



Nearly 30,000 visited Ballestas Islands, Paracas over past long weekend

The Paracas Natural Reserve and the Ballestas Islands in Ica, Peru drew a total of 29,858 visitors during the New Year's long weekend, informed the National Service of Protected Areas (Sernanp).

According to Pedro Gamboa, head of Sernanp, 14,983 people visited the Ballestas Islands, while other 14,875 headed to Paracas from 31 December 2014 to 4 January 2015.

This represents a 57% growth compared to 2013-2014 New Year's holidays, Gamboa told Andina news agency.

He also said 2015 will witness a tourism boom both in the Paracas Reserve and the Ballestas Islands, to be driven by an ambitious strategy to further improve security, the installation of modern toilet facilities and a better hotel infrastructure.

In the past few years, he added, hotel chains have invested about US\$ 200 million for the construction of three five-star hotels in Paracas: the Hotel Paracas, the Hilton hotel Paracas and the Aranwa Paracas Resort & Spa, as well as another four-star hotel group.

Sernanp's head said the Ballestas Islands welcomed 244,000 visitors, which is a 4% rise from 2013.