

## THE LANDSCAPE AND BIODIVERSITY GORJ - STRENGTHS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL TOURISM

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**ABSTRACT:** The paper presents the context in which topography and biodiversity Gorj county represent strengths in development of rural tourism / ecotourism. The area is characterized by the diversity of landforms, mountains , hills, plateaus , plains, meadows , rivers , natural and artificial lakes, that can be capitalized and constitute targets attraction.

**KEY WORDS:** landscape, biodiversity, tourism, rural

### 1. PLACING THE ENVIRONMENT GORJ COUNTY

Gorj County is located in the south - west of Romania, in Oltenia northwest. It borders the counties of Caras Severin , Dolj, Hunedoara, Mehedinți and Vâlcea. Gorj county occupies an area of 5602 km<sup>2</sup>, which represents 2.3% of the country. Overlap almost entirely of the middle basin of the Jiu , which crosses the county from north to south. From the administrative point of view , Gorj county is divided into nine cities, including 2 cities (Targu- Jiu- county resident and Motru), cities Bumbesti -Jiu, Novaci, Rovinari, Targu Cărbunești, Tismana, Turceni, Ticleni, 61 common and 411 village (Figure 1.)



Fig. 1. Gorj position in the Oltenia region

Gorj County has a significant tourism potential, thanks to a diversified natural environment , represented by the uniform distribution of relief items , dense river network , balanced and valuable resources for climate and landscape area economy.

### 2. GORJ COUNTY RELIEF

The relief area includes mountain ranges, hills and foothill extended a hilly area in the southern half of the county. Morphologically, Gorj county has stepped descending from north to south.

Mountains are grouped in the north of the county and occupies about 29 % of the county. Mountain ranges in the county present in group Carpathians. The existence of highly resistant rocks, granites, crystalline schist, limestone, in the mountains, valleys and created numerous extremely spectacular color, have become tourist attractions. In the area, there are leveling plates that favored the development of towns in the mountains and can be an asset in tourist exploitation of the area. Southern Exposure creates a favorable environment for tourism development zone, with prespective for mountain tourism,

recreational and ecological tourism in the summer.

1. Căpățâni Mountains - in group Șureanu mountainous Parang, Parang mountains dividing the southern facade of this group. The specifics of mountain massif can be clearly seen through existing steep south to the border with depression Polovragi. Parang Mountains western boundary is formed by Olteț, whose deep into the heart of the valley to the saddle Oltețului Mountains, near the main ridge that connects the skull Mountains Parang Mountains .
2. Parâng Mountains of between rivers Jiu and Olteț, oriented west-east, have heights of 2519 m, the peak Parângu Mare (Mandra), 2337 m in Mohoru Peak, 2136 m peak doll. Quaternary glaciation traces covers a length of 10 km, the main summit Mandra - Mohoru. Hence detach secondary peaks , marking the nucleus glacial complex in the area. Numerous glacial lakes in the upper basins of Jieț, Lotru, Gilort, increase the value of this country's mountainous landscape. Calcareous rocks occur on the south side , where they developed Oltețului keys, Yellow kezs, The cave Muierii and Polovragi, sinkholes, karst more special (Figure 2).



Fig. 2. Căpățâni and Parâng mountains – Păpușa Top

3. Vâlcan Mountains - ranging between Jiu, Cerna and Motru are josie, with lands gentle, easily navigated, dominated altitude by Peak Oslea 1945 m altitude, Peak Arcanu to 1815 m and Peak Straja to 1868 m. It is the branch mountainous west of the county and has a development

from west to east, the starting point of many rivers that were strung from ancient settlements. It is recognized by the multitude of caves and grottoes (caves Cioaca with Brebeni, Cloșani, Fușteica, Izvarna basins Motru, Tismana, Jaleș, resulting from the presence of karst relief that dominates margimea southern and southwestern mountains. In the karst landscape of a very picturesque Cheile Runcului, Bistriței, Motrului and famous Keys Sohodolului entered in the national tourism heritage. On plains mountains Vâlcan are conducted numerous popular activities (Tismana, Padeș and Staging). Between Parang and Vâlcan gorge strongly deepened the Jiu among steeps which rail and road slips, pierce transverse Carpathians chain, linking Petrosani Depression and the Olt Carpathian Basin.

4. Godeanu Mountains covers a narrow area in the north -west of the county. Mountain ridges have an average altitude between 1800-2000 m . The heights most important are Micușa top - 1824 m, Balmezu top- 1456 m and Arcanu top - 1760 m. The variety of the landscape is erosion platforms smoothing the appearance of heavier peaks, glacial erosion traces. Calcareous rocks have led to the present karst forms Cerna, Cernisoara, Cave Reef. Making hydropower complex Cerna- Motru - Tismana increased accessibility and tourism Mountains Vâlcan and Godeanu (Figure 3).



Fig. 3. Vâlcan and Godeanu mountains

5. Mehedinți Mountains are represented in the Gorj county in the northern basin of the Valley Motrului between Motrului

Great Valley and Valley Brebina. This differs three karst areas with other attraction gorges Corcoaia and Ciucevele Cerna.

6. Subcarpații Getici hills - including two alignments of hills with an average altitude between 300-600 m. Between the last line of the first mountain peaks and hills present a series of depressions submountain smaller in size: Cerna on river Cerna, Racovița on Tărăia River, River Polovragi on river Olteț, Baia de Fier on river Galbenu, Novaci on river Gilort, Stănești on river Șușița Green, Bumbesti-Jiu on river Jiu, Runcu on river Jaleș, Celei on river Tismana, Padeș on river Motru. After a line of hills is conducting a broad lowland area: Targu-Jiu-Mare Câmpu meeting a real market for water. Aria continues south collinear with shorter hills with monoclinic structure, with rich ore resources (oil, gas, lignite), belonging to the Piedmont Plateau. This space subcarpathic and plateau presents less attractive scenery, the region is densely populated, land with agricultural uses. Remain attractive places where there is felt mineral waters or of special cultural-historical sights (Figure 4).



Fig.4. Mehedinți mountains and Subcarpații Getici hills

7. Hydrographic network belongs to a single sump: Jiu, which gathers the waters of several tributaries: Sadu, Tismana, Jilțu, Motru, Gilort Amaradia, on an area of over 10 thousand km<sup>2</sup>. An exception northeast and northwest ends of the county, which are drained by the headwaters of Oltețului and

Cerna. The hydrographic network is complemented by a series of lakes, most human

8. Natural lakes are glacial origin and there are in Parang mountains, of which are permanent water (Figure 5):

- Câlcescu- 3 ha area and maximum depth 9.3 m
- Slăveiu- area 0.25 ha and a maximum depth of 2.8 m
- Mija and bird- 0.3 ha area and maximum depth 3 m



Fig. 5. Natural lakes of Gorj county

9. The artificial lakes are a result of hydropower: Valea lui Iovan/Cerna, Great Valley, Vâja, Targu -Jiu, Sambotin, after coal mining activities Beterega areas , Poiana or after fitting watercourses Moi, Peșteana. From the ecological point of view, the results of hydropower threats of interest tourism, architecture of dams, high gloss water and mountain scenery elements constituting tourist attraction (Figure 6).



Fig. 6. Artificial lakes of Gorj county

### 3. BIODIVERSITY GORJ COUNTY

Gorj county the following ratios vegetation vertical:

1) Floor meadows - it includes great heights, limestone peaks, steep and rocky debris. Are present species of juniper, blueberry bushes, currant, smardar and many other species of grasses or grassy type plants with colorful flowers.

2) Coniferous Forest Floor - is conducted between 1400-1700 m, especially on the northern slopes, species being spruce, fir. The presence of these woods complement the landscape values and create a negative air ionisation, beneficial climatic.

3) Deciduous forest -it covers the southern slopes where there are mixed or diffuse, with copies of conifers. On the southern peaks of Parang and Vâlcan mountains appear pure beech forests or sometimes mixed with oak, hornbeam. The oaks in the hilly area was greatly reduced in favor of agricultural land. A special place in the presence of calcareous slopes of sheltered and sunny chestnut (*Castanea vesca*) associated with turkish hazelnut, species mezotermophile xerothermophilous (horn, flowering ash, dogwood, darmox, hawthorn, sumac, wild lilac).

Vegetation Gorj County includes about 2000 species, of which 110 species are mediterranean, 13 pontic 36 balkan, 26 balkan-dacian, playing a key role in diversification of tourism that can be practiced in the county (hiking, recreation and holidays, weekend, in scientific knowledge) in rural tourism (Figure 7).



Fig. 7. Natural setting of vertical vegetation in Gorj

Fauna county is very diverse and rich. Alpine peaks and glacier shelter chamois (Parangăurile, Gheres, Roșiile, Slăvei, Vâlcan-

Oslea). The deciduous forests are species like bears, wild boar, wolf, deer, deer, wild cat, ferret high value hunting. And some wildlife species appear mediterranean features: viper, tortoise, true personal and scientific curiosity. The picturesque hilly forests of the mountainous area and is enhanced by a large number of birds and insects. With hunting stands role grouse and grouse. The large number of species and hunting lodges explains hunting in Vâlcan and Parang mountains (hunting 467.400 ha). Waters of mountain lakes, the ice and the dam are rich in trout and carp. River headwaters and medium Jiu Jieț, Gilort Olteț are considered a paradise for anglers by the presence of species of trout, barbel, moioagă, chub, broad snout (Figure 8).



Fig. 8. Fauna of the Gorj county

In the county of Gorj , there is beauty of the landscape and flora and fauna species that are subject to protection, which annually attracts many tourists. The annual number of protected areas 54 areas, but very few of these protected areas of interest and allow tourism activities tour.

The most important protected areas in the county of Gorj are (Figure 9):

- Keys Sohodolului - complex , 20 hectares, length 10 km, interest in landscape and flora;
- Keys Corcoaiei - complex, 10 hectares, length 40 km;
- Keys Oltețului - Flora, 20 ha, gorges, caves dug into the limestone with small harboring 400 species of plants, some with unique;
- Polovragi cave - spelunking 1 hectare, famous for the cave entrance;
- Muierii - spelunking 10 ha, 4 levels Karst, near the yellow key, natural monument, arranged for sightseeing ( electrified ).

- Chestnut Forest Pocuia - Tismana - floral , 30.4 ha , species of edible chestnut (*Castanea vesca*, *Castanea sativa* ).



Fig. 9. Protected areas of the county Gorj

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

1. Gorj County landforms, mountains, hills, plains , meadows, plains, rivers, natural and artificial lakes, can be harnessed for rural tourism development and ecotourism.
2. Mountains are grouped in the north of the county and occupies about 29 % of the county.
3. Gorj county the following ratios vegetation vertical: floor meadows, coniferous forest floor and deciduous forest.
4. Vegetation and fauna diversity is significant tourist attractions, zone unique in terms of biodiversity.
5. Vegetation Gorj County includes about 2000 species, of which 110 species are mediterranean, 13 pontic 36 balkan, 26 balkan- dacian, playing a key role in diversification of tourism that can be practiced in the county.
6. In the county of Gorj , there is beauty of the landscape and flora and fauna species that are subject to protection, which annually attracts many tourists.
7. With a diverse tourist potential, Gorj county is the picturesque landscape, monuments of

art and architecture of great artistic value (many works are of international interest), representing an important heritage folklore and ethnographic these settlements and places presenting the history of ancient times until today.

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