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'Understanding volcanoes and society: the key for risk mitigation'



Volcanic Natural Monuments in Campo de Calatrava (Spain): declaration and public use

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In Campo de Calatrava, the protection of the volcanic relief has not been a priority of the institutions responsible for safeguarding the natural heritage, since protectionist policies have been ambiguous and ineffective. Within the scope of the Law of Nature Preservation in Castilla-La Mancha (L.9 / 99, 26 May), the study of volcanic formations is started to establish priorities when implementing any of the instances of protection referred to in the aforementioned act. The criteria to be taken into account are per se restrictive and disabling to reach the aimed objective. Among these criteria are the "absence of mining concessions" and a "good preservation level", apart from others such as geological and geomorphological uniqueness or scenic interest. Most of the volcanoes in the region are included in mining concessions, which means that a number of volcanic edifices, among them the most important for their geodiversity and hydrodiversity, have been removed from the protectionist plans by the Regional Government. The figures of protection that apply are Natural Reserve, Microreserve and Natural Monument. In general, the entire Campo de Calatrava is ZEPA and hunting zone, while the volcanic lagoons are considered as LIC spaces. However, despite these protectionist instances, the territories that host them have been just timidly favored and their economic development rarely boosted, but in very specific situations. On the other hand, as regards social and participatory issues, most of the population has been aside from the articulation of protectionist regulations. The result has been that the use and enjoyment of protected areas has been, in the very emblematic landmarks of Campo de Calatrava, drastically reduced. The clearest examples are related to maars and volcanic lagoons, which have passed from being virtually of free access for visitors to being restricted by fences, and the closing of public paths.