

Can conservation in protected areas and visitor preferences converge? An empirical study in Central Chile

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© 2018, Springer Science+Business Media B.V., part of Springer Nature. The assessment of visitors' willingness to pay (WTP) to achieve scenarios that guarantee good conservation status in protected areas and that positively contribute to visitor experience is crucial to revealing the potential to harmonize the development of nature-based tourism and the conservation of biodiversity. We estimated visitors' WTP for a variety of environmental attributes in a protected area in a biodiversity hotspot in central Chile. Using a choice experiment (CE), WTP was estimated for the protection of animals, plants, and soil; for guaranteeing the provision of ecosystem services related to water resources; and for increasing touristic infrastructure. Among animals and plants, the marginal mean WTP/visitor/visit for single levels of variation in the attribute ranged from ~ US \$1.4 (for herbaceous species) to ~ US \$7 (for birds). The WTP for soil protection in camping areas and walking trails reached a m