that allow tourist visitations in the aforementioned state, addressing the current ecotourism status, possibilities, access, obstacles, and control in the investigated PAs. We recorded that ecotourism takes place in almost all PAs in Amapá State, although it appears to happen at levels below their potential. Most observed obstacles were linked to lack of investments by the government (lack of infrastructure, promotion, public policies, management plan, and human and financial resources). High costs, mainly the ones associated with transport, were also a significant obstacle to this activity. The main attractions comprised natural or cultural attributes, which are common in the Amazon, a fact that leads to the need of promoting exclusive characteristics of Amapá State.

Keywords: Sustainable development; Community-based tourism; public use; Biodiversity conservation; Protected

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Introduction

The current development model takes the environment as provider of inexhaustible raw materials (DALY; FARLEY, 2017), a fact that leads the world towards an environmental crisis featured by the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services (GIAM, 2017). Such a model also subjects billions of people to poverty, i.e., they do not have their basic needs met (MAX-NEEF, 2012). Therefore, it is necessary to adopt a sustainable development model capable of improving individuals' living conditions without "compromising future generations' ability to meet their own needs" (WORLD COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT, 1987).

Sustainable development presupposes the equitable and inclusive division of wealth, improvements in basic living standards, as well as the integrated and sustainable management of natural resources (UNITED NATIONS, 2012). Therefore, sustainability depends on maintaining ecosystems' health and on sharing benefits across society (MEBRATU, 1998). Thus, social participation in sustainable development is a fundamental element since it allows knowledge sharing and negotiation of power relationships (PITA et al., 2009). Thus, the economic sphere is no longer an end and becomes a means to achieve sustainable development (SACHS, 2007).

Protected areas (PAs) are one of the main strategies used to mitigate the current environmental crisis and to promote sustainable development (GRAY et al., 2016). Besides enabling biodiversity conservation, protected areas can generate different values through ecosystem services, extraction of natural products by traditional peoples, and sustainable forest management, among other elements (MEDEIROS; YOUNG, 2011). Moreover, protected areas provide opportunities for ecotourism, which is the tourism segment focused on natural (landscapes and biodiversity) and cultural attractions that are compatible with environmental conservation and capable of bringing benefits to communities (CEBALLOS-LASCURÁIN, 2002; PERALTA, 2012).

Ecotourism's fast growth worldwide is closely linked to the current environmental crisis. Natural environments, when scarce, are also more desired for tourism purposes (LAYRARGUES, 2004). Ecotourism is an activity compatible with sustainable development, since it can generate social and economic benefits while conserving the environment (DAVENPORT; RAO, 2002; IRVING; AZEVEDO, 2002).

However, ecotourism is not always practiced as sustainable activity since, sometimes, it leads to increasing environmental impacts (MATHEUS; RAIMUNDO, 2017) and/or concentrates profits in the hands of a limited number of "entrepreneurs" (LAYRARGUES, 2004). Community-Based Tourism (CBT) is an important modality in this context, wherein local communities play the main role in collectively managing tourist activities, better distributing the generated benefits, valuing cultural heritage and communities' quality of life, as well as strengthening environmental education and conservation (ICMBIO, 2019b). CBT in PAs becomes increasingly strong (SANSOLO et al., 2009) and promotes innovative alternatives to enable PA management and social inclusion (IRVING et al., 2015).

All the 12 different PA categories in Brazil allow visitations, and tourism is allowed in 10 of them. Visitations to PAs require a management plan, which is a guiding docu-

ment for PA management that defines the zones where each activity may, or may not, be performed (BRASIL, 2000). Brazilian federal PAs were visited by 12.4 million tourists, in 2018 (ICMBIO, 2019a), and they have the potential to generate billions of *reais* a year through ecotourism (MEDEIROS; YOUNG, 2011).

However, visitations to PAs face obstacles, such as lack of management plan (FARIA, 2007; MEDEIROS; YOUNG, 2011); lack of infrastructure to receive visitors (SEMEIA, 2019) and to enable them to access and stay in these areas (OLIVEIRA-FILHO; MONTEIRO, 2009); local residents' poor training to work in ecotourism (OLIVEIRA, 2011), conflicts with populations living in, or around, PAs (MORSELLO, 2001; OLMOS et al., 2005); and competition with other activities capable of affecting the local environment (BENTO 2010).

Each PA has its own reality, besides being susceptible to different obstacles; thus, there is not a single recipe applicable to all cases. It is essential to understand these obstacles and their origins to help solve them and enhance ecotourism.

Amapá State has high biodiversity, different ecosystems and a rich culture represented by traditional peoples, such as riverside, indigenous and quilombola communities (CONSERVAÇÃO INTERNACIONAL BRASIL, 2007; DRUMMOND et al., 2008; HILÁRIO et al., 2017). Iit is also the best preserved (INPE, 2019) and most protected state in Brazil (62% of its area corresponds to PAs - DRUMMOND et al., 2008).

However, there is criticism towards the vast extension of Amapá State's PAs, which is seen as an obstacle to economic growth (TOSTES; MOURA, 2017). Thus, ecotourism becomes a potentially relevant activity capable of meeting the demand for economic growth, while conserving local biodiversity and culture, and justifying the existence of PAs. In fact, according to estimates, tourist visitations in the six largest PAs in Amapá State (alone) can generate at least US$1.8 million a year (DIAS et al., 2016).

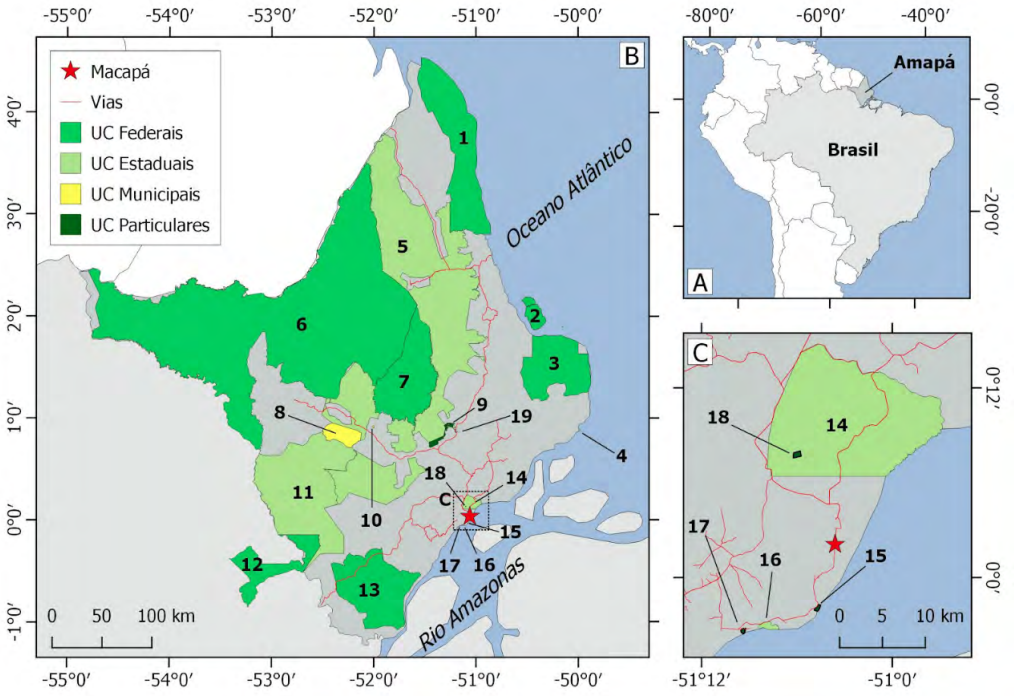
To encourage ecotourism in Amapá State's PAs, it is necessary to understand the potential attractions offered by PAs, as well as the main obstacles faced by them in order to receive tourists . Therefore, the aim of the current study was to investigate ecotourism's status in Amapá State's PAs, as well as their potentials and obstacles.

Methodology

Study site

The object investigated in the current research comprised PAs that allow tourist visits in Amapá State (15 of the 19 State's PAs), in the Northeastern extreme of the Brazilian Amazon (Figure 1, Table 1). Amapá State hosts different ecosystems, such as "terra firme" (non-floodable) and floodplain forests, savannas, mangroves, floodplain fields, rivers and lakes (CONSERVAÇÃO INTERNACIONAL BRASIL, 2007; DRUMMOND et al., 2008), and it enables high biodiversity and different ecotourism experiences.

Figure 1 – Map showing the location of PAs in Amapá State. Among them, Ecological Stations and Biological Reserves only allow visits of educational or scientific nature. All other PAs allow tourist visitations



1 - Cabo Orange National Park; 2 - Maracá-Jipioca Ecological Station; 3 - Piratuba Lake Biological Reserve; 4 – Parazinho Biological Reserve; 5 - Amapá State Forest; 6 - Tumucumaque Mountains National Park; 7 - Amapá National Forest; 8 - Beija-Flor Brilho de Fogo Extractive Reserve ; 9 - Seringal Triunfo Private Reserve of Natural Heritage (PRNH); 10 – Natural Park of Cancão; 11 - Iratapuru River Sustainable Development Reserve; 12 – Jari Ecological Station; 13 – Cajari River Extractive Reserve; 14 - Curiaú River Environmental Protection Area ; 15 - Ekinox Village PRNH; 16 - Fazendinha Environmental Protection Area; 17 - Revecom PRNH; 18 - Retiro Paraíso PRNH; 19 - Retiro Boa Esperança PRNH.

Source: Elaborated by the authors, 2022.

Chart 1 – Amapá State's PAs open for tourist visitation; their jurisdiction and managing agency. ICMBio: Chico Mendes Institute for Biodiversity; SEMA: Amapá State Secretariat for the Environment

Name	Jurisdiction	Managing Agency
Fazendinha Environmental Protection Area	State	SEMA
Curiaú River Environmental Protection Area	State	SEMA
Amapá State Forest	State	SEMA
Amapá National Forest	Federal	ICMBio
Cabo Orange National Park	Federal	ICMBio
Tumucumaque Mountains National Park	Federal	ICMBio
Municipal Natural Park of Cancão	Municipal	Municipal Secretariat for the Environment of Serra do Navio County
Iratapuru River Sustainable Development Reserve	State	SEMA
Beija-Flor Brilho de Fogo Extractive Reserve	Municipal	Municipal Secretariat for the Environment of Pedra Branca do Amapari County
Cajari River Extractive Reserve	Federal	ICMBio
Ekinox Village PRNH	Private	The owner
Retiro Boa Esperança PRNH	Private	The owner
Retiro Paraíso PRNH	Private	The owner
REVECOM PRNH	Private	The owner
Seringal Triunfo PRNH	Private	The owner

Source: Elaborated by the authors, 2022.

Data collection and analysis

A quali-quantitative approach was herein adopted to collect information about ecotourism aspects in Amapá State's PAs; it was done through interviews conducted with the managers of each PA, between September and November 2018. Attempts were made to contact all PAs open for tourist visitation; however, it was not possible interviewing the managers of the two municipal PAs and of four of the five Private Reserves of Natural Heritage (PRNHs). Thus, interviews were conducted with nine PA managers. The difficulty in contacting the PAs that did not participate in the current research would also be felt by potential ecotourists and likely result in difficulty to visit these places.

Interviews were based on semi-structured forms comprising 10 questions that covered PA identification, ecotourism situation and possibilities, access to the PA, obstacles and control. The questions had some pre-elaborated alternatives (e.g., structures to support visitation, tourist attractions, among others), although they allowed managers to indicate other possibilities. Therefore, data analysis was quantitatively performed, based

on quantifying the number of responses indicating each aspect, but it was also qualitatively performed, based on additional information provided by the interviewed managers.

Given the complexity of the addressed topics, participants' responses may not cover all possibilities. Nevertheless, responses were kept in the same way they were expressed by interviewees. This methodology was approved by the Research Ethics Committee of Federal University of Amapá (statement 2,036,894/2017); interviews were carried out upon all participants' consent.

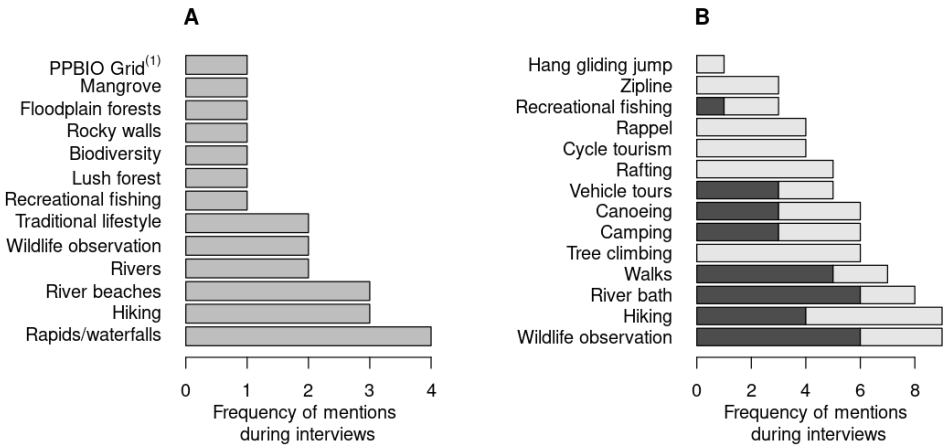
Results

Only Iratapuru River Sustainable Development Reserve did not have any experience with ecotourism among the investigated PAs, a fact that was attributed to the difficulty to access it. All other PAs had already developed, or were in the process to develop, ecotourism; two of them (Amapá State Forest and Cajari River Extractive Reserve) were visited by tourists in a manner not authorized by their management office. Cajari River Extractive Reserve manager has attributed the informality of this activity to lack of management plan. However, ecotourism has been practiced in Curiaú River Environmental Protection Area, Fazendinha Environmental Protection Area and Revecom PRNH, despite their lack of management plan.

All interviewed managers believed that the PAs have great potential for ecotourism practice. According to them, rapids/waterfalls, hiking and river beaches are the main attractions in these PAs (Figure 2a). Among the activities mostly cited as having the potential to be performed in PAs, one finds wildlife observation, hiking, river bathing and hiking, which were also the activities mostly performed by PA visitors (Figure 2b).

Control over the number of visitors in PAs remains deficient; Revecom PRNH is the only PA systematically controlling it, based on a visitors' book and entrance fee. Four other PAs (Curiaú River Environmental Protection Area, Tumucumaque Mountains National Park, Amapá National Forest and Cabo Orange National Park) have partial control of it. The first two based their control process on authorization requests to enter the PAs. Amapá National Forest only controls people who pass through the PA base, which is located at its main access. Cabo Orange National Park only has control over people taken by guides and private companies, but they do not have control over those taken by communities.

Figure 2 (A) - Main attractions - mentioned by interviewed managers - of the nine investigated Amapá State's PAs. (B) Main activities with potential to be performed by visitors, or already in place in the investigated PAs[1]



Source: Elaborated by the authors, 2022.

Tabela 1 – Mean access time from downtown Macapá City and means of transportation necessary to access the investigated protected areas

Protected Area	Mean access time	Necessary means of transportation
Tumucumaque Mountains National Park	9 to >24 hours(1)	Mixed
Iratapuru River Sustainable Development Reserve	~20 hours	Mixed
Cabo Orange National Park	8 to 12 hours (2)	Overland or Mixed
Amapá National Forest	~5.5 hours	Mixed
Cajari River Extractive Reserve	~4 hours	Overland
Amapá State Forest	2 to 4 hours (2)	Overland or Mixed
Revecom PRNH	30 minutes	Overland
Fazendinha Environmental Protection Area	20 to 30 minutes	Overland or Mixed
Curiaú River Environmental Protection Area	20 to 30 minutes	Overland or Mixed

(1) Including overnight stay

(2) Depending on the route

Source: Elaborated by the authors, 2022.

1 - System of trails used for scientific researches

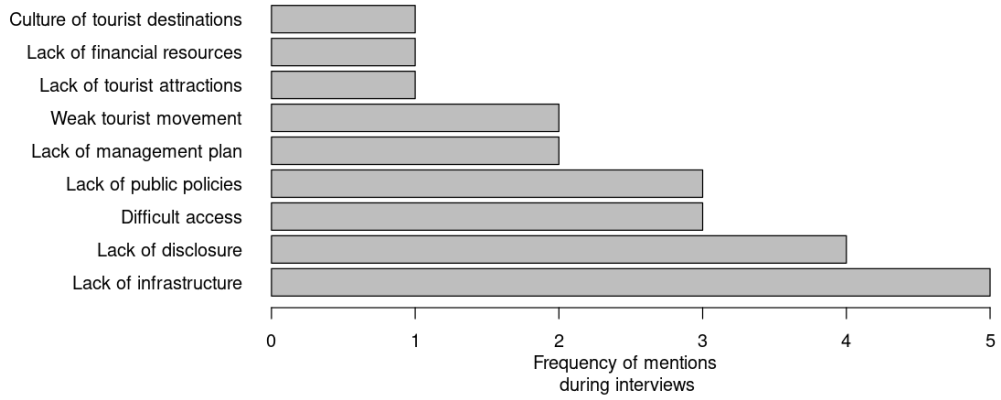
Most PAs have little or no infrastructure to support visitations within their boundaries. The following units presented the best infrastructure to receive visitors: Revecom PRNH (tourist guides, visitor center and parking lot), Fazendinha Environmental Protection Area (parking lot, tourist guides and restaurants/cafeterias) and Cajari River Extractive Reserve (restaurants, inns and parking lot). Amapá National Forest and Cabo Orange National Park only count on their field bases, which are used for management activities, as well as to support visitation activities performed at their units. Tumucumaque Mountains National Park has a jungle camp, whereas Curiaú River Environmental Protection Area only has few signs, two tracks and one panoramic deck. On the other hand, Iratapuru River Sustainable Development Reserve and Amapá State Forest do not have any structure to support visitation or management in their territories.

On the other hand, five PAs (Curiaú Environmental Protection Area, Fazendinha Environmental Protection Area, Amapá State Forest, Cabo Orange National Park, and Cajari River Extractive Reserve) have tourism/ecotourism support structures in their adjacent regions. The areas surrounding the other PAs (Amapá National Forest, Tumucumaque Mountains National Park, Iratapuru River Sustainable Development Reserve and Revecom PRNH) have incipient, or non-existing, infrastructure to support visitors.

In fact, lack of infrastructure was described by managers as the main obstacle to tourism in Amapá State's PAs (Figure 3). Lack of disclosure, difficult access and lack of public policies were also important obstacles, from managers' perspective. Lack of management plans was another important obstacle to this activity, although it was only mentioned by two managers; four of the investigated PAs (Curiaú River Environmental Protection Area, Fazendinha Environmental Protection Area, Cajari River Extractive Reserve and Revecom PRNH) did not have management plans.

According to the interviewed managers, lack of disclosure, difficult access, lack of public policies and weak tourist movement in the state were also significant obstacles to ecotourism activity in protected areas (Figure 3).

Figure 3 – Main obstacles to ecotourism in the herein investigated nine Amapá State's PAs, according to their respective managers



Source: Elaborated by the authors, 2022.

Discussion

Obstacles and challenges to ecotourism in Amapá State's PAs

Results have shown that ecotourism in PAs is already in place in Amapá State. However, this activity does not reach all PAs and most of them appear to be used well below their potential. From managers' perspective, most obstacles to visit Amapá State's PAs are associated with lack of investments - i.e., lack of infrastructure, publicity, public policies, management plan and financial resources.

This scenario is consistent with what happens in other Amazonian destinations, such as Cazumbá-Iracema Extractive Reserve (Acre State) and Pedras Negras Extractive Reserve (Rondônia State), among others (MORAES; IRVING, 2013; PERALTA, 2012). In fact, ecotourism can be income generator for the region (MUANIS et al., 2009; MEDEIROS; YOUNG, 2011); however, it is necessary investing in minimum infrastructure to receive tourists, as well as in promoting destinations, in order to make this activity attractive (LAYRARGUES, 2004; SEMEIA, 2019).

Promoting destinations is directly linked to another obstacle mentioned by interviewees, namely: the culture of tourist destinations. The main tourist destinations in Brazil are located in its coastal areas (MINISTÉRIO DO TURISMO, 2018); however, Brazilian tourists often prefer to travel abroad, rather than visiting PAs in the Amazonian region (MINISTÉRIO DO TURISMO; FUNDAÇÃO GETÚLIO VARGAS, 2017) - this issue can be partly reversed through investments in PA-promotion campaigns.

Resources used to minimize barriers to ecotourism in PAs can come from three different sources. The first one lies on governments, which account for promoting tourism, mainly the federal and state governments, which manage the herein investigated PAs.

The second source can be Payment for Environmental Services (PES), such as climate regulation, carbon storage and water source (MUANIS et al., 2009; WHITELAW et al., 2014). The third source would be the reactivation of the Amazon Fund (*Fundo Amazônia*, in Portuguese), which has already received almost 3.5 billion *reais* (FUNDO AMAZÔNIA, 2019), but was suspended due to differences between the Brazilian government and the main donors at a time of scarce resources for the conservation of the Amazon Forest (G1, 2019).

Since it was launched, in 2008, the Amazon Fund has contributed to reduce deforestation in the Amazonian region (FUNDO AMAZÔNIA, 2019), partly due to the allocation of R$ 480 million (until 2018) to alternatives capable of valuing the standing forest, which is where the support to CBT lies on (KADRI et al., 2020). Thus, the suspension of the Amazon Fund is a significant loss of potential resources to promote ecotourism in PAs throughout the Brazilian Amazon Forest and in Amapá State; moreover, it forces managers to use either government or PES-deriving resources.

Several ecotourism and CBT development plans focused on the sustainable development of the Amazonian region have been prepared at national, regional or state level, since the 1990s. Among them, one finds the Amazon Tourism Plans, the Legal Amazon Ecotourism Development Program, the National Ecotourism Program, the Sustainable Amazon Plan and the Amazonas State Tourism Plan (SANTOS, 2019). However, these plans were not enough to rule out most obstacles hindering these activities in the Amazonian region, mainly the ones associated with logistics, deficient infrastructure and actors' training (MORAES; IRVING, 2013; PERALTA, 2012).

Transportation is often the main tourists' expense in Brazil, as a whole (MINISTÉRIO DO TURISMO, 2012). However, the high cost of this item, in association with access difficulties, is a major obstacle in the Amazonian region, where distances to several destinations are often long (SEMEIA, 2019). Access to five of the nine investigated PAs takes four hours, or longer, and three of them can only be accessed through river transportation - this scenario is similar to that of other Amazonian states (SEMEIA, 2019).

Long distances demand greater availability of time and raise the costs of tourist activity. In addition, river transportation is more expensive than the overland one, since it requires hiring vessels and one, or more, specialized professionals (i.e. boatman, bowman, pilot), consumes more fuel, as well as demands intermediary agents (guides and tourism agencies) to organize these services. PA managers' perception about this aspect is in line with tourists' perspective, who claim that travel costs and long distances are the main barriers to visit the Amazonian region (SEMEIA, 2020).

If, on the one hand, access difficulties limit the number of individuals willing to visit a given destination, on the other hand, it can become an attraction. River and dirt road routes pass through landscapes with scenic beauty and can configure an ecotourism activity by itself. In fact, from the perspective of tourists visiting the Amazonian region, scenic beauty is much more important than the traveled distance at the time to choose their destination (OLIVEIRA, 2014). In addition, the most isolated destinations remain better preserved, a fact that increases their attractiveness for ecotourists (LAYRARGUES,

2004).

On the other hand, the idea of small-scale tourism can compromise the economic revenue of this activity (RABINOVICI, 2012). Local population's broad and active participation in the tourist activity, from the sale of tourist packages to the provision of necessary services (transportation, food, accommodation, and guide), is the most desirable solution in this scenario (OLIVEIRA; BLOS, 2012), since working with tourism would provide additional income, among other income sources, for the local population, even at small scale, as well as promote sustainable development.

Lack of management plan was pointed out by two managers as an obstacle to ecotourism in PAs. In fact, four of the investigated PAs lacked a management plan. According to the Brazilian legislation, all PA visitation activities must comply with their respective management plans and they cannot (or should not) take place when the plan is missing (BRASIL, 2000).

Elaborating management plans enables better structuring activities of a given PA by guiding ecotourism, as well as outlining guidelines and goals for this activity, so it takes place in compliance with the PA's goals. Amapá State's PA management bodies must prioritize the elaboration of management plans to help ruling out this obstacle and complying with the Brazilian legislation, according to which, management plans must be published within five years after PA's designation (BRASIL, 2000).

On the other hand, low compliance with this legal requirement is a common issue in the national territory; only 19% of PAs have management plans (MMA, 2020). In addition to prepare management plans, the legislation requires them to be subjected to periodic reviews (BRASIL, 2000). The elaboration or periodic review of management plans must be carried out under broad dialogue with the local community (ICMBIO, 2009a) to help finding points of convergence to set a local development model that emphasizes environmental conservation and that promotes social and economic development to help improving the quality of life of local populations.

The analysis of the existing management plans (ICMBIO, 2009b; BRASIL, 2010; ICMBIO 2014; GEA, 2014; GEA, 2015) has evidenced the need for better planning PA's public use. Although all these plans include public-use programs, most of them have vague goals, mainly with regards to the definition of deadlines. Only two of the analyzed plans addressed the installation of infrastructure and none of them mentioned the promotion of tourist destinations, which were the two main obstacles observed in the present research.

In addition, there is no detailed description of activities planned to reach the goals of the management plans, and no definition of costs with financial and human resources. It is necessary to improve the planning process at these points to enable capturing resources external to the managing institutions, for example, by submitting projects to the Amazon Fund.

Lack of systematization of PA-visitation data is associated with lack of human resources (MUANIS et al., 2009). The workload of PAs' few employees often makes it impossible for them to properly register ecotourism information. Lack of visitation data systematization hinders the in-depth diagnosis of this activity, as well as the monitoring

of its impacts, results and goals. This monitoring is also important to check whether ecotourism takes place in a responsible manner. Moreover, it is necessary to systematically assess whether the investigated activity has damaged, or not, the PA environment (BURGOS; MERTENS, 2015; FILETTO; MACEDO, 2015).

Tourist activity concession to the private sector was recently suggested as a solution to shortage of human resources in federal PAs and to expand tourist visitations in National Parks (BRASIL, 2019). However, this alternative is far from solving the herein addressed issues due to several reasons. Firstly, although this solution has the potential to overcome the lack of structure to receive tourists, it does not solve PA-access issues, mainly to the most remote ones.

In fact, this concession is only designed for the most accessible PAs, which already receive a considerable number of tourists; thus, it does not provide any solution to the other PAs. Moreover, profits are concentrated in the hands of concession companies, whereas local populations get little or no benefit at all. Although investing in training local residents (OLIVEIRA, 2011), allowing them to take the leading role in ecotourism activities (ICMBIO, 2019b), as well as to promote associativism – which distributes benefits among communities in a more equitable manner – is a more complex solution, it is certainly in compliance with sustainability principles (SAMPAIO, 2005; ICMBIO, 2019b).

Thus, several smaller concessions, rather than a single large concession (the most common form), can be made in the same PA as strategy to create opportunities for the participation of local organizations. Furthermore, outsourcing is associated with lesser inspection of ecotourism impacts, and it can increase the environmental damage caused by this activity (MATHEUS; RAIMUNDO, 2017).

The government must play its role as promoter of an inclusive and environmentally balanced development model (LAYRARGUES, 2004), rather than seeking simple alternatives that reproduce inequalities and that do not solve problems. The Amazonian region already has examples of CBT where the population plays the role of monitoring environmental damage caused by ecotourism, of establishing visitation rules to minimize this damage, and of applying sanctions to non-compliance cases (SANTOS, 2019). Community's leading role in this aspect assures that community interests prevail, as well as reduces the demand for human resources in PA management bodies.

Accordingly, it is important to differentiate CBT from mass tourism. Urban or peri-urban PAs oftentimes show higher visitation rates (FIDÉLIS et al., 2015), a fact that was also noticed in the present study. However, mass tourism often clashes with the goals of PAs and causes environmental damage (pollution, natural resources' depletion - BARBOSA; CAMPOS, 2017; FIDÉLIS et al., 2015). In addition, they are associated with a perspective that privileges short-term economic gains (BARBOSA; CAMPOS, 2017) and that is dissociated from sustainable and inclusive development.

Negative impacts of ecotourism in Amazonian PAs are not limited to environmental damage. Several studies have listed changes in local population's daily life, marginalization or even abandonment of traditional activities, generation of greed in the local population, cultural changes, violence, prostitution, pressure on water, sewage and energy services,

as well as inflation of land and product prices (BARBOSA; CAMPOS, 2017; LOPES; SANTOS, 2014; MORAES; IRVING 2013; OLIVEIRA, 2012; PERALTA, 2012).

However, many of these issues stem from the exclusion of local communities from decision-making processes (BARBOSA; CAMPOS, 2017). It is necessary to take into consideration that ecotourism in PAs also has positive impacts, such as generating income and jobs, valuing local culture and maintaining biodiversity (BARBOSA; CAMPOS, 2017; LOPES; SANTOS, 2014; OLIVEIRA, 2012; PERALTA, 2012). Therefore, it is necessary to find ways to minimize its negative impacts and to enhance the positive ones (LOPES; SANTOS, 2014).

A single manager has pointed out the lack of tourist attractions as an obstacle to visit Amapá State's PAs. However, this viewpoint goes against the perspective of the other managers, who listed a series of potential attractions.

Most obstacles to ecotourism in Amapá State's PAs reflect the reality of other Brazilian PAs, mainly the Amazonian ones. Therefore, solutions, such as investing in promotion and improving the infrastructure to enable individuals' access to PAs and to receive tourists, as well as monitoring impacts and designing new projects, can and should be implemented by other PAs to enhance ecotourism activity in other regions.

Attractions and potentials

From managers' perspective, the region's natural (rapids, rivers, beaches and forest) or cultural (knowledge and practices linked to traditional peoples' lifestyle) attributes are the main attractions of Amapá State's PAs. These attractions are in compliance with the attributes mostly valued by ecotourists in Brazil, namely: water (waterfalls, lakes, rivers and sea - 46%), regional culture (19%), woods and forests (17%) (MINISTÉRIO DO TURISMO, 2010). In fact, most of these attractions are features observed in the entire Amazonian region (e.g., rivers, wildlife observation, biodiversity, lush forest); thus, they do not differentiate Amapá State's PAs from those of other parts of this region (NELSON, 2012).

Thus, Amapá State may face difficulties in competing for tourists with more consolidated centers, such as Manaus and Belém regions. A likely advantage of Amapá State lies on its status of best preserved state in Brazil (INPE, 2019), in association with some specific attractions, such as *Marabaixo*, which is a unique cultural manifestation of this state that can be seen in Curiaú River Environmental Protection Area (PESSOA; VENERA, 2016); the influence of tides in the estuarine region of the Amazon River that enable high- and low-ebb cycles twice a day - in opposition to the seasonal cycles observed in other parts of the Amazonian region – and that can be observed in Fazendinha and Curiaú River Environmental Protection Areas (DRUMMOND et al., 2008); the largest National Park in Brazil, i.e., Tumucumaque Mountains National Park (DRUMMOND et al., 2008); the largest trees in the Amazon Forest, which reach over 80 m (in height) and can be seen in Iratapuru River Sustainable Development Reserve and in Tumucumaque Mountains National Park (GORGENS et al., 2019); and the border with French Guiana,

which can enable easier access to European tourists. However, it is necessary to publicize these features to help promoting ecotourism in Amapá State.

Amapá State's government plays a key role in meeting the need of attracting tourists from other regions. The federal government has historically concentrated investments in the most consolidated regions, states and municipalities, in each context (CRUZ, 2005); thus, Amapá State is at disadvantage, since it is a peripheral state located in Northern Brazil. Therefore, Amapá State's government must invest in promoting these unique features that are capable of attracting tourists to the state, even as a way to attract money to the state through tourism. Investments in access infrastructures (e.g., airports, ports, roads) should also be primarily made by the state government. In addition to ecotourism in PAs, these investments would also benefit the state's population. Therefore, one of the main criticisms towards the extension of Amapá State's PAs could be minimized (TOSTES; MOURA, 2017) by expanding their role as economic resource and social well-being generator.

The main attractions listed by managers mostly correspond to activities already in place in these PAs, as well as to activities mentioned as having the potential to be put in place. Hiking, wildlife observation, river bathing, and cycle tourism are also the most common activities in place in other Brazilian PAs (SEMEIA, 2019; ICMBio, 2019b). Among the potential activities mentioned by interviewees, tree climbing, zip-lining and hang gliding require a certain infrastructure and trained professionals. Activities such as walks, hiking, and cycle tourism also demand investments, although small, in infrastructure (track implementation, maintenance and signaling). Thus, even small investments in infrastructure can further enhance ecotourism in Amapá State's PAs.

Some attractions rarely mentioned by PA managers in Amapá State may have great potential, such as the case of sport fishing, which attracts tourists from different Brazilian regions and generates benefits to some Amazonian PAs (BARBOSA; CAMPOS, 2017; SANTOS, 2019). The "water trails" in flooded forests (floodplain and blackwater-flooded forests) also attract visitors to Anavilhanas National Park, Amazonas State (OLIVEIRA, 2012). On the other hand, traditional lifestyle - which may involve activities, such as collecting Brazil nut, handcrafting, and medicinal gardens, among others - was not mentioned as potential activity by managers, although it was pointed out as tourist attraction in Cazumbá-Iracema Extractive Reserve, Acre State (MORAES; IRVING 2013).

Although, so far, CBT is only in place in two PAs, managers have pointed out the potential to develop this activity in other PAs or in their surroundings. CBT can help better distributing ecotourism-associated benefits across the community (FONTOURA, 2017), a fact that strengthens the participatory management of PAs, mainly of those that also focus on protecting traditional peoples (ICMBio, 2019b). Based on these benefits, it is essential including this modality - as priority - in plans for the tourist development of Amapá State.

In fact, it is necessary to include local populations in all decision-making stages, such as planning the public use of PAs, negotiating tourist packages, offering tourist services (accommodation, transportation, guide and food), and PA management activi-

ties (boatmen, watchmen, cooks and park rangers - ICMBIO, 2019b), so tourism can benefit them. In order to do so, there must be investments in training the population living around PAs, in supporting the promotion of community initiatives and in close relationship with tourism agencies and with the operator market. Examples of initiatives in this direction comprise training local dwellers who live around Amapá National Forest to work in CBT (FLORESTA NACIONAL DO AMAPÁ, 2020), and training 164 park rangers throughout the state (PACHECO; RUSSO, 2018).

These training actions should be expanded to enable ecotourism to play a role in income distribution for local dwellers living around PAs, rather than just for some links in the tourist chain (LAYRARGUES, 2004). Inns in Uatumã Sustainable Development Reserve hire cooks from Manaus City to the detriment of people who live in the local community (SANTOS, 2019). However, individuals living in this reserve will certainly be able to cook as well as non-local cooks, after proper training.

In addition, associativism or cooperativism is crucial to assure the success of these community initiatives (MORAES; IRVING 2013; SAMPAIO, 2005). In fact, some associations and cooperatives are already in place in Amapá State's PAs, but they are mainly linked to extractivism (DRUMMOND et al., 2008; GEA 2015). Therefore, associations and cooperatives aimed at working in CBT should be encouraged. Providing training to the local population and establishing/strengthening associations and cooperatives can enable the tourist activity to get in line with sustainability principles by distributing benefits through the community, by improving its quality of life and by breaking with income concentrating logics.

Some tourism experiences in Amazonian PAs teach valuable lessons that can be applied in the Amapá State's context. Firstly, one must take into consideration that CBT should not be seen as the only solution to local communities' issues (BARBOSA; CAMPOS, 2017; MORAES; IRVING 2013; SANTOS, 2019); in fact, it is necessary preventing community members from having unrealistic expectations about this activity (PERALTA, 2012). Therefore, CBT should not replace the other activities in place in these communities; it should add to them (SANTOS, 2019). Moreover, standards regulating tourist activity in PAs must be established by associations or representative deliberative councils, although it does not fully rule our local conflicts of interest (SANTOS, 2019). Finally, technical support must be provided on a permanent basis, since, in some cases, the programmed activity ends up declining after the end of this support (MORAES; IRVING 2013; SANTOS, 2019).

Conclusions

Although ecotourism in Amapá State's PAs remains incipient, it has the potential to be developed. This development requires the solution of some obstacles through investments in infrastructures, which must aim at serving tourists (e.g., accommodation, visitor center, restaurants), improving access, and structures capable of enabling the availability of new tourist activities (e.g., hiking, tree climbing and zip-lining). It is also important to invest in advertisement, mainly due to competition with similar destinations, and with

those that are more often visited by Brazilians (e.g., beaches). It is necessary developing management plans for PAs that do not yet have them, assuring population's broad participation in the process to develop public-use plans, as well as hiring more employees to fully meet the demand for activities in these PAs, so that ecotourism to be carried out in an orderly manner. These investments will help leveraging ecotourism in Amapá State, as well as generating resources for both PAs and other actors involved in this activity, while keeping the environment preserved. Amapá State can take advantage of its status as the best preserved and protected Brazilian state and of some of its specific attractions. Since Amapá State's scenario is similar to that of several other PAs in Brazil, it is necessary to invest in planning, infrastructure, promotion, local residents' training and associativism/cooperativism to help enhancing ecotourism in PAs in other country regions, as well.

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AMBIENTE & SOCIEDADE 25 anos 25 años 25 years

SciELO

Estado atual, atrativos e entraves para o ecoturismo em unidades de conservação do Amapá, Brasil

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Resumo: Atividades capazes de conciliar geração de renda e conservação ambiental, como o ecoturismo, são cada vez mais importantes. O presente trabalho objetivou diagnosticar a situação do ecoturismo nas unidades de conservação (UC) do Amapá. Entrevistamos os gestores das UC que permitem visitação turística no estado, abordando a situação e possibilidades do ecoturismo na UC, acesso, entraves e controle. Registramos que o ecoturismo ocorre em quase todas as UC do Amapá, mas aparentemente em níveis abaixo do potencial. Grande parte dos entraves está relacionada a uma falta de investimentos por parte do poder público (carência de infraestrutura, de divulgação, de políticas públicas, de plano de manejo e de recursos humanos e financeiros). Os altos custos, principalmente associados ao transporte, também são um entrave importante. Os principais atrativos são atributos naturais ou culturais, atrativos que são comuns na Amazônia, sendo necessário um esforço de divulgação de características exclusivas do Amapá.

Palavras-chave: Desenvolvimento sustentável; Turismo de base comunitária; Uso público; Conservação da biodiversidade; Áreas protegidas.

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AMBIENTE & SOCIEDADE 25 anos 25 años 25 years

SciELO

Estado actual, atracciones y obstáculos para el ecoturismo en áreas protegidas en Amapá, Brasil

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Resumen: Las actividades que concilian la generación de ingresos y la conservación del medio ambiente, como el ecoturismo, son cada vez más importantes. Se efectuó un diagnóstico de la situación del ecoturismo en las áreas protegidas (APs) del estado de Amapá, Brasil. Se realizaron encuestas a funcionarios de las APs en las cuales es permitido el ingreso de turistas, abordando la situación y las posibilidades de ecoturismo, acceso, obstáculos y control. Registramos que el ecoturismo ocurre en casi todas las APs, pero aparentemente en niveles por debajo del potencial. La mayoría de los obstáculos está relacionada con la falta de inversión gubernamental (infraestructura, divulgación, políticas públicas, plan de manejo, y recursos humanos y financieros) y los altos costos, asociados principalmente al transporte. Las principales atracciones son los atributos naturales o culturales (comunes en toda la Amazonía), siendo necesario un esfuerzo mayor para divulgar las características que son exclusivas de Amapá.

Palabras-clave: Desarrollo sostenible; Turismo comunitario; Uso público; Conservación de la biodiversidad; Áreas protegidas.