

ENVIRONMENTAL AND TERRITORIAL ZONING OF NAUTICAL ACTIVITIES IN THE FORMOSO RIVER ESTUARY (ZATAN)

EXPERIENCES FROM A PARTICIPATORY APPROACH

The Formoso river estuary is located in the three coastal municipalities of Sirinhaém, Rio Formoso and Tamandaré, in the south of the state of Pernambuco. It is part of the Environmental Protection Areas (APA) of Guadalupe and (APA) Costa dos Corais, which are known for their wealth of biodiversity and scenic beauty.



-  Limit of ZATAN
-  Limit of Environmental Protection Area (APA) of Guadalupe
-  Limit of Environmental Protection Area (APA) Costa dos Corais

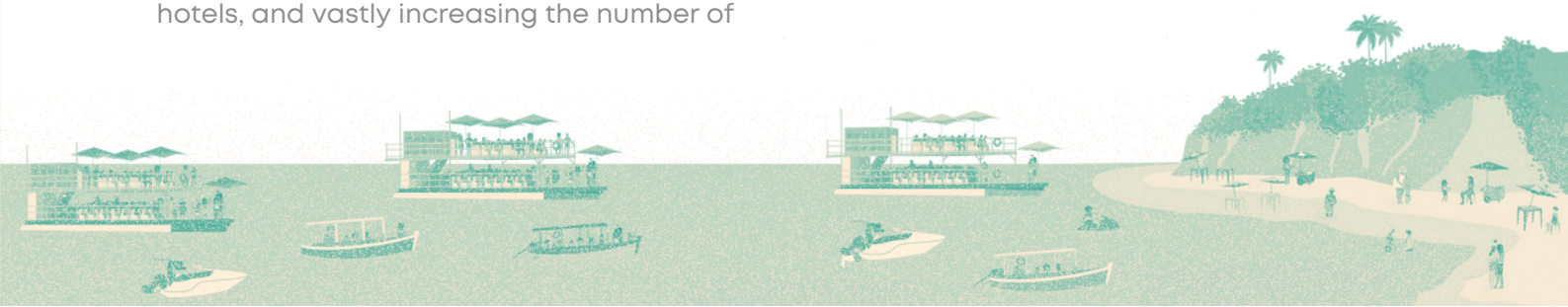
In recent years, the area has experienced an aggravation of conflicts over nautical activities, mainly as a result of growing tourism. Competing claims on using the coastal river delta have created a highly complex scenario. On the one hand, the growing tourism sector is driving the development of local bars, restaurants and hotels, and vastly increasing the number of

tourists who use the area for recreational activities, water sports and private boat trips. On the other hand, traditional fishing communities also depend on the estuary to earn their living. The vast range of unregulated activities poses a serious threat to the ecosystem.

In this context, there was an urgent need to develop a planning instrument for this area, the *Environmental and Territorial Zoning of Nautical Activities (ZATAN)*. The instrument focuses on regulating nautical activities to conserve the estuary's biodiversity and beautiful landscape, which provide the basis for all local economic activities. It aims to contribute to more sustainable tourism and to preserving artisanal fishing, the culture of traditional communities as well as the local ecosystem.

CHALLENGE

The main challenge is to reconcile and harmonize the various socioeconomic activities with ecosystem conservation objectives of the Formoso river estuary area, considering the interests of the approximately 1,000 local users, including artisanal fishermen and fisherwomen, small boat owners, raftsmen, nautical rental service providers (kayaks, floaters, banana boats, snorkeling and diving gear), catamaran owners, large and medium-sized motorboats, marinas, innkeepers as well as bar and restaurant owners.



FAR BEYOND WHAT THE TERRITORY CAN SUPPORT

In 2011, a study on the area's carrying capacity determined the number of vessels and visitors the environment can support. According to the study, the number of boats in the area at any given time should be limited to a maximum of 52 boats. However, in December 2018, during holiday season in Brazil, Google Earth aerial images showed 332 boats circulating in the area, almost 540% more than the recommended limit.

The study further indicated that the number of daily visitors to the beach of Carneiros should be restricted to a maximum of 169. However, according to the interviews conducted during the zoning process, the average number of boat tourists is around 3,500 per day, exceeding the recommended threshold by 1,970%. Owners of local pubs and restaurants stated that, during the holiday season, the number of tourists visiting the beach of Carneiros can increase to almost 5,000 per day.

PARTICIPATIVE PROCESS FOR DEVELOPING THE ENVIRONMENTAL ZONING OF THE FORMOSO RIVER ESTUARY (ZATAN)

The Environmental and Territorial Zoning of the Formoso River Estuary (ZATAN) was developed using a participatory process over several months, involving various workshops and a public hearing with technical staff of state and federal environmental and protected area agencies

CPRH, SEMAS-PE and ICMBio, community associations, the tourism sector, artisanal fishermen and fisherwomen, and other traditional communities such as quilombolas. The public hearing was particularly important to facilitate the exchange between the various sectors and public authorities, and to ensure the participation of local citizens in the decision-making process.

STATE LEGISLATION

As a result of the commitment and collaboration of all stakeholders, a decree was drafted and approved in August 2020 at the 100th meeting of the Environmental Council of the State of Pernambuco (Consema). Decree no. 50.049/2021 establishes rules for nautical activities in the Formoso river estuary, including for recreational purposes, tourism and fishing. It regulates which activities are allowed, prohibited (for example, visitation, fishing) or encouraged (for example, monitoring, research, clean-ups) in specific areas of the estuary.

The decree provides an essential legislative foundation for protecting and preserving the estuary's ecosystem and the local communities' livelihood. Participants of the zoning process are now demanding the implementation and enforcement of this legal instrument.

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