

CHARACTERISTICS AND TOURISM POTENTIAL OF THE BURABAY NATIONAL PARK (KAZAKHSTAN)

Emin ATASOY*

Bursa Uludağ University, Faculty of Education,
Department of Social Studies Education, Bursa, Turkey, e-mail: eatasoy@uludag.edu.tr

Evren ATIŞ

Kastamonu University, Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Department of Geography,
Kastamonu, Turkey, e-mail: evrencografya@gmail.com

Zhambyl KANAGATOV

Zhetysu University named after I. Zhansugurov, Technical Faculty,
Taldykorgan, Republic of Kazakhstan, e-mail: kanagatov2013@mail.ru

Beknur IZENBAEV

International University of Tourism and Hospitality,
Department of Tourism and Hospitality, Turkestan, Republic of Kazakhstan, e-mail: izenbaev.beknur@iuth.edu.kz

Yerlan Sirimovich KABİYEYEV

Atyrau University named after H. Dosmukhamedov, Faculty of natural and agricultural sciences,
Department of Geography, Tourism and Water Resources, Atyrau, Kazakhstan, e-mail: yerlanustaz@gmail.com

Asset SERALIYEV

Abai Kazakh National Pedagogical University, Institute of Natural Sciences
and Geography, Almaty, Republic of Kazakhstan, e-mail: seraliev_81@mail.ru

Citation: Atasoy, E., Atış, E., Kanagatov, Z., Izenbaev, B., Kabiyevev, Y.S., & Seraliyev, A. (2022). CHARACTERISTICS AND TOURISM POTENTIAL OF THE BURABAY NATIONAL PARK (KAZAKHSTAN). *GeoJournal of Tourism and Geosites*, 43(3), 1129–1137. <https://doi.org/10.30892/gtg.43334-928>

Abstract: In this study, the geographical location and geographical features of the Republic of Kazakhstan were summarized and discussed, and the main advantages and disadvantages of Kazakhstan in terms of tourism were explicated. In the article, the geographical and ecological characteristics of the Burabay National Park, the number of tourists, the purpose and tasks of the establishment of the park and the historical development of the park were also deliberated. In this study, the tourism resources and accommodation potential of the national park, on the one hand, the most visited tourist attractions in and around the park area on the other hand were investigated. In the conclusion part of the article, the main problems observed in the Burabay National Park and its surroundings and what needed to be done to solve them were discussed. The most important aim of the research was to introduce the tourism potential and ecological richness of the Burabay National Parks to the readers.

Key words: tourism, National park, tourism potential, tourism resources, Burabay National park,

* * * * *

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

In order for the plant and animal species, ecosystems and biodiversity to be protected, new nature reserves, as in every country, are put into service every year within the borders of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Natural reserve areas, national parks, nature parks, natural monuments, nature reserves, botanical gardens, regional nature parks, zoological park areas and botanical park areas constitute the main nature reserves within the borders of the Republic of Kazakhstan. While the total area of all nature reserves within the borders of Kazakhstan in 2004 was 20.9 million hectares, making up 7.7% of the country's area, the total area of nature reserves in 2015 increased to 24.0 million hectares and their percentage in the country's area has reached 8.8%. Even though the percentage of nature reserves in the country's surface area varies from country to country, it is commonly known that the world average is 10-12%. Therefore, the area covered by the nature reserves in Kazakhstan is insufficient and it is commonly recognized that these values are below the world average (Kalyujnaya and Vaşukeviç, 2018). Most of the nature reserves within the borders of the Republic of Kazakhstan constitute the National Park areas. While the total area of the National Park areas in the country exceeded 14 million hectares in 2004, these values exceeded 25 million hectares in 2021 (Kayjakparova, 2020).

The main purpose and expectation in the establishment of national parks is, on the one hand, to protect the natural elements, which are unique in terms of environmental protection and aesthetics and on the other hand, provide people with the

* Corresponding author

opportunity to access and see these elements (Berdenov et al., 2021). Today, 14 national parks are in service in Kazakhstan, but this is an insufficient number for this huge country (Map 1 and Table 1). The country's first national park is Bayanaul Park, which was established in 1985. The newest and most recently established national parks are Tarbagatay, which came into use in 2018, and Ulitau, which came into use in 2021. It is expected that the “Merke” and “Türkistan” national parks will be put into service in the coming years. It is apparent that the national park areas in Kazakhstan are mostly concentrated in the mountainous and forested areas in the east and southeast of the country. It is noteworthy that no national parks are located in the northwestern and southwestern parts of the country (Table 1, Figure 1). As illustrated in Table 1, today there are totally 14 National Parks within the borders of the Republic of Kazakhstan and their total area is 2 726 330 hectares. Among the National Park lands, Katon-Karagayskiy (643 477 hectares) is the largest in terms of surface area, and the smallest is the Ulitau National Park (58 912 hectares). Burabay National Park, which is the most popular among domestic and foreign tourists and hosts the most visitors, was visited by a total of 683 000 people in 2019. Jongar-Alatau and Buyratau are the least visited national parks. In 2019, the total number of tourists visiting all the parks within the borders of the Republic of Kazakhstan was 1 380 000, which is a very insufficient number, far behind the countries that maintain the world tourism leadership (Seitimova et al., 2021). These statistical data show that the national park areas in the country are not sufficiently promoted and that they have failed to take their rightful place in national tourism planning.

Table 1. Major Characteristics of Kazakhstan National Parks (Sources: Seitimova et al., 2021)

No:	National Park	District	Area (Hectare)	Number of visitors (Year 2019)	Foundati on Year
1	Kokşetau	Akmolinsk	182 076	64 000	1996
2	Burabay	Akmolinsk	129 299	683 710	2000
3	İle-Alatauskiy	Almatinsk	198 669	288 000	1996
4	Çarin	Almatinsk	127 050	20 000	2004
5	Altın-Emel	Almatinsk	307 653	19 000	1996
6	Kelsay-Kelderi	Almatinsk	161 045	88 000	2007
7	Jongar-Alatau	Almatinsk	356 022	1 500	2010
8	Katon-Karagayskiy	East Kazakhstan	643 477	4 500	2001
9	Tarbagatay	East Kazakhstan	143 550	- -	2018
10	Karkaralinskiy	Karagandinsk	112 120	42 000	1998
11	Buyratau	Karagandinsk	88 968	2 000	2011
12	Bayanaul	Pavlodarsk	68 452	130 000	1985
13	Sayram-Ugamskiy	Turkestan	149 037	33 000	2006
14	Ulitau	Karagandinsk	58 912	- -	2021



Figure 1. Kazakhstan National Parks (Source: Authors, 2022)

PURPOSE

The principle purposes of the present study are manifold and can be stated as in the following: This study mainly aims in general to promote the tourism potential and tourism resources of the Northern Kazakhstan Region and the Akmolinsk region. More specifically, the functions and significance of the Nation Parks for Kazakhstan will be emphasized. Furthermore, the geographical and ecological characteristics of the Burabay National Park will specifically be investigated in detail. By this way, the unique and place and significance of the Burabay National Park in terms of Kazakhstan tourism geography will be emphasized. It is also one of the purpose of the present study to investigate the founding purpose, historical development. Tourism centers and economic functions of the Burabay National Park. The present study also aims to introduce and promote the tourism resources, natural attractions and human appeal as well as the accommodation potential of the Burabay National Park. The study will consequently deliberate the principle tourism-related problems visible in the Burabay National Park and its immediate surrounding and offer solutions to resolve these problems. With the ensuing results to come out of the study, recommendations will be offered to the National Parks in Kazakhstan in the future based on the economic and tourism-related lessons learnt from the results of the present study.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Some of the observations and research data in this study were obtained from the field trips of Emin Atasoy and doctoral students in Northern Kazakhstan and Burabay region between 2017 and 2019. In these trips, which included forests and lake basins, plains and steppes, river valleys and nature protection areas, museums and settlements, historical and touristic places, the tourism riches in the Burabay region were identified in the research area with the observations of the authors.

In this study, the method of case study was implemented. The case study method is referred to differentially in different countries. The most common terms used in the social sciences literature are as follows: "case study", "case method", "case study method" and "incident study". In the relevant English literature, the equivalent of this research method is "Case Study" (Aytaçlı, 2012; Subaşı and Okumuş, 2017). The case study is one of the systematic design types that includes steps such as collecting data, organizing the collected data, interpreting and researching it, and reaching the findings, just like a detailed planning in architecture (Safarov, 2020). Case study is a way of surveying at what is actually happening in the geographic setting, systematically collecting and analyzing the data and presenting the results. The resulting output is a powerful comprehension of why it has happened that way and what needs to be focused on in more detail for future research. In the data collection process of the study on Burabay National Park, 4 different sources were utilized:

- 1) Documents, atlases, maps and official statistical data
- 2) Scientific works written in Turkish, Kazakh, English and Russian,
- 3) Electronic resources,
- 4) Direct field observations in the area. Archival documents, periodicals, books and articles, doctoral theses and official institution reports, statistical documents and various scientific researches were utilized as written sources in the study.

Major Characteristics of Burabay National Park

Burabay National Park is located northwest of the capital Nur-Sultan, southeast of the city of Kokshetau and southwest of the city of Omsk, one of the most important metropolitan cities in Russia (Figure 1). Burabay National Park, located in the northern parts of Akmolinsk province and within the borders of Burabay rayon (district), is called "Little Switzerland of Kazakhstan" due to its natural beauties. The diversity in forest and lake types, clean air and wide green areas, rugged hills and interesting geomorphological formations are the characteristics enabling the comparison of this region to Switzerland. There are a total of 14 lakes and many small lakes with a surface area of more than 1 km² in the national park area.

The main lakes within the borders of the national park, which are important for tourism, are: Borovoe, Katarkol, Ştuçie, Bolşoe Çebachie, Maloe Çebachie, Svetloe, Karasie, Gornoe and Lebedinoe. All of these lakes are located in the Burabay Lakes Region. Among them, Bolshoe Chebachie (23.2 km²), Maloe Chebachie (16.8 km²), Shtuchie (19.6 km²), and Borovoe (10.5 km²) are the largest lakes in terms of surface area. The main lakes in the Burabay Lakes Region with an area of less than 1 km² are: Akkol, Jaynak, Lebyajie, Zerkalnoe, Tekekol, Maybalik, Barmaşino, Lebedinoe, Karasu, Akkulok and Sulukol (Chirikov et al., 2008). Most of the lakes in the region have fresh waters and closed basins, and salty lakes are much less in number. The large number of lakes, large green areas, clean air and large forested lands have caused the national park to be compared to the Alps and Switzerland. Although there are no large rivers and large streams within the borders of Burabay National Park, Gromovaya, Saribulak, Kolchakti, Kilchakti and Imanayskiy can be cited as examples of small streams in the region (Chirikov et al., 2008). Today, one of the most important goals and objectives of the national park officials is to protect the pine forests and lake basins in the park area and transfer them to future generations.

Steppes, hilly areas, forested-steppes, flat plains, lakes and forested areas constitute the largest natural lands in the national park area and all these lands are part of the Kokshetau Hilly Massif. Kokşetau Hill (887 m), also known as Sinyuha Mountain, forms the highest point of the Kokşetau Hilly Massif with a length of 400 km and a width of approximately 200 km. Jeke-Batır (826 m) and Burabay (690 m) form other important mountain masses within the borders of the National Park. Burabay National Park is located in the northwest of the Kokshetau Hilly Massif (Chirikov et al., 2008). Burabay National Park, located in the west of the Seletiteniz Lake Basin and east of the Ishim Valley, is the tourism showcase

of the Republic of Kazakhstan and one of the most well-known and most visited tourism centers of the country. Burabay, which is a wonder of nature, is called "Borovoye" in Russian. In fact, it is known that the name Burabay comes from the Kazakh word "Bura", which means "camel". According to historical legends, a camel living in the vicinity of Kokshetau, while grazing on the slopes of the mountain, sensing the approach of the enemy armies, climbed to the top of the mountain and warned



Figure 2. Geographical Location Burabay National Park (Source: Authors, 2022)

people of impending danger with a powerful roar. As proof of this interesting legend, a landform resembling a two-humped camel is demonstrated on one of the majestic rocks of the Kokshetau Mountains today (Figure 2).

The Burabay National Park has a severe continental climate. The temperature differences between months and seasons are very high, while the amount of humidity and precipitation is very low. The annual average temperature of the park area is 1 °C, the average temperature in January is -16,7 °C, and the average temperature in July is +18,6 °C. In winter days, temperatures can drop to extreme values -52 °C, and in summer days, temperatures can rise to +42 °C as extreme values. Since the lands of the national park are located in a semi-arid region, the annual precipitation is insufficient and is around 300-400 millimeters. In general, all national park lands are covered with snow during the period of October – April (Ivasensko, 2009). Burabay National Park has a long and interesting history. In 1898, the “State Forest Enterprise” was established to protect the lakes and forests in the region around Lake Borovoye. In 1910, a sanatorium was established in the same region for the treatment of pulmonary tuberculosis and some other diseases. From the 1920s to 1990, that is, during the entire USSR era, the Borovoye region was recognized as an important health, recreation and tourism region and hosted thousands of tourists every year. In fact, during the USSR era, the first nature reserve in the Burabay region was established in 1935. This protection zone named “Borovoye State Reserve” was in service for only 16 years and was closed in 1951 and replaced by the “Borovskoe Forest Enterprise”.

In 1997, both the name and functions of “Borovskoe Forest Enterprise” were changed so that it existed as a state institution under the name of “Burabay Ecological Forestry and Health Complex” in the period 1997-2000 until 2000. On August 12, 2000, as a state institution, the “Burabay National Park” officially started its activities. In 2000, the park area was established on an area of 83511 hectares, of which 47600 hectares are covered with forests. In 2010, the National Park area was expanded to 129935 hectares. In 2018, the “Burabay” monument, written in large illuminated letters and visible from afar, was placed on the top of Borovoye hill and turned into a touristic symbol of the national park. Today the national park area is under the control and authority of the presidential administration of the Republic of Kazakhstan. The national park, which was officially established on August 12, 2000, covers an area of 129 299 hectares today and there is a forest area of 79291 hectares within the borders of the park (<https://www.udp-rk.kz/ru/organizations/45471/>). In other words, 61.0% of the national park lands are covered with forests and a large part of these forests consists of coniferous trees.

The geographical proximity to the Ural Mountains, the West Siberian Plain and the capital city of Nur-Sultan provides both transportation and tourism advantages for the Burabay National Park. The cities of Shtuchinsk and Kokshetau are the closest urban settlements to the national park area (Figure 1 and Figure 2). The foreign tourists visiting the national park area should know that the Shtuchinsk railway station, Kokshetau national airport and the international airport in the city of Nur-Sultan are the transportation hubs located at the nearest distance. In summary, there are both road, rail and airline options for domestic and foreign tourists to reach the national park area. As a geographical location, the fact that Burabay National Park is located in a geographical location that accommodates both the West Siberian Plain and the Central Asian Region, steppe and taiga lands, and the transition characteristics between the European and Asian continents has caused the diversity of ecosystems and living species in the park area. There are more than 800 plant species and more than 300 animal species within the borders of Burabay National Park (<http://parkburabay.kz/>). As a result of intense anthropogenic activities, the number of living species is gradually decreasing, and today about 90 of animal species and about 10% of plant species are threatened with extinction (Khrustaleva, 2012). 65% of the forests within the borders of Burabay National Park consist of pine trees, 31% of birch trees, 3% of aspen trees and 1% of shrubs (Sultangazina and Kuprijanov, 2012). As is clearly seen, coniferous forests are dominant within the boundaries of the national park land and pine and birch are the most common tree species among them.

The fauna of Burabay is much richer than the surrounding steppe regions. The living species seen in the national park land are virtually a mixture of the characteristic fauna elements of steppe and forest lands, lakes and mountains. In the Burabay (Russian: Borovoye) region, both the animal species of the northern and southern regions and the European, Central Asian and Siberian species can be observed simultaneously. Deer, wild boar, badger, rabbit, Siberian roe deer, wolf, fox, lynx, squirrel, weasel and pine marten are the most common animals in the national park lands today (İvaşensko, 2009).

Major Tourist Attractions of the Burabay National Park

In terms of the number of nature reserves, Kazakhstan ranks sixth among the former republics of the USSR (Out of 15 republics in total), and third in terms of the total area occupied by these nature reserves. However, when the percentage of nature reserves in the country's area is compared, it is seen that Kazakhstan is only 13th among the former republics of the USSR. It is understood that for a large country such as Kazakhstan, nature reserves cover very little area and are extensively insufficient in number. Considering all these shortcomings, the Kazakhstan Government aims to open 18 new nature reserves by the middle of the 21st century (Kalyujnaya and Vaşukeviç, 2018). Burabay National Park is located within the borders of Akmolinsk province (province), which is one of the most developed provinces of Kazakhstan in terms of tourism. There are about 700 tourism enterprises operating within the borders of Akmolinsk principality (province). Of these, 370 are touristic accommodation facilities, 45 sanatorium facilities and treatment centers, 178 roadside service facilities and 68 travel agencies. Furthermore, within the borders of Akmolinsk province, there are 3 national parks (“Burabay”, “Buyratau” and “Kokshetav”), 1 state nature reserve (Korgaljin Nature Reserve) and about 900 historical-cultural monuments. Furthermore, 394 900 tourists purchased service from the touristic accommodation facilities located within the borders of Akmolinsk principality (province) in 2019. However, the fact that most of the incoming tourists are the citizens of Kazakhstan and a very small part of them are foreign tourists illustrates that the region has not achieved the due success in terms of international tourism. As a result, a total of 813000 domestic and foreign tourists visited Akmolinsk principality in 2019 and this number is expected to rise to 1.6 million by 2025 (Evloeva and Titova, 2020). With the completion of the “Ak Bura Resort” holiday village with a capacity of 1900 beds, which is under construction between the

Bolshoe Çebachie and Tekekol lakes, and the Abilayhan Park and the "Zernovaya Industriya - Astana" hotel complex going into service, both the number of tourists coming to Burabay National Park and the touristic importance of the region is expected to increase even more (Figure 3). Burabay National Park is actually a part of the Shtuchinsk – Borovoy Touristic Complex, and this holiday complex draws attention with its more than 190 touristic facilities and more than 15 000 beds (Evloeva and Titova, 2020). The fact that the Shtuchinsk – Borovoy Touristic Complex is located close to the city of Kokshetav, the administrative center of the region, to the capital Nur Sultan, to the Buiratau and Kokshetav National Parks, provides a great tourism and transportation advantage to this popular region (Figure 2). Vast forest lands, numerous lakes and intact ecosystems constitute the biggest tourism advantages of the Shtuchinsk – Borovoy Touristic Complex. The administrative center of the Burabay National Park is only 22 kilometers away from the city of Shtuchinsk and 90 kilometers away from the city of Kokshetau, and 250 kilometers away from the capital city of Nur-Sultan (Chirikov et al., 2008).

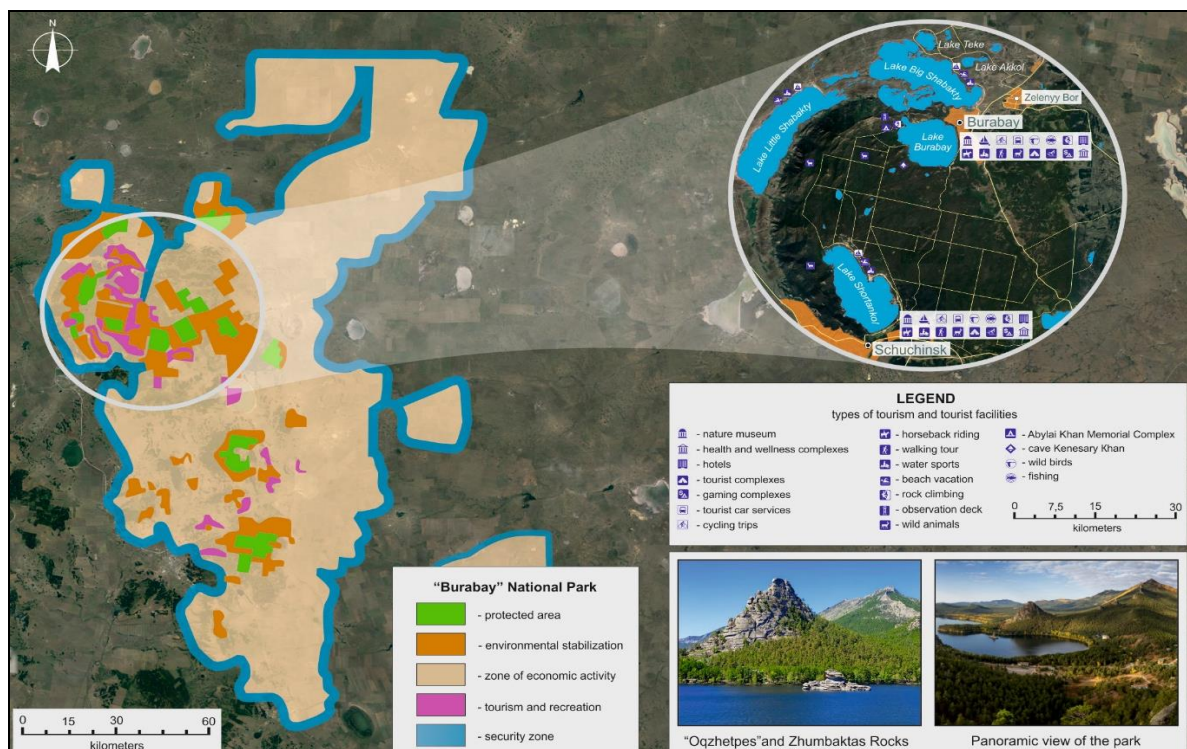


Figure 3. Burabay National Park (Source: Authors, 2022)

Within the Shtuchinsk – Borovoy Touristic Complex, there are many different types of accommodation facilities such as hotels, hostels, motels, chalets, boutique hotels, city hotels, sanatoriums, hostels and winter tourism resorts (Figure 3). The main accommodation centers within the Shtuchinsk – Borovoy Touristic Complex are: Rixos Borovoe Hotel, Sultan Plaza Borovoe, Park Hotel Kokshetau, Alatau Hotel, Park House Kokshetau, Tumar Halal Hotel, Pansionat Zhumbaktas, Bay-Bura Hotel, Samal Hotel, Almaz Sanatorium, Bura Family Pension, Altın Orman Holiday House, Nomad Hotel, Hotel Sari-Arga, Uyut Holiday House, Zhaylau Hotel, Ar-Ay Gostinniy Dom, Hotel "Alem Plyus", Jumbaktas Borovoe Hotel, Gostevoy Dom "Aruana", Gostevoy Complex Burabay Service, Wyndham Garden Burabay, Comfort Hotel Burabay, Altyn Kun Hotel, Edem Spa Hotel, Kekşebel Hotel, Arasan Holiday Village, Green Which Tourist Borovoye, Nursat Hotel, Zhansaya Hotel, Toboroboro Hotel, Gostevoy Dom Ostrov Robinzona, Gloriya Hotel, Al Baraka Hotel, Terrassa Park Hotel, Arkhidom Hotel, Alma-Ata Hotel, Pansion "Progress", Īnsar Hotel, Zona Otdiha "Tsvetnichok", Ak Bult Hotel, Bayterek Hotel, Mini Hotel Yasmin, Johnny's Place Motel, Alişer Hotel, Eurasia De Luxe, Hotel Sunrise, Baitas Hotel, Gos tevoy Dom "U Baby Lyuby", Okjetpes Sanatorium, Grand Trek Hotel, Green Park Burabay, Sanatorium Shtuchinskiy, Discovery Borovoe, Sanatorium Katarkol, Hostel Okjetpes, Boutique Hotel "Rufus Lodge", Ekotel "Obereg", Siniy Hotel Cozy, Hotel Nurlytau, Sanatoriyy Zelenyy Bor and Altai Hotel (booking, trivago, tripadvisor, luxuryhotelsguides, agoda).

As is clear, these accommodation facilities include 4-5-star luxury facilities such as Rixos Borovoe Hotel, Wyndham Garden Burabay and Park Hotel Kokshetau, family hostels such as Progress, Ar-Ay and Bura, holiday villages such as Arasan and Ostrov Robinson, motels such as Johnny's Place and Marsel. Economic holiday homes such as Altın Orman, Uysun and Ansar, sanatorium complexes such as Katarkol, Almaz and Sultan Plaza are also in service. Most of the accommodation facilities are concentrated on the eastern shores of the Burabay lake and around the Ştuçie lake. Furthermore, Nurtau Ski, Shtuchinsk National Ski Center, Burabay Ski Center and Tseseka Ski Center are the most important winter tourism centers within the borders of the Shtuchinsk - Borovoy Touristic Complex. Consequently, the Shtuchinsk – Borovoy Touristic Complex has become famous throughout Central Asia as the holiday, health and entertainment pearl of Kazakhstan.

The number of touristic facilities and tourism enterprises within the borders of Burabay National Park is 178 and 22 accommodation facilities have the operating certificate of the Ministry of Tourism of Kazakhstan. The accommodation facilities in the park area are in service with a total of 6403 rooms and 13310 beds. There are 15 tourism companies operating within the boundaries of the park, and there are 44 historical monuments or sculptures. In order to develop

ecological tourism, a total of 29 excursion routes, including 19 walking, 2 horse, 1 bicycle, 1 water and 6 bus routes, have been developed in the national park area, and all of them are in the service of tourism today. The total length of the walking and cycling paths in the park area exceeds 55 kilometers. More than 9 boat rental points operate within the park boundaries, generally during the summer months. Curious tourists who wish to browse closely the bays, natural beauties, lake shores and interesting rock formations in the region usually participate in lake excursions with the boats they rent. The “Cash Ville” casino operating within the borders of the “Rixos Borovoe” hotel is one of the most popular entertainment centers of the region and the largest operating national park (<https://www.gov.kz/memleket/entities/aqmola-burabay/activities/4987?lang=ru>). Burabay National Park draws attention with its colorful festivals, educational and scientific organizations and sports activities as well as recreational activities and health tourism. In 2019, about 20 major touristic organizations focused on cultural and sports activities were organized within the borders of the national park. “Veloburabay” cycling competitions, “Burabay” international sailing competitions organized in the lake basins, “Red Bull 400” international running competitions and “Race Nation Burabay” hurdle running competitions are among the most popular and most interesting international tourism events. The stage performances of the “Astana Opera” artists and the “Birjan-Sara” opera, organized in 2018 within the borders of the national park with the support of the Ministry of Culture and Sports of Kazakhstan, helped the region to be visited by thousands of local and foreign tourists and contributed comprehensively to the promotion of the national park (Evloeva and Titova, 2020). The most visited tourist attractions in and around Burabay National Park are:

- Geomorphological tourist attractions: Kokshetau, Jeke-Batir and Burabay Mountains; Kenesari Cave; geomorphological formations named Sfinisk, Deve, Berkut and Kabarga; Okjetpes Hill, Jumbaktas Rock and Ekstrim-Park Cliffs.
- Hydrographic tourist attractions: Imanaevski Waterfall; Lakes of Borovoe, Katarkol, Shtuchie, Bolshoe Chebachie, Maloe Chebachie, Lebyajie, Akkol and Svetloe.
- Anthropical (the existence of human life) tourist attractions and recreation areas: Shtuchinsk Botanical Garden, Burabay Nature Museum, Dendropark Shtuchinsk, Cash Ville Casino, Abilay Khan Throne, Burabay Zoo, Abilay Khan Museum, Shtuchinsk Cultural Center, Thematic Park Kazakhstan Lapland, Ledoviy Gorodok Thematic Park, Bolek Tau Walking Area, Abilay Khan Recreation Area, Bereke-Burabay Trade and Entertainment Center, Akbura Park Walking Area, Konniy Dvor Park, Lesnaya Skazka, and Shtuchinsk City Park.
- Major faith centers: Shtuchinsk Mosque, Nikolay Chudotvoretz Orthodox Church, Burabay Mosque, Burabay Orthodox Church and Shtuchinsk Orthodox Church.
- Major sports centers: Nurtau Ski Center, Burabay Ski Center, Tseseka Ski Center, Burabay Golf Club, Jaksı Sports Center, Cumhuriyet Winter Sports Center, Yaguar Sports Hall, Orlenok Sports Complex and Olimp Sports Hall.
- Major sanatorium centers: Bolek Tau, Saken Seyfilin, Burabay, Shtuchinsk, Katarkol, Zvezdnyy, Baldauren, Zeleniy Bor, Almaz, Priezerniy, Detskiy Sanatoriy Burabay and Sultan Plaza.
- Major beach areas: Lesnaya Skazka Beach, Borovoye Beach, Shtuchiy Bereg Beach, Katarkol Beach and Maybalik Beach.
- Major restaurants and cafes: Dostar, Samal, Aygerim, Şafran, Uzbečka, Asia, Ayajan, Inszhu, Aynakol, Boom, Agajan, Astana Nury, Aragvi, İmperiya Sushi, Kafe Steyk Haus, Nursat, Altın Kazına, Family Sushi, Kaspiy, Kafe “Merey”, Astoriya, Mozaika, Cafe “Nauryz”, Cafe “Aray”, Masala Indian Restaurant and Cafe “Express”.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Burabay region is one of the most visited and popular tourist destinations in Kazakhstan. However, in the geography of Kazakhstan, Burabay not only denotes a lake, settlement, ski resort and mountain, but also denotes a hotel, restaurant, district, sanatorium and National Park. There are different usage areas within the borders of Burabay National Park in terms of nature protection priority and freedom of human-economic activities. Nature reserves where human-economic activities are prohibited, private recreation areas and areas open to human-economic activities are the primary ones. Lake tourism, ecotourism, winter tourism, cultural tourism, sports tourism and health tourism are the most developed types of tourism in the park area. It is expected that event tourism, convention tourism and adventure tourism will develop within the borders of the national park in the 2020-2060 period. Sports activities, environmental education and scientific activities, as well as fishing, mountaineering, trekking and cycling tours are organized in certain seasons and in certain areas in the park area. Fresh air, green forests, interesting landforms, sandy beaches on the lake shores, breathtaking natural beauties and quiet natural environment away from the city are the biggest tourism advantages of Burabay National Park (<https://borovoe.kz/about/>). Undoubtedly, Burabay National Park is one of the most famous, beautiful and busiest tourism centers of Kazakhstan. Furthermore, Burabay (Russian: Borovoe) is the most famous health tourism center of the country and more than 15 sanatoriums and health centers operate within the borders of the park. Respiratory tract, gastrointestinal system, cardiovascular system and musculoskeletal system diseases are the most commonly treated in Burabay sanatoriums (<https://tengritravel.kz/my-country/prirodnaya-jemchujina-kazahstana-burabay-346441/>). Therefore, every year thousands of patients are both take a rest and are treated in one of the facilities within the borders of the national park. Sanatorium complexes such as Okjetpes Sanatorium, Sanatorium Shtuchinskiy, Sanatorium Katarkol, Almaz Sanatorium, Detskiy Sanatorium Burabay, Sanatorium Zeloniy Bor and Sultan Plaza Burabay are the major health tourism centers located within the borders of the national park.

In comparison to other national park areas in Kazakhstan, Burabay National Park has seven important advantages:

1. Geographically, it is close to the capital city of Nur-Sultan and the administrative center of the region, Kokshetau.
2. In comparison to other nature reserves in Kazakhstan, it is the national park with the most transportation type options. By offering road, rail and air transportation options, it has easy and economical transportation connections for visitors from abroad and from different parts of the country.
3. It is the country's most visited and most popular national park, with an annual number of tourists exceeding 600 000.
4. It has breathtaking natural beauties, vast forest areas, popular ski resorts, interesting geomorphological formations, modern accommodation facilities and many clean lake basins at the same time.

5. It has many sanatoriums, SPA facilities and health centers and is the most famous health tourism center of the country.

6. The Burabay region, which hosts communities with different religious and ethnic characteristics such as Russian, Kazakh, German, Belarusian, Polish, Tatar, Ingush, Korean and Chechen, has a great potential in terms of both faith and ethnic tourism as well as diaspora and cultural tourism.

7. In comparison to other nature reserves in Kazakhstan, it is the national park with the most tourism diversity. It has simultaneous development opportunities of various tourism types such as lake tourism, ecotourism, ethnotourism, winter tourism, cultural tourism, youth tourism, event tourism, sports tourism, health tourism, congress tourism, gambling tourism and adventure tourism in the national park lands.

The Burabay National Park is neither the newest established nor the largest national park of the Republic of Kazakhstan. Nevertheless, it is the most visited national park by the Russian tourists and the most popular and the most tourist accepting park in the country. While 122 843 visitors visited the national park area in 2010, this number increased to 683 710 in 2019 (Figure 4).

In other words, the number of visitors to the national park has increased by 5.5 times in a period of about 10 years. In conclusion, no other national park in Kazakhstan except Burabay has more than 500 000 annual visitors (Figure 4). As it is clear in Figure 4,

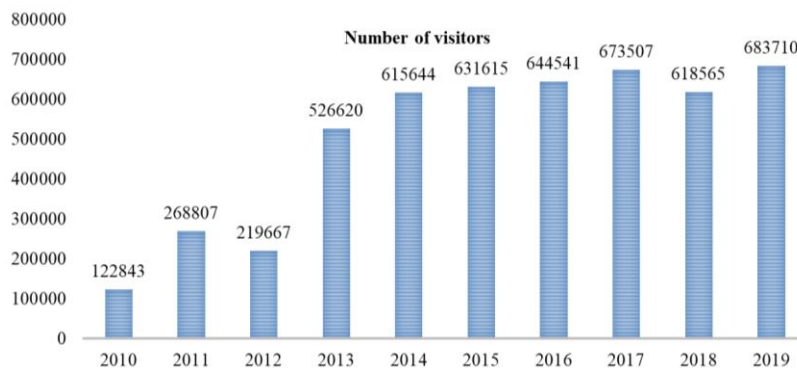


Figure 4. Number of Tourists Visiting the Burabay National Park in 2010–2019 Period (Nugmanova et al., 2020)

more than 5 million tourists visited the national park in the period of 2010–2019, that is, in 10 years. The number of visitors to the national park in the 2013–2019 period varied between 525 000 and 685 000. By 2030, the annual total number of tourists is expected to exceed 1 million. The average daily number of tourists visiting the Burabay National Park is around 1600 - 2000, and this number rises to 5000 at the weekends and holidays. Uncontrolled influx of visitors and excessive touristic density are among the most important ecological problems of the park area and threaten both natural forest areas and lakes in the region. 6.18 people per hectare at the weekends, holidays and holidays is a testament to this unplanned touristic density in the park area (Nugmanova and Arhipov, 2019; Nugmanova et al., 2020).

The main problems observed in the Burabay National Park and its immediate surroundings and the main problems waiting to be resolved can be summarized as follows (Duysen, 2002; Ahmetov et al., 2009; Bagiryan, 2016; Dmitriyev et al., 2021; Egorina and Geldieva, 2010; Khrustaleva et al., 2012; Tokpanov et al., 2021):

- Ecosystems within the borders of the national park are very delicate and fragile and can be easily damaged by intense human activities. When such structures as highways, holiday centers, public buildings, hotels, restaurants, walking routes are being constructed, they should be planned in such a way that they would cause no damage to the natural ecosystems. Unplanned construction, unsightly concreting and uncontrolled construction may destroy the attractiveness and ecological authenticity of the national park and may adversely affect tourism activities in the region in the long run.

- The lakes located within the borders of the national park are exposed to pollution and intense human activities, especially in the summer months when tourism is intense. Illegal fishing and transportation in the lake basins, as well as the lack of modern water treatment facilities to clean the polluted wastewater around the lakes are other problems that negatively affect the tourism activities. Without an ecological approach, environmentally friendly tourism and nature-centered touristic planning, the national park cannot achieve its desired goals and tourism achievements.

- There are still some problems regarding garbage collection in the settlements and holiday centers within the borders of the national park, and problems regarding the storage and transportation of domestic wastes. There are neither garbage bins nor waste collection centers on the lake shores, picnic areas, forest areas and along touristic routes. Therefore, environmental pollution and garbage problem is one of the important problems of the park waiting to be resolved.

- Uncontrolled access to the virgin areas, grasslands, lake shores and forest lands within the borders of the national park with bicycles, automobiles and various motor vehicles adversely affects both plants and animals and natural ecosystems. For instance, thousands of people enter the natural forest areas every year in order to collect mushrooms and berries, have a picnic or start a fire, destroying vegetation and frightening wild animals. Legal and legal regulations that will protect the untouched natural areas in the park area from human influence, intense construction and transportation activities should be implemented as soon as possible.

- The uncontrolled growth of tourism within the borders of the national park and the rapid concretization of the lake shores with new constructions and buildings pose a major problem. Uncontrolled tourism in the park lands, rapid construction, environmental pollution and the desire of companies to make profits endanger both natural ecosystems and local communities in the long run. Furthermore, control mechanisms should be developed in an attempt to prevent illegal tree cutting and forest fires in the summer months in the national park area. In conclusion, the rich diversity of living species in forests, unique ecosystems and valuable forest areas in national park lands should be protected in a way that will be handed down to the future generations.

- State and private investments within the borders of the national park should be enhanced, and both infrastructure and service activities such as transportation, water, sewerage, internet network and communication should be modernized. Modern marketing methods, long-term promotional policies, financial support of state bodies are the first steps to be taken for the development of the national park.

- The Burabay territories have very rich touristic resources and a great variety of tourism. Today, lake tourism, health tourism, sports tourism and ecological tourism constitute the most developed tourism branches within the borders of the national park. Nevertheless, by making new plans and new investments in the park area by 2050, other tourism types suitable for the region such as business tourism, youth tourism, gastronomic tourism, event tourism, agricultural tourism, ethnotourism, gambling tourism, cultural tourism, congress tourism, equestrian tourism and adventure tourism can be promoted. Briefly, the recreation and tourism activities in the national park area should diversify over time and spread over four seasons.

- The number of tourists visiting the Burabay National Park often exceeds the bearing capacity of the park, especially at the weekends and holidays, and all this leads to some serious environmental problems. Uncontrolled influx of visitors and excessive touristic density are one of the most important ecological problems waiting to be resolved in the park area.

- The long winter period, harsh climatic conditions and long distances between geographical regions on the territory of Kazakhstan are a national tourism problem. In addition, it is known that the lack of tourism experts, qualified foreign language-speaking personnel and tourist guides is common both in the Burabay National Park and in the other nature reserve areas.

- The insufficiency and neglect of picnic areas, bus stops, public facilities, as well as bicycle and walking routes within the borders of the national park constitute a separate problem and another tourism negativity.

- For the development, protection and beautification of the Burabay region, local and national politicians should cooperate with each other.

Kazakhstan has a great potential for the development of tourism activities in national park areas, but due to many reasons, it has not been able to attain the desired success in this regard and has not been able to organize the international tourist flow towards nature reserves. There are different problems in nature reserves located in different regions within the borders of the country. Therefore, in the following part of the article, national tourism problems or the problems of all nature reserves have not been discussed, but only the main problems that await to be resolved within the borders of Burabay National Park have been addressed. The things that need to be done to resolve the problems within the borders of the Burabay National Park can be summarized as follows (Rahimbaev, 2017; Sultangazina and Kuprijanov, 2012; Makhanova et al., 2022; Dmitriyev et al., 2021; Kurmanbaeva et al., 2019):

- Active participation of the state, non-governmental organizations and local administrations in the implementation of regional projects related to tourism activities is essential. Both state and private sector representatives and local and central government officials should cooperate and develop joint tourism projects for the healthy conduct of tourism activities in national park areas by combining their powers and experiences.

- A utilitarian park management and a contemporary organizational model should be established in the national park area. Both transportation, communication, security and accommodation problems of tourists, as well as the economic and ecological problems in the park area, should be resolved. Considering the economic and socio-economic characteristics of the Burabay region, the effects and economic opportunities of the national park on regional development and the enrichment of the local people should be re-evaluated and new targets should be identified in this area. The positive and negative effects of both the region on the national park and the national park on the region should be debated again on scientific and administrative grounds.

- Cooperation should be sought with the world's most successful national park managers, who have great experience in the field of tourism, so that successful tourism practices abroad should be transferred to Kazakhstan with international cooperation. Until 2050, both the tourism and recreation diversity of the park should be enhanced and tourism activities should be organized to cover four seasons by spreading over 365 days.

- Since the number of tourism experts, tourist guides and interpreters in the national park area is very insufficient, trained personnel, tourist guides, mountaineers and translators should be employed with the support of the state.

- It is essential to develop a long-term government policy on the use and protection of national park areas and implement it meticulously. Illegal constructions and illegal housing in the national park area must be restrained, and imperative sanctions and measures must be implemented in an attempt to prevent illegal hunting, forest fires and logging.

- There are hiking and trekking routes, picnic areas, boat rental centers, etc. available in the national park areas, the existing venues should be renewed and new ones should be put into service. The flooring, information signs, infrastructure and lighting of touristic tracks, cycling and walking routes need to be renewed. Moreover, visual information boards and tourist maps should be placed everywhere so that visitors walking in the park do not get lost on the touristic paths.

- Since the Republic of Kazakhstan is a country with very poor resources in terms of forest lands and fresh water resources, national park areas should be transformed into ecological centers that will protect and appropriate these valuable resources. In order to protect the natural environment and prevent ecosystem destruction, new sources of finance should be identified. Furthermore, new ecological projects, new infrastructure applications and new nature protection targets should be put into practice in order to protect the forest lands, river valleys and lake basins.

- New nature reserve and environmental education centers should be put into service within the Burabay National Park. The national park area should be transformed into an international tourism center that both preserves and promotes the richness of national flora and fauna, cultural, geomorphological and hydrographic tourism attractions and interesting natural beauties.

- Scientific congresses, international conferences, sports and arts activities and especially environmental education activities should be organized more intensively within the national park areas.

- There is a large increase in the number of visitors to the park during the summer months and especially on holidays and weekends. Therefore, policies and sanctions should be developed by the park management in order to reduce the touristic density in these specific periods. Picnic, fire, resting and swimming areas for the visitors should be designated again and showcased with the touristic maps on the roadside.

REFERENCES

- Ahmetov, E.A., Karmenova, N.N., Karbaeva, Ş.Ş., & Asubaev, B.K. (2009). *Ekonomiçeskaya i Sotsialnaya Geografiya Kazahstana, (Economic and social geography of Kazakhstan)*, İzdatelstvo "Mektep", Almaty, Kazakhstan, (in Russian).
- Aytaçlı, B. (2012). *A Detailed View of the Case Study*, Adnan Menderes University Faculty of Education Journal of Educational Sciences, June 2012, 3 (1), 1-9.
- Bagiryan, B.A. (2016). Gosudarstvenno-Çastnoe Partnerstvo v Turizme Kak Instrument Zaštiti Natsionalnih İnteresov Gosudarstva, (Public-private partnership in tourism as a tool for protecting national interests state). *Jurnal Finansovye Issledovaniya*, 2 (51), 62-68, (in Russian).
- Berdenov, Z., Mendybayev, E., Beketova, A., Satkarova, N., & Gozner, M. (2021). Assessment of the Southern Urals recreational potential for the development of the Aktobe tourism industry. *GeoJournal of Tourism and Geosites*, 38(4), 1274–1279. <https://doi.org/10.30892/gtg.38435-769>.
- Chirikov, A.I., Pozdnyak, G.V., & Kamenskaya, İ.Y. (2008). *Atlas Mira, (World Atlas)*, İzdatelstvo Oniks, Moskova (in Russian).
- Dmitriyev, P.S., Fomin, I.A., & Wendt, J.A. (2021). Assessment And Zoning Of Recreational Facilities North Kazakhstan Region For The Development Of The Tourism Industry. *GeoJournal of Tourism and Geosites*, 38 (4), 1069–1075. <https://doi.org/10.30892/gtg.38411-745>
- Duysen, G.M. (2002). *Fundamentals of the formation and development of the tourism industry in Kazakhstan*, Publishing «LEM», Almaty, Kazakhstan.
- Egorina, A.B., & Geldieva, G.B. (2010). *Fiziçeskaya Geografiya Respubliki Kazahstan, (Physical geography of Kazakhstan)*, İzdatelstvo ENU L.N. Gumileva "Arkas", Astana, Kazakhstan (in Russian).
- Evloeva, A.S., & Titova, M.A. (2020). Prospects for The Development of Tourist Animation in the Territory of the Shchuchinsky-Borovsky Resort Zone of the Akmola Region. *Magyar Tudományos Journal*, 40, 10-13.
- Ivasensko, A.A. (2009). *Zapovedniki i Natsionalnie Parki Kazahstana, (Reserves and national parks of Kazakhstan)*, İzdatelstvo Almatikitap Baspası, Almaty, Kazakhstan (in Russian).
- Kalyujnaya, E.B., & Vaşukeviç, H.B. (2018). *Analiz Zemel Osobo Ohryanyaemih Prirodnih Teritoriy Respubliki Kazahstan, (Analysis of lands of specially protected natural territories of the Republic of Kazakhstan)*, Molodej i Nauka, 1, (32) (in Russian).
- Kayjakparova, A.B. (2020). *Stanovlenie i Razvitie Zakonodatelstva v Oblastii Osobo Ohryanyaemih Prirodnih Teritoriy Respubliki Kazahstan, (Formation and development of legislation in the field of specially protected natural territories of the Republic of Kazakhstan)*, Vestnik İstituta Zakonodatelstva i Pravovoy İnfornatsii RK, 3(61), 183 – 190, (in Russian).
- Khrustaleva, I.A., Kuprijanov, A.N., & Sultangazina, G.J. (2012). Rare Species of Plants of the National Park «Burabay» (Central Kazakhstan). *Tomsk State University Journal of Biology*, 4(20). 118–126, (in Russian).
- Kurmanbaeva, A.S., Husainov, A.T., & Jumay, E. (2019). *Ecological State of Lake "Burabay" State National Natural Park "Burabay*, News of Science of Kazakhstan, 3(141), 202-209, (in Russian).
- Makhanova, N., Berdenov, Z., Wendt, J.A., Sarsekova, D., Mursalimova, E., Sansyzbayeva, A., Nurtazina, N., & Safarov, R. (2022). Biogeographic potential of the North Kazakh Plain in the perspective of health tourism development. *GeoJournal of Tourism and Geosites*, 40 (1), 253–258. <https://doi.org/10.30892/gtg.40130-826>
- Nugmanova, V.M., & Arhipov, E.V. (2019). *Assessment of Natural Regeneration in Various Types of Pine Forests of Burabay National Park*, Materials of International Scientific and Practical Conference, Kokshetav, Kazakhstan, 370 – 376, (in Russian).
- Nugmanova, V.M., Pavlova, G.S., Baltasheva, S.J., & Rahmatulina, K.S. (2020). *Effect of Recreation On Natural Renewal Pine Forests of Gnpp Burabai*, Materials of International Scientific and Practical Conference, Dedicated to the 20th Anniversary of State National Natural Park «Burabay» Creation «Innovations in the Conservation and Sustainable Development of Forest Ecosystems», Burabay, Kazakhstan, 147 – 152, (in Russian).
- Rahimbaev, B.B. (2017). *Ponyatie, Printsipi Organizatsii Osobo Ohryanyaemih Prirodnih Teritoriy v Respublike Kazahstan, (The concept of the principles of organization of specially protected natural areas in the Republic of Kazakhstan)*, O Znaçenie Gosudarstva v Epohu Globalizatsii, Vestnik Kazahstansko-Amerikanskogo Svobodnogo Universiteta, 17 (09) 117, Ust-Kamenogorsk, Kazakhstan, 117-124, (in Russian).
- Safarov, R.Z., Shomanova, Z.K., Nossenko, Y.G., Berdenov, Zh.G.; Bexeitova, Zh. B.; Shomanov, A.S., Mansurova, M. (2020). Solving of classification problem in spatial analysis applying the technology of gradient boosting catboost. *Folia Geographica*, 62(1), 112–126.
- Seitimova, A., Beyseminova, A., & Baekeyev, Y. (2021). Tourism Development in National Parks of Kazakhstan. *Laisvalaikio Tyrimai*, 1(17), 27-32, Kaunas, Lithuania. <https://doi.org/10.33607/elt.v1i17.1092>
- Subaşı, M., & Okumuş, K. (2017). Case Study as a Research Method. *Journal of Atatürk University Social Sciences Institute*, June 2017, 21 (2), 419-426.
- Sultangazina, G.J., & Kuprijanov, A.N. (2012). *Floristic Findings Within The "Burabay" National Park*, Scientific Bulletin KemGu, 1(49) 2012, 23-26 (in Russian).
- Tokpanov, Y., Atasoy, E., Mendybayev, E., Abdimanapov, B., Andasbayev, Y., Mukhitdinova, R., & Inkarova, Z. (2021). Prospects For The Development Of Health Tourism On Lake Ray In The Almaty Region Of The Republic Of Kazakhstan. *GeoJournal of Tourism and Geosites*, 37 (3), 888–893. <https://doi.org/10.30892/gtg.37320-722>
- <https://tengritravel.kz/> (Accessed: 18.03.2022).
- <https://stat.gov.kz/> (Accessed: 18.03.2022).
- <https://ecogofond.kz/> (Accessed: 18.03.2022).
- <https://biodiversity.ru/> (Accessed: 18.03.2022).
- <http://gis-terra.kz/gosudarstvennye-nacionalnye-prirodnye-parki/?lang=ru> (Accessed: 18.03.2022).
- <https://www.booking.com/> (Accessed: 18.03.2022).
- <https://www.trivago.com/> (Accessed: 18.03.2022).
- <https://www.tripadvisor.com/> (Accessed: 18.03.2022).
- <https://www.luxuryhotelsguides.com/> (Accessed: 18.03.2022).
- <https://www.agoda.com/> (Accessed: 18.03.2022).
- <https://borovoe.kz/about/> (Accessed: 18.03.2022).
- <http://parkburabay.kz/> (Accessed: 18.03.2022).
- <https://www.gov.kz/memleket/entities/aqmola-burabay/activities/4987> (Accessed: 18.03.2022).
- <https://www.udp-rk.kz/ru/organizations/45471>