



A propose of geoturist itinerary along the coastal area of Caldera (Atacama, Northern Chile)

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The coastal area of Caldera (Atacama Desert, Chile) presents a manifest geological interest due to the excellent outcrop exposure conditions and the great variety and heterogeneity of geological manifestations that are concentrated in the area and that perfectly combined with the great beauty of the landscape. Despite this, few scientific or specialized studies have been carried out in the sector what has lead, together with sociocultural and economical aspects, to a lack of knowledge of the existing Points of Geological Interest and their underused as a geotourism resource.

We have elaborated an inventory of 17 Places of Geological Interest along 70 km of coastal area, between Caleta Obispito and La Virgen Beach. These sites are the most representatives to highlight the geological heritage of Caldera and its geotouristic and geoeducational potential. According to their geological content, 11 geosites can be classified as geomorphological, 6 as stratigraphic, 5 as tectonic, 2 as petrological, 2 as geochemical, 2 as paleontological, 1 as hydrogeological and 1 as sedimentological as each geosite may present more than a geological content. On the other hand, according to their representativeness, 6 geosites present a local interest, another 6 present a regional significance, 2 present national relevance and 3 show international importance. Although no high risks have been identified for any of the sites it is clear that their conservation is low and therefore, figures of protection should be implemented to assure their conservation and sustainable use as socioeconomic engine of the area. Finally, an 8 geosites itinerary is proposed as example for a future geoturism proposal in the Caldera municipality.