



BeActive... BeOutdoors... BeLocal...

A report into issues
and mitigations in
non-protected natural areas



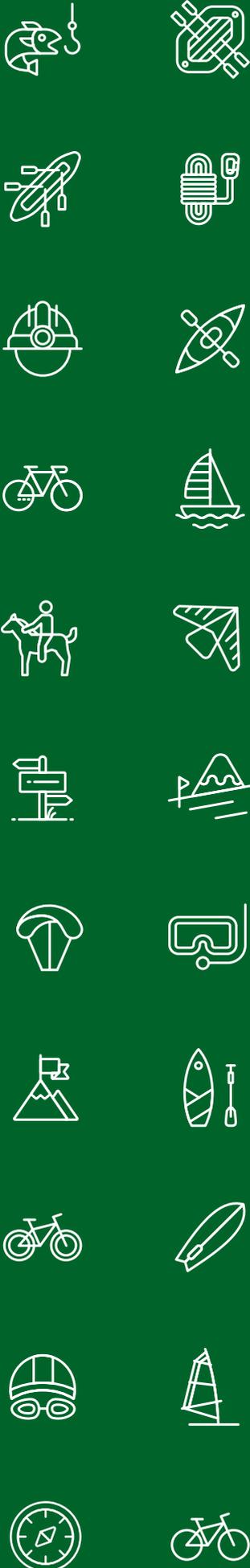
SEE SUSTAINABILITY AND
ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION
IN OUTDOOR SPORTS



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union



ENOS
European Network
of Outdoor Sports



Project Partners

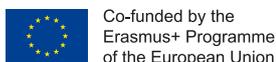


Authors

Mike McClure
Paddy Elliott
Barbara Eigenschenk
Noel Doyle
Stephen Millar
Benjamin Billet
Alberto Robles
Mark Torsius
Victor Labrador
João Zamith
Jeanette Uner
Estela I. Farías

Project Partners

Leave No Trace Ireland (Ireland) (*Lead partner*)
CREPS Rhone Alpes (France)
EUROPARC Federation (Europe Wide)
Folkungaland (Sweden)
INEFC (Catalonia, Spain)
Sport Northern Ireland (UK)
Surf Clube de Viana (Portugal)
Tara Mountain Club (Serbia)
Technical University Munich (Germany)
IMBA Europe (Europe Wide)



This publication has been co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union.

"The European Commission support for the production of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents which reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein."

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted in any form or by any means, including photocopying, recording, or other electronic or mechanical methods, without the prior written permission of the publisher, except in the case of quotations embodied in critical reviews and certain other non-commercial uses permitted by copyright law.

For permission requests, write to the publisher or authors, addressed "Attention: Permissions Coordinator" to the editor: Mike McClure (mikemcclure@sportni.net)

CONTENTS

Introduction.....	4
The Sports identified.....	8
The Issues	9
The sites and environments.....	12
Mitigations	14
Conclusion.....	17

INTRODUCTION

The SEE project – Sustainability and Environmental Education in outdoor sports - will promote education in and through sport with special focus on skills development for outdoor sports professionals such as outdoor sports trainers, guides or instructors.

The project seeks to understand the impacts that outdoor sports can create in natural and protected areas as well as more globally with respect to climate change etc. It also seeks to identify good practice from within the sector and then develop resources and methodologies to share knowledge and develop skills to support greater environmental responsibility by outdoor sports practitioners.

The project has been divided into 4 key work packages as well as the administration of the project (WPO)

WP 1 involves research into the current situation in sustainability and environmental education in outdoor sport federations in Europe.

WP 2 is the development of a toolkit targeted towards those who train outdoor sports leaders, coaches and guides. It will share good practice and include dynamic and inter active methods for education on the environment that have been developed through an exchange programme.

WP 3 is the testing of the toolkit using real life projects; based on this knowledge the toolkit will be revised and updated.

WP 4 is the dissemination the outputs and share the lessons learned widely across the outdoor sports sector in Europe.

This report outlines some of the initial findings from Work Package one.



Within Work Package one, the partners had undertaken a survey to managers of **protected areas across Europe** to see what issues they faced in relation to outdoor sports and also to gauge how outdoor sports were perceived. The EUROPARC Federation, which is the network of protected areas in Europe (and further afield), undertook this survey.

As a follow up to this the partners agreed that there would be value in looking at issues within those sites that may not be protected by legislation but that could have significant levels of use by outdoor sports enthusiasts including urban and peri-urban parks, non-native species forests and certain rivers, lakes or coastlines.

Partners also undertook desktop research and/or communication with local and regional authorities to gain a better understanding into the issues caused by outdoor sports in their own countries. This provided information from the following countries:

- France
- Germany
- Ireland
- Netherlands
- Portugal
- Spain
- Sweden
- United Kingdom

It is important to note that the issues reflect personal, subjective perceptions by partners themselves, stakeholders or regional / local authority managers who had been contacted on this. The purpose of this analysis is not to point at causality between the outdoor sports and mentioned issues. Rather it should serve as an initial stepping-stone for further research and development of mechanisms to educate and reduce perceived impacts.

It should also be noted that the aim was to capture data in other natural but not necessarily protected sites and areas. However, some of the information that came back did relate to both non-protected and adjacent protected areas.

There was also a difference in the number of sports, sites / environments and associated issues reported by each partner country. There were also vagrancies in how this data was gathered (whether through knowledge held by the partner or through engagement with land managers or conservation organisations). Therefore, any system to aggregate such findings has inherent flaws

within it and comparisons between countries is not viable. However, the relevant data was extracted from each country report and then compiled to examine different sports and to identify common issues and mitigations.



Partners used the following template to highlight each individual issue:

SEE Partner	
Country	
Issue found	
Activity / sport	
Nature of site environment (e.g. forest, beach, urban park etc.)	
Location / site	
Management organisation	
Mitigation measures (if any)	

There were 78 templates returned and within these, there were 184 different issues identified across these eight countries.

Analysis of the templates allowed for examining groups of similar issues, the types of sports involved, the nature of the sites' environments and the type of mitigation measures employed. There were many similarities in the information provided, which allowed these aspects to be grouped into a series of categories.

The issues all were categorised within the following:

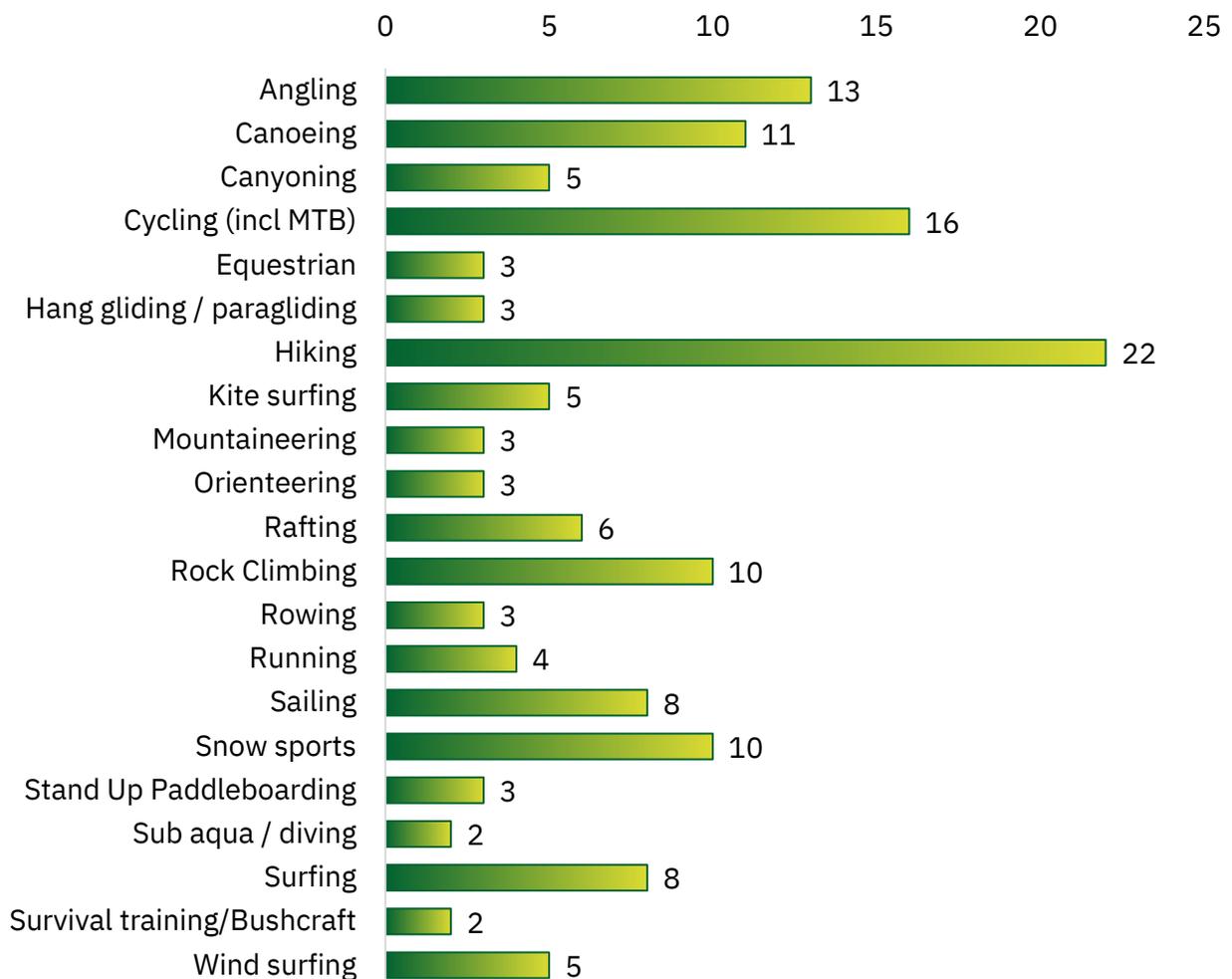
- Conflicts
- Damage to ecosystem
- Damage to flora
- Disturbance of fauna
- Erosion
- High numbers
- Illegal trail development
- Illegal wild camping
- Increased CO₂
- Infrastructure developments
- Invasive species transmission
- Littering
- Parking issues/congestion
- Pollution (including light and sound)
- Wildfires
- Unauthorised activity/access

THE SPORTS IDENTIFIED.

Twenty-one different sports were identified and the number of issues per sport could then be counted as per figure 1.

There were more reports of issues in association with hiking (22 issues, 15.17% of all), cycling/mountain biking (16 issues, 11.03% of all) and angling (13 issues, 8.97% of all). Given the popularity and accessibility of these sports, it was not surprising that the number of issues identified was higher. This does not indicate that the severity of the issues associated with these activities is higher – rather it is simply a count of the number of issues identified.

Figure 1 Sports and number of issues identified



THE ISSUES

The issues were examined and these were grouped into the aforementioned categories and counted. It should be noted that there were 78 templates provided but 184 issues recorded. This is due to any given activity being perceived to cause a number of issues such as erosion, overcrowding, littering and disturbance of fauna or a number of different activities causing different issues but all at one site.

Table 1

Issue	Number of times recorded
Conflicts	31
Damage to ecosystem	26
Damage to flora	16
Disturbance of fauna	31
Erosion	12
High numbers	19
Illegal trail development	4
Illegal wild camping	1
Increased CO ₂	4
Infrastructure developments	8
Invasive species transmission	3
Littering	10
Parking issues/congestion	5
Pollution (including light and sound)	3
Wildfires	3
Unauthorised activity/access	8
TOTAL	184

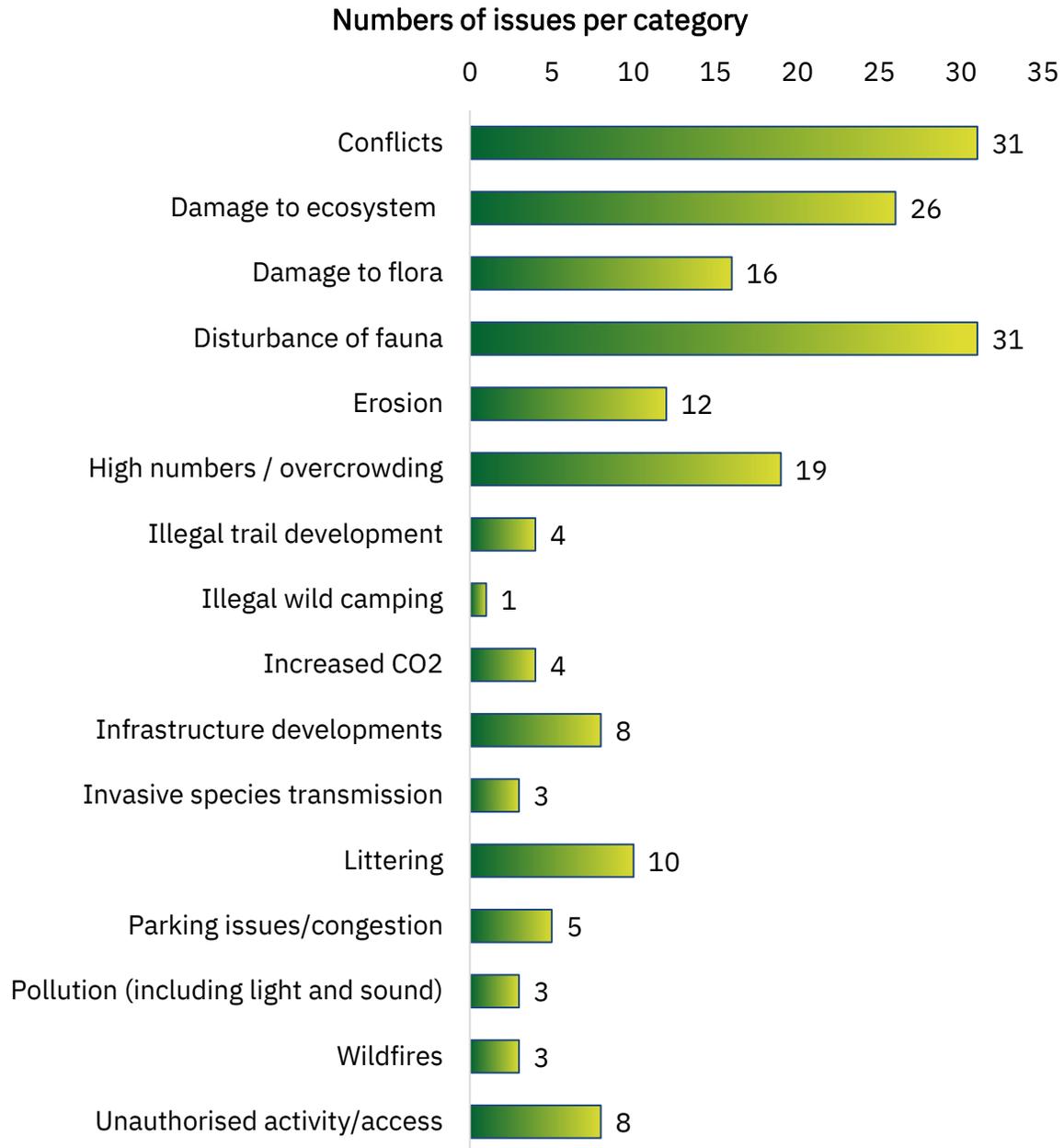
It should be noted that only one of the partners highlighted increased CO₂ but this could readily be applied to every template sheet for the activities as travel to sites to participate in outdoor sport is a very common occurrence.

However, the main things that stand out are conflicts with others (whether with other sports people, landowners or managers), disturbance of fauna (especially birds) and then general damage to the ecosystem (which may be due to a combination of the other factors noted such as littering, erosion or pollution).

The survey that was undertaken with the protected areas across Europe also showed that one of the main issues they perceived was disturbance of wild fauna and conflicts with other users ranked fairly highly as well (although not with all sports). The SEE project can utilise this information to develop bespoke training and education tools for sports federations.



Figure 2



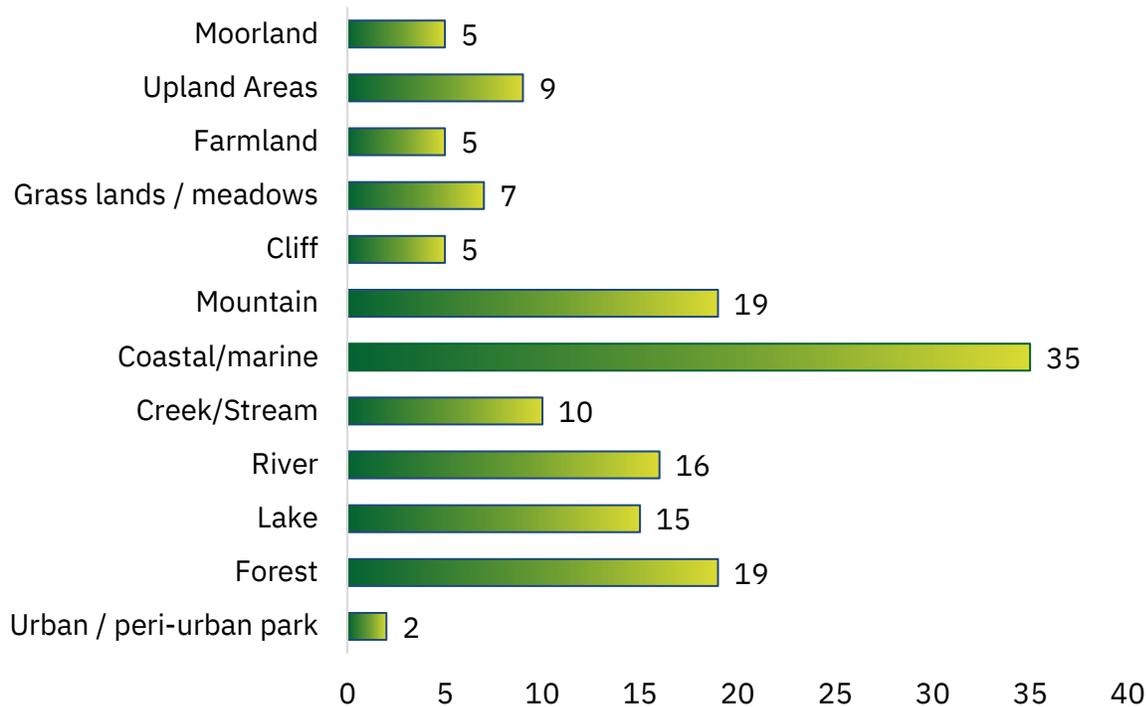
The sites and environments

The sites and environments could be grouped under the following headings and a count of the types of issues associated with these specific types of environments was undertaken. Some data sheets indicated more than one environment so the graph below highlights totals that are more than the 78 template sheets provided.

Table 2

Environment / site	Totals	% Share
Urban / peri-urban park	2	1.3%
Forest	19	12.9%
Lake	15	10.2%
River	16	10.8%
Creek/Stream	10	6.8%
Coastal/marine	26	23.8%
Mountain	19	12.9%
Cliff	5	3.4%
Grass lands / meadows	7	4.8%
Farmland	5	3.4%
Upland Areas	9	6.1%
Moorland	5	3.4%

Figure 3 Environments of sites with issues identified



As can be seen from the table 2 and figure 3 the majority of issues were related to marine, coastal and shore environments (23.8%) and again disturbance of wild fauna featured highly in these reports.

There were also a high number of issues highlighted in relation to forests and mountains. The latter was more surprising as many of the mountain regions in Europe fall under some aspect of legislative protection.

The number of issues reported in relation to urban or peri-urban parks was also surprisingly low.

However, all of this is caveated with the extent of the sources of the data and a survey to every local authority in Europe may have provided very different results. Unfortunately, the scope of this project did not allow for such rigorous research, but it can be a strong recommendation for future projects or research.

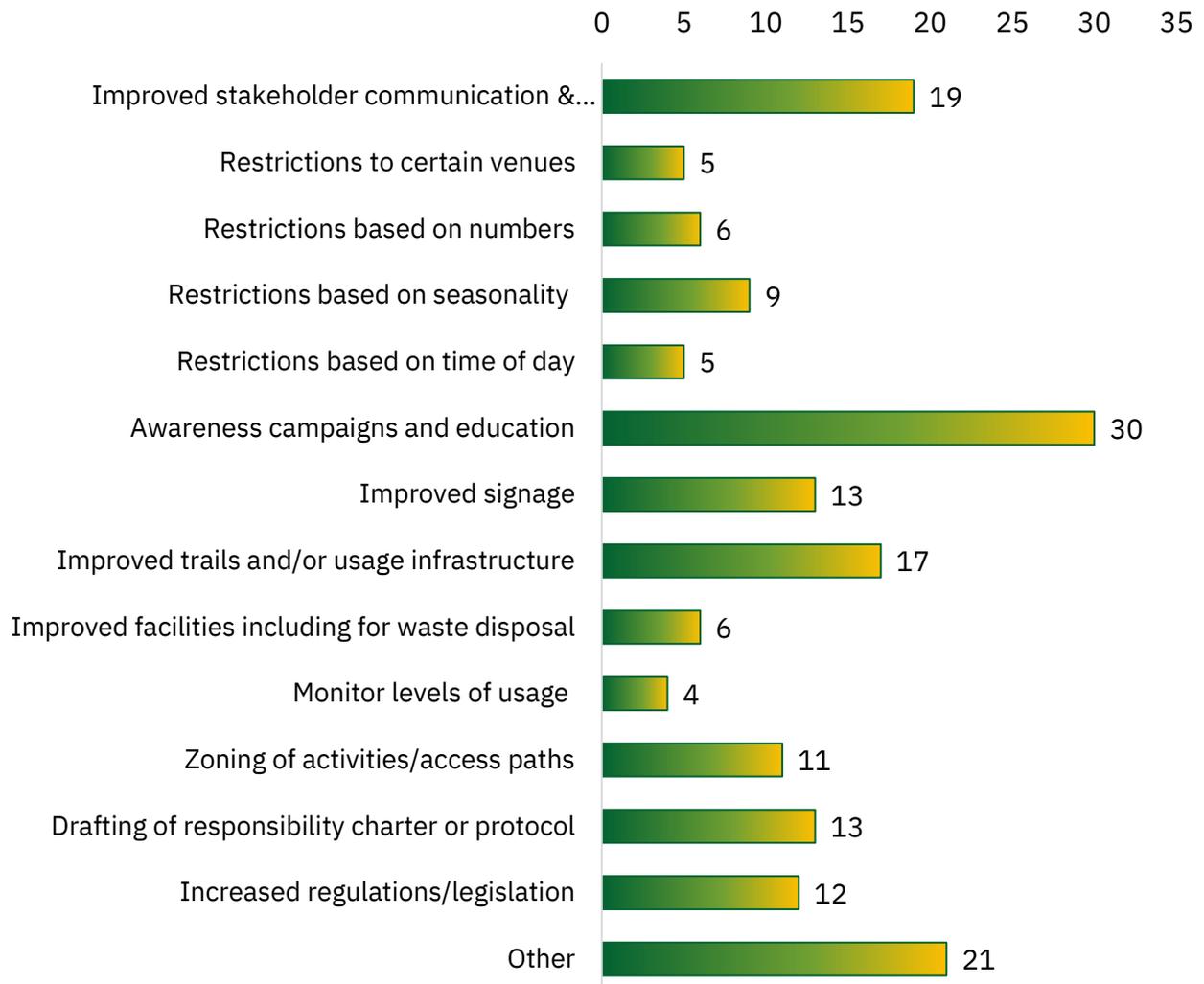
MITIGATIONS

Across the 78 template reports returned, 171 mitigations were highlighted, ranging from high regulatory approaches such as banning activities through to communicating via comic apps. The majority of the mitigations (n=150) could be grouped into the categories highlighted below in figure 4. A category was only created where there was more than one country highlighting the mitigation. The “other” mitigations capture information that was only highlighted in a single country.

There is an inter-connectivity between many of the mitigations highlighted and they should not necessarily be considered in isolation. For example, improved signage is often associated with improved trails and infrastructure and can provide a mechanism to communicate on awareness campaigns and education about the fragility of the environment.

Mitigations	Total number	% Share
Improved communication and dialogue between stakeholders	19	11.1%
Restrictions to certain venues	5	2.9%
Restrictions based on numbers	6	3.5%
Restrictions based on seasonality	9	5.3%
Restrictions based on time of day	5	2.9%
Awareness campaigns and education	30	17.5%
Improved signage	13	7.6%
Improved trails and/or usage infrastructure	17	9.9%
Improved facilities including for waste disposal	6	3.5%
Monitor levels of usage	4	2.3%
Zoning of activities/access paths	11	6.4%
Drafting of responsibility charter or protocol/	13	7.6%
Increased regulations/legislation	12	7.0%
Other	21	12.3%

Figure 4 Number of suggested mitigations



The most common mitigations tried or suggested centred around implementing awareness campaigns (17.5%) to educate the public on responsible behaviour when using the outdoors; these were intended to be deployed in both traditional media (print, radio, TV) but also via social media to target all generations and sectors.

The next highest mitigation was in relation to improved dialogue and communication between stakeholders (11.1%). This could be inter-sport but also inter-disciplinary between the sports, the land/water managers and conservation organisations (both statutory and non-statutory sector). Open dialogue between these groups, in a neutral setting and with an appropriate facilitator can allow concerns to be raised, heard and addressed. This can be a powerful tool and

then when education campaigns are developed by such a cross-sectoral grouping the buy in and adoption from the users is likely to be enhanced.

In order to protect flora and fauna in protected areas, the need for improved trails and usage infrastructure featured strongly (9.9%) which can help as well to reduce the spread of activities and ensure that there are still quieter and less disturbed areas for wildlife.

Improved signage (7.6%) as well as the creation of charters and protocols (7.6%) were also clearly articulated across a range of countries' responses. These also inter-connect with the mitigations of improved trails, zoning of activity areas (6.4%) and awareness campaigns and education. Aligned to this as well, five out of the eight countries highlighted the need for increased legislation and regulations to help protect the environment.

“Other” mitigations that were highlighted included:

- Voluntary action by local communities
- Image analysis
- GPS tracking
- Use of comic apps
- Reducing noise
- Using sustainable and/or innovative materials
- Use of grid mats to reduce erosion
- Use of risk register
- Deployment of rangers
- Licenses for usage
- Environmental impact studies
- Restricted to specific operators
- Census about climbing regulations
- Infrastructure that restricts motorised vehicles
- Using natural belays only
- Check and cleaning systems
- Incentives to make change
- Improved parking
- Improved public transport

CONCLUSION

The report on the data that was gathered via the separate work of the EUROPARC Federation on perceived impacts (and benefits) of outdoor sports is available on the SEE project website at <https://see-project.eu/resources>. This provides a useful complimentary analysis of the issues in protected areas and indeed reflects some of the findings from this element of work.

What is clear is that the issues identified in a variety of environments and attributed to any specific outdoor sports are complex and wide ranging and although there were similar issues identified in many countries, the mitigations suggested were not always the same. From certain countries, the need for a more regulatory approach was highlighted, whereas, in others the need for good dialogue and mutual understanding was highlighted. There are cultural differences between countries and the legislation on the provision of access to the environment for sport and recreation is very different across Europe.

Therefore, there is clearly no one size fits all approach to mitigation of these issues but rather, genuine engagement that is perhaps facilitated to support better listening between stakeholders can lead to a shared approach to manage the sites. As a result of such dialogue the development of associated and bespoke solutions through for example, infrastructure, new trails, communications and charters will then have support and buy in from the disparate sectors involved.





SEE

SUSTAINABILITY AND
ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION
IN OUTDOOR SPORTS



10 Good Principles for Outdoor Sports in Protected Areas

Plan your visit sustainably

When we enter a Protected Area, we all make an impact on the natural environment no matter how small this might be. It is important not just to care for ourselves but the nature around us. Nature is inviting you into her home, be a good guest!



Come on foot, bike or public transport as a priority.



When using private vehicles, try to share the ride.



Circulate with caution and park in the spaces reserved.

How to make the most out of your visit and to take care of the Protected Area?

1 You are a privileged guest.
Stay in the trails, respect the natural environment and regulations to guarantee the beauty of the place.

3 If you come with a dog,
take extra care of it. Follow the regulations. Dogs can disturb other species.

5 Everyone wants to enjoy the place.
Give way to other users; anticipate that they often do not feel or see you coming, respect speed limits.

7 Night is for species to be alone.
Avoid going in the night for your safety and let the animals live in peace.

9 Avoid excessive noise.
Enjoy the quietness and calm, animals need quietness as we do.

2 Plan your activity carefully.
Gather the information you need to enjoy your activity and the place; you will appreciate it better.

4 Take care of yourself and others.
and be prepared to help others, regardless their sport.

6 Help us to keep this place clean.
Leave no trace and take with you the waste you make.

8 Keep "secret places" secret!
Use social media and GPS tracks with responsibility and according to official regulations.

10 See it, Say it, Sort it!
If you see something wrong, tell the park. Open your eyes, appreciate nature and enjoy!

Get Out & Get Into Nature

www.outdoor-sports-network.eu
www.europarc.org





SUSTAINABILITY AND
ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION
IN OUTDOOR SPORTS



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union



Generalitat de Catalunya



TOLLYMORE NATIONAL OUTDOOR CENTRE



www.see-project.eu

