
Dmitry A. Ruban
Southern Federal University

Natalia N. Yashalova
Cherepovets State University

Russian Ecotourism in International Research: Limited Literature Contrasts Rich Resources

Scientific treatment of the large ecotourism potential of Russia would contribute to tourism growth and sustainable development in this country. The bibliographical survey has resulted in 38 articles considering Russian ecotourism and published in international journals. Many of these articles deal with ecotourism conceptualization and national potential and focus on the Russian North-West, the Altay Mountains, the Lake Baikal, and Kamchatka. Both Russian and foreign scientists contribute to the knowledge of Russian ecotourism, but international research collaboration is weak. The journals' bibliometric parameters, where the analyzed articles were published, indicate the research in the Russian ecotourism remains marginal. Some recommendations for its improvement are given, and, particularly, the necessity of shift from geographical to sociological context of research is stressed.

Keywords: bibliography, ecotourism potential, tourism research

Dmitry A. Ruban
Southern Federal University
23-ya Linija Street 43
Rostov-na-Donu 344019
Russian Federation
Phone: 7 903 463 4344
Email: ruban-d@mail.ru

Natalia N. Yashalova
Cherepovets State University
Sovetskiy Avenue 10
Cherepovets, Vologda Region 162600
Russian Federation
Phone: 7 921 132 4155
Email: natalij2005@mail.ru

Dmitry A. Ruban is an associate professor at the Higher School of Business of the Southern Federal University with an interest in geosciences, tourism and hospitality, and economics and management. A significant part of his current research focuses on tourism and hospitality. He has published > 150 papers in major international journals and several books, he is an editorial board member of several journals, and he has reviewed dozens of papers for various scientific media. He holds a Ph.D. degree from the University of Pretoria (South Africa).

Natalia N. Yashalova is head of the Department of Economics and Management of the Business School of the Cherepovets State University. Her research focuses on ecological economics. She has published numerous papers in major international and national journals. She holds D.Sci. degree from the Moscow State University (Russia).

Introduction

Ecotourism is among the most popular tourist activities in the world, and it does not only satisfy the people but also contributes to sustainable environmental and socio-economical development on global, national, and local scales (Orams, 1995; Gössling, 1999; Scheyvens, 1999; Drumm et al., 2004; Honarpisheh, 2011; Das and Chatterjee, 2015; Chakraborty, 2019) despite some serious, but generally unavoidable challenges (Wall, 1997; Krüger, 2005; Brockington et al., 2008; Wondirad, 2019; Wondirad et al., 2020). This is also one of the most intensively studied tourism directions (Weaver and Lawton, 2007; Stronza et al., 2019). Annually, hundreds of research articles devoted to various aspects of ecotourism are published by tourism and environmental journals, including the leading, general-subject journals and specialized ecotourism-focused journals. According to the online bibliographical system 'Scopus', the total number of relevant works has climbed to 8000. It is logical to suppose that the countries boasting the richest ecotourism resources would be among the most studied. However, this is a mere oversimplification. For instance, ecotourism needs infrastructure and effective promotion to increase the number of ecotourists, and some countries with rich resources do not host significant ecotourist activities and, thus, do not deserve intense research. In other cases, ecotourist destinations may locate in countries with a restricted number of tourism-dedicated universities and research centers.

Russia is the biggest country in the world by its area (>17 mln sq km), and it attracts ~25 mln of international tourists annually (UNWTO, 2019) (the domestic tourist flows are also very strong). Various aspects of tourism development in Russia were discussed by Burns

(1998), Algieri (2006), Bednova and Ratnikova (2011), Morozova et al. (2014), Wiesmeth et al. (2016), Sorokin et al. (2017), Glazyrina (2019), Alexandrova et al. (2019), Mariani and Predvoditeleva (2019), Predvoditeleva et al. (2019), Dzhandzhugazova et al. (2020), Gorochnaya et al. (2020). These authors highlight the significant potential of this industry and note significant peculiarities of the latter. The Russian nature demonstrates outstanding diversity, including typically polar landscapes, dense forests (taiga), extensive grasslands (steppe), and deserts; there are vast plains and high mountains, numerous rivers, and lakes, as well as so unique and world-famous objects as the Lake Baikal and the Kamchatka volcanoes and geysers. The wildlife is very rich, and the system of protected areas is very well developed and extensive (there are biosphere reserves, national parks, natural monuments, and other protected areas). Importantly, a significant portion of the Russian ecotourism resources are well-accessible to domestic and foreign visitors due to developed infrastructure. Although the growth of ecotourism faces some serious challenges in this country, including unexpectedly low demand by domestic tourists, it is actively supported by the state and vividly discussed in the public media (Table 1). Generally, it is possible to state that Russia does not only possess significant, outstandingly-rich ecotourism resources but exploits them quite actively. If so, Russian ecotourism deserves scientific investigation on the international level. Dozens of universities with well-established tourism educational programs of bachelor and master level (ecotourism is often a must-taught discipline) and hundreds of researchers would make such investigations very active. A significant number of articles devoted to Russian ecotourism and published in international scientific journals is expected.

Table 1: The Russian ecotourism reported online (selected web-portals)

Web-portal	Story essence	Year	URL
Russia Beyond	Significant ecotourism potential undervalued by Russian tourists	2011	https://www.rbth.com/articles/2011/10/03/ecotourism_in_russia_faces_an_uphill_battle_13368.html
International Union for Conservation of Nature	An ecotourism initiative contributes to forest conservation and sustainable development in North-West Russia	2012	https://www.iucn.org/content/ecotourism-secures-russias-forests
The Guardian	Rich ecotourism resources, eco-hotels, ecotourism resorts are available already	2016	https://www.theguardian.com/travel/2016/feb/15/10-best-russia-holiday-destinations-beyond-moscow-st-petersburg
Destinations Magazine	Ecotourism development and it's potential in the Krasnodar Region and the Republic of Adygeya	2017	https://destinationsmagazine.com/stories/russia-voyage-into-ecotourism/
EastRussia	Opportunities and challenges of ecotourism development in the Kamchatka Peninsula; the number of tourists reaches the allowed limited; 70% of tourists are Russian	2018	https://www.eastrussia.ru/en/material/zapovednik-etone-vokzal/
GeoHistory	Ecotourism contributes to only ~1% of the Russian tourism; challenges of ecotourism in the Baikal Region	2018	https://geohistory.today/siberia-ecotourism-olkhon-island/
Kreab (reprinted material)	Growing of ecotourism in Russia with some projects to be launched in different parts of the country	2019	https://kreab.com/moscow/en/insight/back-to-nature-ecotourism-has-captured-russia/
Visit Petersburg	Fifteen protected areas offer ecotourism opportunities directly in Sankt-Petersburg	n/a	http://www.visit-petersburg.ru/en/ecotourism-in-petersburg/

Note: accessed on January 9, 2020.

This paper's main objective is to present the first bibliographical evidence of international research on Russian ecotourism. There are two main rationales for this study. First, Russia's rich natural resources make this country a potentially important ecotourist destination, and the pieces of the relevant knowledge that occur in the vast amount of the available scientific literature are worth gathering. Second, understanding whether possession of such rich natural resources facilitates ecotourism research is of theoretical interest in tourism studies. This bibliographical evidence can be important for the understanding of the

promising topic, as well as for advising further research. From a practical point of view, this study's outcomes will facilitate the development of scientific approaches for Russia's ecotourism management.

Materials and methods

Content analysis, (critical) review making, and bibliometric approaches have gained significant popularity in social sciences and, particularly, tourism studies (Ivanovic and Ho, 2016; Erzhenin, 2018; Ali et al., 2019; Della Corte et al., 2019; Fernandez, 2019; Godoy et al., 2019; Johnson and Samakovlis, 2019; Merigó et al., 2019; Snyder, 2019; Weinfurter and Seidl, 2019; Booth et al., 2020). Despite certain limitations, these methods permit visualization of research trends and geographical patterns and systematization of the previously published knowledge that often occurs in dozens and hundreds of works.

The present study is based on a bibliographical survey (this does not pretend to be a full-scale bibliometric approach, although it shares many features of the latter). The only articles published in international journals are considered the most evident indicators of high-quality and broadly-important research. The online bibliographical system 'Scopus' that seems to be the most complete and representative (at least, for the past decade) is used to collect the initial bibliographical data set (access to this system is provided by the Regional Scientific Library of the Southern Federal University, Rostov-on-Don, Russia). Articles containing the words 'Russia' or 'Russian' and 'ecotourism' or 'eco-tourism' in their titles, abstracts, and keywords are selected. The presence of these words in the noted article elements indicates the relevance of a given article to the analyzed issue, i.e., Russian ecotourism. The standard search engine of 'Scopus' is used to search for the sources matching the criteria outlined above. Undoubtedly, a few sources could be missed due to technical issues or system incompleteness/incorrectness, but these issues are generally unavoidable and

do not challenge the extracted bibliographical information that appears to be representative. Then, this information is filtered 'mechanically' to avoid occasional inclusion of some irrelevant works (the abstract of each work is read carefully to be sure that this work is genuinely relevant to Russian ecotourism). The present analysis's time span is limited to 1998–2019; 1998 is the year when the first relevant work was published, and 2019 is the last year for which more or less complete bibliographical information is available. The selection of the articles was conducted in the winter of 2020. The list of the works considered for the present analysis is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Content and relevance of the considered works

Citation	Context of the Russian ecotourism consideration	Relevance to ecotourism	Relevance to Russia
Andrades and Dimanche (2017)	Potential for the Russian destinations growth	+	+++
Braden and Prudnikova (2008)	Finding opportunities for ecotourism development	+++	+++
Brovko and Fomina (2008)	National parks as areas for ecotourism	++	+++
Bunakov et al. (2018)	“Last Chance Tourism” as a direction of ecotourism	+++	+++
Chernyago et al. (2012)	Radioecological conditions of ecotourism development	++	+++
Chizhova and Shlyakova (2017)	Techniques for implementing ecological routes	++	+++
Dayneko and Dayneko (2018)	Development and marketing of ecotourism for the purposes of sustainable development	+++	+++
Degtyaryova et al. (2017)	Arguments for necessity of ecotourism development in Russia	+++	+++
Dong et al. (2018)	Ecotourism as tourism ecologization along the China-Mongolia-Russia Economic Corridor	++	++
Doronkina and Borisova (2014)	Review of ecotourism and its relevance to local communities	+++	++
Drozдов (1998)	Potential and challenges of the Russian ecotourism	++	+++
Dunets and Zhogova (2018)	Needs for regional ecotourism linked to protected areas	++	+++
Dzhandzhugazova et al. (2019a)	Role of the national projects in ecotourism growth	+++	+++
Dzhandzhugazova	Analysis of the best regional practices of	+++	+++

et al. (2019b)	ecotourism		
Elbakidze et al. (2007)	Coupled forest management and ecotourism	+	+++
Fedorov and Ruban (2019)	Therapeutic mud resources of ecotourism	+	+++
Kalikhman et al. (2011)	Ecotourism infrastructure	+++	+++
Khalatov and Abdul'myanov (2011)	Geotopes and ecotourism on mountainous areas	++	+++
Kiladze and Kiladze (2018)	Beluga whale as ecotourism resource	+	++
Klimenko et al. (2018)	Modeling of ecotourism in innovative economy	+++	+++
Korneevets et al. (2018)	Cross-border cooperation projects for ecotourism development at UNESCO World Heritage Site	+++	+++
Kosheleva et al. (2019)	Motivating tourists to visiting national parks	+++	+++
Krasovskaya (2006)	Traditional nature management as opportunity to ecotourism	+	+++
Lisova et al. (2017)	Ecotourism for the purposes of sustainable development in the conditions of urbanization	+++	+++
Mingaleva et al. (2018)	Abandoned mines provide opportunities to ecotourism	+	++
Muzyka et al. (2019)	Ecotourism as promising direction of rural tourism	++	+++
Nikolaeva et al. (2018)	Resources and state support of the Russian ecotourism development	+++	+++
Pashkus et al. (2016)	Ecotourism importance for agritourism	++	+
Provalova et al. (2019)	Protected areas form premise for ecotourism, and the latter serves environmental education	+++	+++
Revenko (1998)	Brown bears as ecotourism resource	+	+++
Sevastiyanov et al. (2014)	Regional opportunities for Russian and international ecotourism	++	+++
Sevastyanov and Shchukin (2001)	Joint development of ecological and ethnic tourism on the regional scale	+++	+++
Tynkkynen (2007)	Potential conflicts between industrial resource exploitation and ecotourism	++	+++
Watson et al. (2003)	Traditional ecological knowledge and wilderness protection	+	+
Wites (2003)	Russia–Central Asia relations as a condition of ecotourism development	+++	+
Zabortseva and Yevstropieva (2009)	Intersection of social, economical, and ecological issues in a national park	++	+++
Zavadskaya	Regional ecotourism potential	+++	+++

(2010)			
Zwirn et al.	Angling as a form of ecotourism with	+++	+++
(2005)	positive and negative effects		

Relevance: + – weak (almost occasional), ++ – moderate (partial), +++ – strong (full).

Each selected work's content is analyzed qualitatively via attentive, critical reading to establish the relevance to ecotourism and Russia. This is necessary because some articles consider ecotourism, but not as a principal subject (e.g., these can be devoted to nature protection or rural tourism), or these deal with some other countries and Russia. The relevance is established semi-quantitatively as weak, moderate, and high (this evaluation is subjective, but it is necessary to demonstrate the impact of each given work to the understanding of Russian ecotourism).

The other procedures include a qualitative generalization of the content of the works (outlining the general topics), mapping the geographical focus of the works (i.e., identification of the main regions discussed in the articles and calculation of the number of the articles devoted to each of these regions), reconstruction of the temporal dynamics of the publishing activity, analyzing the research output of Russian and foreign specialists and tracing their collaboration, and examination of the bibliometric parameters of the journals where the analyzed works appeared (with attention to principal subjects and 'Scopus'-related bibliometrics indicating on prestige). It is necessary to add that the SJR metrics calculated annually by Scimago is tentatively preferred in this study; the journals are compared by their SJR value within a given subject and, thus, attributed to one of four possible quartiles. The findings of the undertaken analysis of the collected bibliographical information are subject to further explanations, comparisons, and relevant interpretations. The present study does not focus on the authors and the institutions because of the weak individual research output, possible misspellings of Russian names, and affiliation changes.

Results

A total of 38 articles published in international journals are fully or partially devoted to Russian ecotourism (Table 2). From these works, 47% demonstrate strong relevance to ecotourism, and 21% demonstrate weak relevance. As for the relevance to Russia, it is strong in 81.5% of the cases. Therefore, Russian ecotourism was in the research focus of many studies, although its 'occasional', 'secondary-order' consideration is also common. The selected articles' content is quite diverse, and the main findings are summarized in Table 2. The central ideas are general conceptualization of ecotourism and application of this concept to Russia, argumentation for the necessity of development of ecotourism in Russia and finding the principal challenges, and importance of national, regional, and local ecotourism resources and perspectives of their exploitation (also in protected areas, including natural reserves that are well-developed in Russia). Interestingly, ecotourism's actual experience is rarely analyzed, or this analysis is restricted to protected areas' functioning.

More than half of the considered works are territorially-focused. The focus areas include official, administrative regions, macroregions (historical regions), and big attractions. As shown in Figure 1, these areas tend to concentrate on the European part of Russia, southern Siberia, and the Far East. More specifically, the articles in international journals tend to deal with the Russian North-West, the Altay Mountains, the Lake Baikal, and Kamchatka. The other territories are occasionally considered, and a significant part of Russia is not investigated regarding ecotourism. For instance, there are not works focused on the Urals, West Siberia, or the Siberian Arctic; the published information about ecotourism in the Russian South and the Far East remains very scarce (ecotourism resources of the noted territories are outstandingly rich, and the number of protected areas is not small).

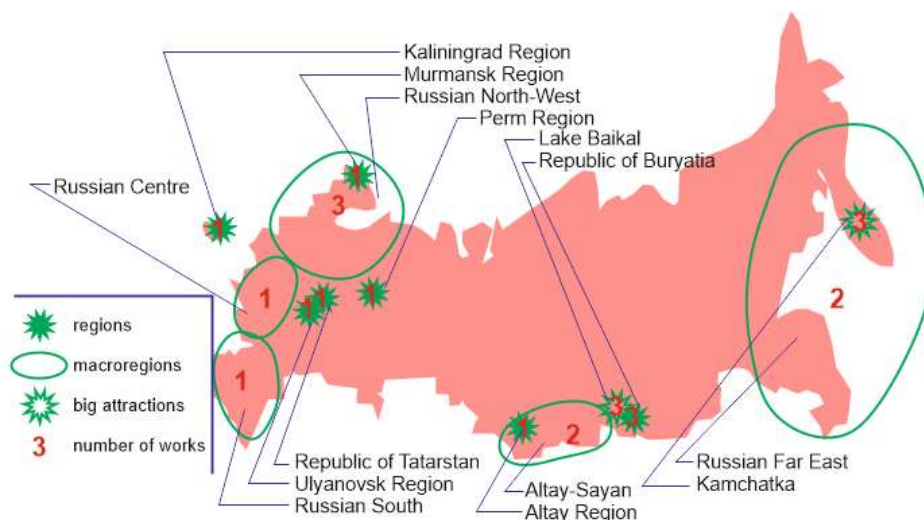


Figure 1: Focus of the considered works on the Russian regions

The international research output's annual dynamics on Russian tourism is characterized by the minimal number of works that appeared each year and instability of this number through time (Figure 2). No more than two articles per year were published in international journals until the last third of the 2010s when the governmental efforts (strengthened demand for publications from the universities coupled with the relevant funding of research) has resulted in a moderate rise in the number of works. However, the latter has not reached even ten articles per year until now.

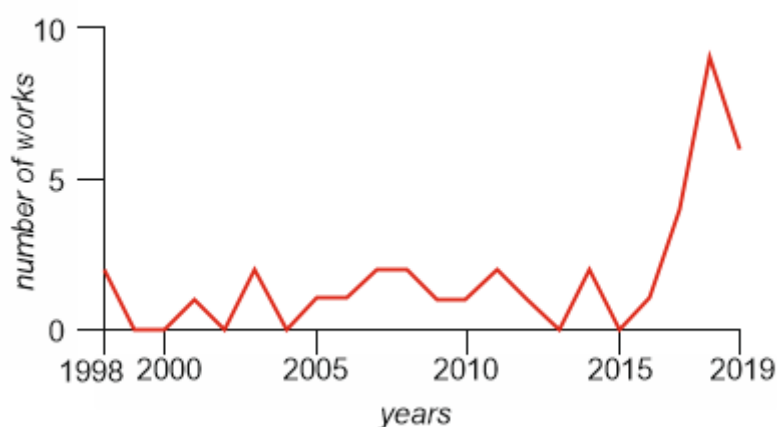


Figure 2: Publishing dynamics of the considered works

Unsurprisingly, most of the authors of articles on Russian ecotourism in international journals are Russians (Figure 3). However, researchers from the other countries are also

relatively active; these are European and North American and Chinese authors. Interestingly, foreign experts often publish their findings 'alone,' i.e., without collaboration with the Russian experts. The latter collaborated with the US, Finnish, Slovakian specialists (Figure 3). Research collaboration between foreign scientists (e.g., Canadian and Spanish) but without Russian participants is found in a few cases (Figure 3). Generally, these patterns reflect what can be called a double research field, i.e., Russian ecotourism provides matter for separate investigation by domestic and foreign specialists.

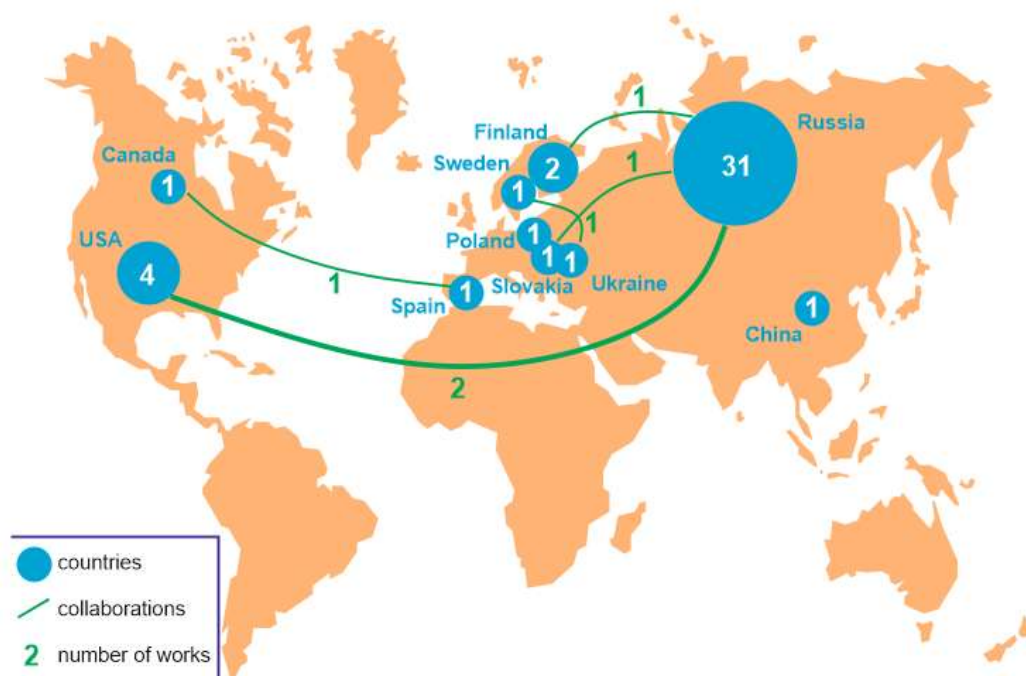


Figure 3: Country affiliations and collaboration of the authors

The articles about Russian ecotourism were published in 26 journals, most of which 'hosted' no more than one article (Table 3). The most popular journals are Turkish 'Ekoloji' and Russian 'Geography and Natural Resources.' Two peculiarities of the journals should be noted. First, 50% of them belong to Earth and environmental sciences, whereas 'purely' tourism journals constitute only 19% (Table 3). This strange proportion can be explained by

the common article focus on ecotourism resources and nature conservation, not on ecotourist activities. Second, many journals are ranked as belonging to the low categories, whereas just about a quarter belongs to the highest category (Table 3). Although this does not suggest against the quality of the considered journals or articles, it is evident that Russian ecotourism is a marginal direction in international tourism research. It is interesting to add that the foreign experts often choose 'top' journals, although the articles co-authored by the Russian and foreign experts did not appear in such journals with the only exception. This means that research collaborations were not fixed so as to result in top-journal publications.

Table 3: Basic information on the journals hosting the considered works

Journal title	Number of works	Principal subject(s)	Scimago quartile (2018)**, ***
Acta Montanistica Slovaca	1	Earth and environmental sciences	Q2, Q3
Current Issues in Tourism	1	Tourism	Q1
Czasopismo Geograficzne	1	Earth and environmental sciences	Q4
Ecology and Society	1	Earth and environmental sciences	Q1
Ekoloji	4	Earth and environmental sciences	Q4
Espacios	1	Economics and management	Q3, Q4
EurAsian Journal of BioSciences	1	Life sciences	Q4
European Planning Studies	1	Economics and management	Q1
European Research Studies Journal	1	Multidisciplinary	Q2
Geography and Natural Resources*	4	Earth and Environmental sciences	Q3
International Journal of Economic Perspectives	1	Economics and Management	Q4
IOP Conference Series: Earth and Environmental Science	3	Earth and environmental sciences	n/a
Izvestiya Akademii Nauk, Seriya Geograficheskaya*	1	Earth and environmental	Q3

Journal of Advanced Research in Dynamical and Control Systems	1	sciences Multidisciplinary	Q4
Journal of Ecotourism	1	Tourism	Q2
Journal of Environmental Management and Tourism	3	Earth and environmental sciences; tourism	Q3, Q4
Nordia Geographical Publications	1	Earth and environmental sciences	Q3, Q4
Resources	1	Economics and management	Q2
Russian Geology and Geophysics*	1	Earth and environmental sciences	Q1, Q2
Scandinavian Journal of Forest Research	1	Earth and environmental sciences	Q1
Tourism Geographies	1	Tourism	Q1
Tourism Management	1	Tourism	Q1
Vestnik Moskovskogo Universiteta, Seriya 5: Geografiya*	3	Earth and environmental sciences	Q3
Vestnik Sankt-Peterburgskogo Universiteta, Seriya Geologiya i Geografiya*	1	Earth and environmental sciences	n/a
Ursus	1	Life sciences	Q2
World Applied Sciences Journal	1	Multidisciplinary	coverage discontinued

Notes:

* These journals are based in Russia and published essentially in Russian, and some of them also have 'mirror' English versions;

** some journals are attributed to several fields, and all quartiles are indicated in such cases;

*** Q1 is the highest category, and Q4 is the lowest category.

Discussion

The results of the present bibliographical survey imply that Russian ecotourism has become a subject of international research, but the relevant studies have remained scarce, fragmented, and often biased. Particularly, the relevant publications are relatively rare, dealing with conceptual matters or ecotourism resources, and focused on only some territories. Moreover, the articles devoted to Russian ecotourism do not result from active international collaboration, and these chiefly do not appear in top journals. This evidence

contrasts outstandingly-rich ecotourism resources available everywhere in the country (Andrades and Dimanche, 2017; Nikolaeva et al., 2018; Dzhandzhugazova et al., 2019b). Moreover, the state support and the actual ecotourist activities in Russia are significantly stronger (Dzhandzhugazova et al., 2019b) than these are described in the articles (Table 2).

In order to demonstrate the problem, it is possible to compare the international publishing output related to ecotourism between some countries (Table 4). China is 1.8 times smaller than Russia by territory, but the number of works on ecotourism in this country is 8.7 times greater. Australia is 2.3 times smaller than Russia, whereas the former's publishing activity is 6.3 times greater than in the latter. It is worth adding that differentiation of the natural environments that leads to the higher richness of ecotourism resources is much weaker in Australia and China than in Russia, which hosts a wide range of natural zones, from polar to subtropical. From the seven biggest countries of the world, ecotourism is the least intensively studied in Russia (Table 4). Russia also makes a smaller (< 1%) contribution to the world ecotourism studies than the other big countries (Table 4).

Table 4: Publishing output related to ecotourism in the biggest countries of the world

Countries	Russia	Canada	USA	China	Brazil	Australia	India
Number of works*	64	148	207	555	178	400	247
Contribution to the world number of works**, %	<1	2	3	7	2	5	3
Country size, mln sq km	17.1	10.0	9.8	9.6	8.5	7.6	3.3

Note:

* the works covered by 'Scopus' with the terms 'ecotourism' or 'eco-tourism' and the particular country name in their titles, abstracts, or keywords; the content relevance is unfiltered by the author; state for January 14, 2020;

** The world number of publications is 7446.

The documented situation requires a proper explanation that can be linked to either the publishing experience of Russian specialists or object of study (or both). According to the National Electronic Library (elibrary.com), >800 papers devoted to ecotourism have been

published in national and local journals and in the Russian language to the beginning of 2020. This means that Russian specialists are active in ecotourism studies but do not publish their results in international journals. This occurs despite strong state- and university-level interest and stimulation of publishing in international scientific media that have strengthened since the mid-2010s when international research activity has become a major issue of governmental concern (Rodionov et al., 2015; Block and Khvatova, 2017; Moed et al., 2018; Mushketova et al., 2018; Grinev, 2019; Kosyakov and Guskov, 2019; Prakhov, 2019; Reznik and Sazykina, 2019). Some universities provide a direct reward to the authors of articles in international journals, and, thus, it is impossible to suppose any disinterest of Russian specialists in publishing there. Three plausible explanations are as follows. First, there is a lack of experience in publishing tourism-related papers in top international journals. The development of academic writing skills is an emerging field in Russia (Korotkina, 2018). Second, leading international tourism journals often focus on tourism (and ecotourism) as a social phenomenon, the investigation of which requires sociological approaches. In Russia, tourism studies have been restricted traditionally to the geographical assessment of resources. Third, Russian specialists are faced with a limited number of Russian journals covered by international bibliographical systems like 'Scopus' (i.e., such journals can be judged international). Journals of this kind are necessary to publish results of regionally- or nationally-important studies and to distribute the relevant knowledge among the international research community.

The other possible aspect of the problem is linked to Russian ecotourism itself. Although numerous examples of the relevant activities are found in the country (Dzhandzhugazova et al., 2019b), the demand for ecotourism from Russian tourists remains restricted, and this cannot be recompensed with the flow of inbound ecotourists due to big size of the country. This low demand and different understanding of nature-based tourism are

stated by public media (Table 1) and researchers (Braden and Prudnikova, 2008; Kosheleva et al., 2019). The 'deep' causes of such a situation are rooted, most probably, in the systems of education and science popularization, as well as in the traditional recreational preferences of the Russians (e.g., living in temperate-to-cold climate conditions stimulate preference of beach resort recreation to all alternatives), discussion of which is beyond the scope of the present paper.

In regard to the content of the works selected for the present study (Table 2) and the above-given discussion of the results, some topics that should be addressed by researchers in Russian ecotourism can be proposed. These topics are (almost) not covered by the analyzed works. First of all, demand for ecotourist activities, the actual number of ecotourists and their preferences, and changes in this demand require examination. Future studies can also address the possible influence of state-supported science popularization on the domestic ecotourism demand and the potential tourists' willingness-to-pay for ecotourism experience. Another topic is the dependence of ecotourism on the prevalence of urban culture in Russia, where the urban population constitutes three-quarters of the total population. On the one hand, the urban culture may stimulate curiosity to 'unknown,' 'wild' places boasting rich ecosystems; ecotourism would become a new experience in this case. On the other hand, ecotourism can be avoided by potential tourists being considered as something 'too opposing' to the urban culture. These hypotheses need to be tested. Importantly, all the above-mentioned topics require investigations of Russian ecotourism in a sociological context.

Conclusions

The present analysis of the articles devoted to Russian ecotourism and published in international journals permits making five general conclusions.

- 1) The analyzed publications are very restricted in number (38 articles in

international journals over 21 years), although the works' content is diverse.

- 2) Only some Russian territories are considered in the articles, whereas international research does not cover many of the territories with rich ecotourism resources in Russia.
- 3) Russian ecotourism has been studied by both Russian and foreign scientists, but their collaboration is weak.
- 4) The analyzed articles rarely appear in top international journals on tourism.
- 5) The documented contrast between outstandingly-rich ecotourism resources and the weak publishing activity differs from the situation in the other big countries.

The principal limitation of this study is its 'anchoring' into the only bibliography. The opinion of the scientists involved in Russian ecotourism research needs consideration. Probably, interviews and questionnaires would help to understand the main opportunities and difficulties in this research direction. The solution to this important but challenging and voluminous task is left for further investigations. The other limitation is linked to 'missing' some relevant literature sources that are either not covered by 'Scopus' or cannot be found with the employed search algorithm. To solve this problem seems to be practically impossible, and the number of such 'missed' sources cannot be large regarding the extensive coverage of the noted bibliographical system and efficacy of its search engine.

Undoubtedly, Russia possesses outstandingly-rich ecotourism resources, which can bring significant socio-economic benefits, including direct income to the local people and the state, contribution to sustainable development, and stimulation of further growth of the national tourism industry. Facilitating this resource exploitation requires high-quality scientific examination of the Russian ecotourism development, which means an intensification of international-level studies. Regarding these issues, the present bibliographical survey permits general practical recommendations for the state-level

management of Russian ecotourism (the same recommendations seem to apply to individual researchers and research groups). First, research that allows publishing in leading international journals on tourism should be prioritized and supported accordingly (e.g., via state-funded grants, strict requirements to research authorities and institutions, and significant author rewards). Second, the ecotourism-related research should shift from geographical context and resource focus to sociological context and tourist activity focus. Third, the Russian ecotourism research should be internationalized with the involvement of foreign specialists (preferably, in collaboration with Russian experts) experienced in the international-level tourist research and the relevant publishing (i.e., the collaborators have to be selected with attention to their previous achievements). The knowledge generated this way would create a solid scientific foundation for Russia's ecotourism growth in the near future.

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