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FORECASTING THE INFLUX OF VISITORS TO STATE PROTECTED WILDERNESS AREAS IN CHILE

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Abstract

This study estimates the number of visitors to State Protected Wilderness Areas (SPWAs) in Chile by origin (national and foreign), using annual data from 1986 to 2011. Two linear regression models were used: one to estimate the number of Chilean visitors and the other for foreign visitors. The model to predict Chilean visitors in 2013-2014 incorporates the GDP per capita in Chile, the annual trend in the conditions of international economic crises, while the model to predict the number of foreign visitors incorporates the total number of tourists from USA and Europe in the context of international economic crises. The results show that Chilean and foreign tourist interest has not yet reached the consolidation phase. The estimations are around 2.1 million visitors. The predictions for 2013-2014 indicate that 26% of total visitors to State Protected Wilderness Areas will be foreigners and 74% Chilean. The arrival of Chilean visitors increased more than that of foreign visitors. The increased influx of Chilean visitors is due to improvements in roadways and economic growth, in particular in the last decade. There are no other studies that estimate the number and interest of visitors to SPWAs in Chile. The results can be used to assign resources for the preservation and conservation of protected areas considered as a global biosphere reserves.

Key words: Chile, tourism demands forecasting, wilderness areas

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