

Urban and rural perceptions of protected areas: a case study in Dandeli Wildlife Sanctuary, Western Ghats, India.(Link)

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Researchers, governments and conservation organizations recognize that the long-term integrity of protected areas (PAs) in low-income nations depends upon the support of indigenous and rural communities that live within or around them. Thus, understanding the determinants of residents' attitudes towards PAs might provide guidance in the design, implementation and evaluation of this strategic form of biodiversity conservation. This paper (1) compares urban and rural residents' perceptions of the impact of a PA and (2) analyses the association between the perception of economic, social and environmental impacts, and overall attitude towards the PA. Information was collected among urban and rural residents living in the vicinity of the Dandeli Wildlife Sanctuary in the Western Ghats (Karnataka, India).

Local residents' attitudes towards the PA were mainly positive, especially among urban residents. Multivariate analysis showed a positive association between the perception of economic benefits and individual attitudes towards the PA. There was no statistically significant association between attitudes towards the PA and perception of social and environmental impacts. Future research should address whether positive attitudes translate into more sustainable behaviors.