

Special protected natural areas of Karabakh released from occupation

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The organization of specially protected natural areas is considered to be the most optimal choice for the protection of the whole natural landscape and its dynamic components like vegetation and wildlife. Although, the strict regime was established by our state in specially protected natural areas of Azerbaijan, as a result of Armenia's near-30-year military aggression, rare and unique natural monuments of a number of reserves and sanctuaries were looted in Karabakh. At present, the main purpose of monitoring in these areas is to calculate the damage and develop practical measures for the restoration of the area.

Keywords: *Caucasus, Azerbaijan, Karabakh, flora, forests*

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Karabakh is one of the richest phytogeographical regions not only of the Republic of Azerbaijan, but also of the Caucasus as a whole. This region along with other natural resources, It is also distinguished by the richness of flora and vegetation (Fig. 1). This richness is primarily due to the extremely complex natural conditions, geological and geomorphological structure of the area. Among the valuable plant species found here are many medicinal, food, vitamin, dye, fodder and other useful plants (Fig. 2). According to pre-occupation research, more than 2,000 higher plant species are found in the territory of Karabakh, which is more than 42% of the higher plant species of the Azerbaijani flora (Asgarov, 2016).

The natural vegetation of the currently released from occupation regions of Karabakh is protected in the following reserves and sanctuaries:

Basitchay State Nature Reserve is located in the Basitchay valley in Zangilan district. Reserve area is 107-hectare. The oriental plane tree forest covered 100 hectares of the whole area. Plane trees as a valuable relict plant species was included to the "Red Book" of Azerbaijan. The climatic conditions of the area are very favorable for the natural regeneration and development of plane trees. The length of the reserve is along the valley is -15 km, and its width in some places reaches 150-200 m. Up to 80% of the area was covered with forest, 14% was sparsely forested. There also were distributed walnuts, hackberries, mulberries, willows, poplars, hawthorns, hips, European buckthorn, thorn and other trees and shrubs in the area. During the occupation, this unique reserve area was destroyed, valuable plane trees were cut down for various purposes and transported to wood processing workshops or uprooted and relocated to different parts of Armenia (Sokolov and Syroechkovsky, 1990).

Garagol State Nature Reserve was of special importance in the protection of typical alpine meadows of the highlands in Lachin region (Fig. 3). The total area of the reserve was 240 hectares. More than 100 valuable plant species were preserved here. During the occupation, lake's water

were intensively used for watering established various purpose farms in the surrounding areas of the lake. All these led to water pollution and lowering of its level of the lake.

Lachin District State Nature Reserve was established in Lachin District and covers an area of 20,000 hectares (Fig. 4). The highest peak of the reserve is Kirghiz Mountain (2825 m), which has a medium and high mountainous relief and includes Shalva, Pichenis, Gorchu and others rivers. Relief of the reserve sharply divided by deep ravines where rivers flow. Vegetation cover of the area is consisting of medium mountain Iberian oak forest (1000-1700 m), upper mountain eastern oak forest (1700-2200 m), subalpine (2200-2500 m) and alpine (2500-2800 m) meadows. The reserve area is mainly inhabited by hornbeam, linden, maple, etc. mixed forests. In the reserve in Hajishamli forest, was protected Sessile oak which a valuable plant species covering more than 4,000 hectares. During the occupation, this valuable plant was ruthlessly destroyed and plundered for the production of wine barrels.

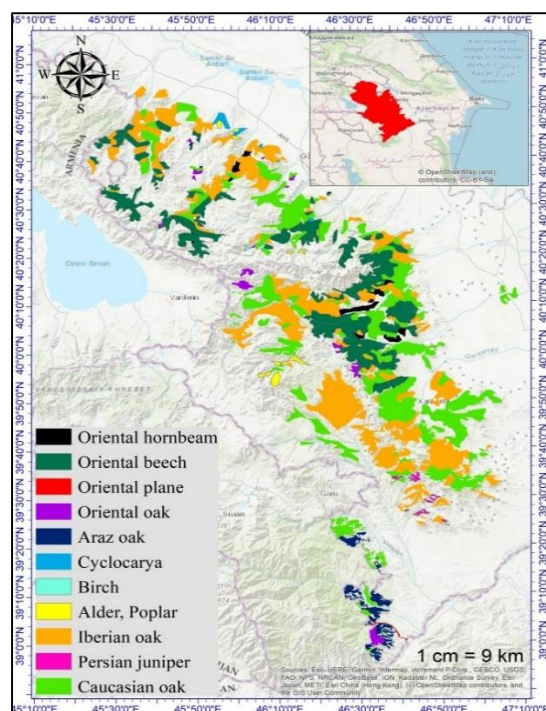


Fig. 1. Main tree species of forests

Gubadli State Nature Reserve is located on 20,000 hectares area in the northern part of Gubadli and the southern part of Lachin region. The 8,500-hectare forest of the reserve consists mainly of oak and hornbeam trees. Reserve was created to protect and enhance wild animals like roe deer, wild boar, bear, wolf, pheasant, partridge, quail, pigeon, etc. There were widespread oak, walnut, hornbeam, maple, juniper, hawthorn, hips, blackberries, etc. trees and shrubs. These valuable natural areas have been looted and severely damaged.

Dashalti State Nature Reserve which covering 450 hectares area was established in Shusha and Khojaly in order to protect and preserve rare natural complexes, especially historical and paleontological monuments, as a reference area. Besides Shusha hornbeam, caucasian hackberry, english yew, orchis there were speared out rare plants such as maple, linden, ash, hawthorn, hips, cornel, medlar, apple, pear etc.

Table 1. Specially protected forests (forests with the status of natural monuments).

No	Name of the administrative district	Name of forestry	Area of site (ha)
1.	Ağdam	Pistachio forest	732
2.	Kalbajar	Storax forest	968
3.	Lachin	Juniper forest	1092
4.	Khojavend	Zelkova tree forest	0,5
5.	Zangilan	Araz oak forest	10,000
6.	Aghdara	Oriental plane tree forest	5
7.	Khankendi	Oak forest	20

The Arazboyu State Nature Reserve was established on the border of the Zangilan region with Iran, on the banks of the Araz River. The reserve covers 2,200 hectares area. Willow, poplar, athel, gum, plane tree, elm, silverberry and liquorice are widespread here. The main purpose of the reserve was to protect tugai forests.

Among the specially protected areas, forests with the status of natural monuments were of special importance in the protection of a number of rare and valuable plant species (Table 1).

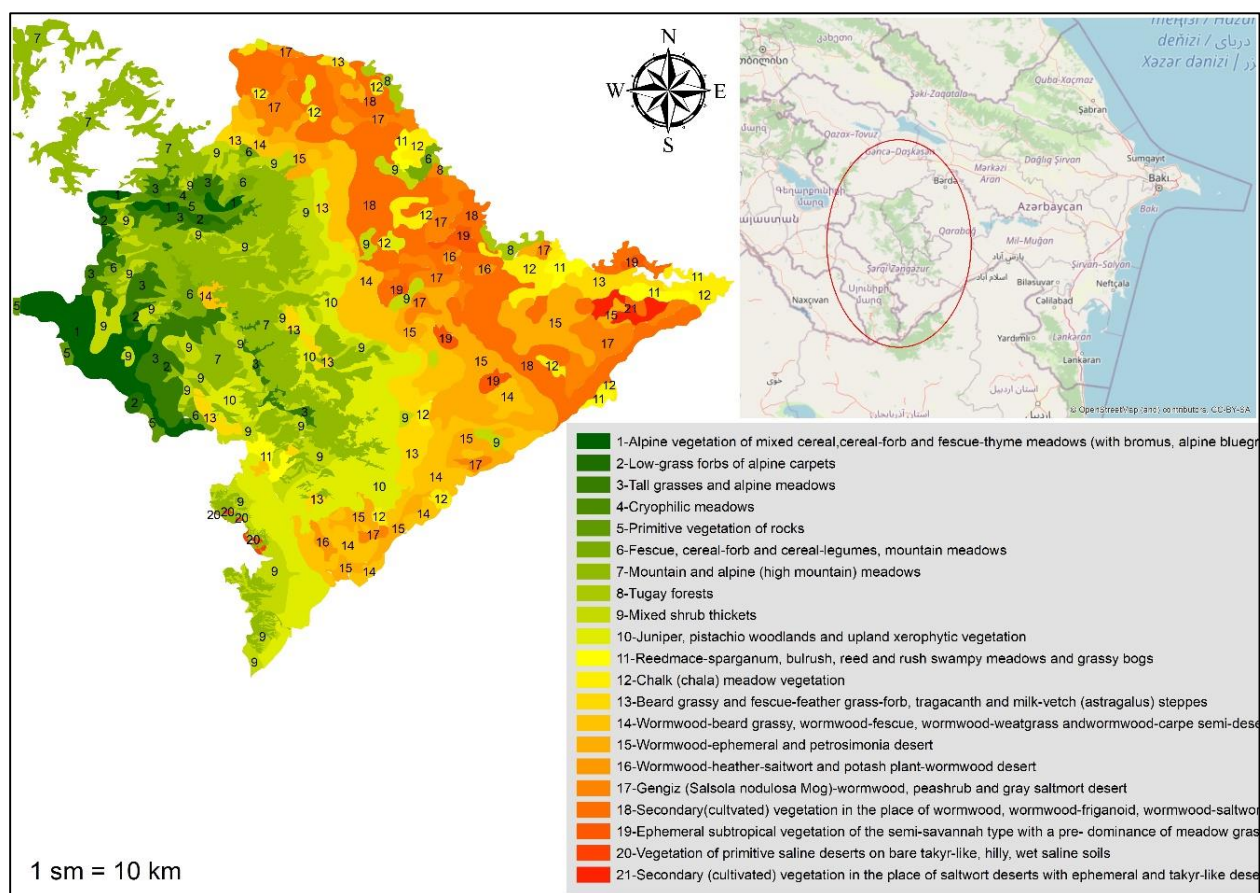


Fig. 2. Vegetation of the Karabakh region



Fig. 3. Karagol State Nature Reserve



Fig. 4. Lachin region State Nature Reserve

In order to sustainably develop and manage the vegetation of specially protected areas, it is expedient to conduct inventory work, monitoring and research based on modern methods, calculate the damage and implement measures to restore the ecosystem. Expansion of the territory of Basitchay State Nature Reserve at the expense of Arazboyu State Nature Reserve located in Zangilan region, creation of Khudafer National Park on their basis, as well as inventory of natural monuments in the liberated areas are among the urgent issues.

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İşğaldan azad olunmuş Qarabağın xüsusi mühafizə olunan əraziləri

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Qarabağ nəinki Azərbaycanın, hətta bütövlükdə Qafqazın ən zəngin fitocoğrafi regionlarından biri olmaqla, digər təbii sərvətləri ilə yanaşı, flora və bitki örtüyü zənginliyi ilə də seçilir. Məqalənin məqsədi Ermənistanın 30 ilə yaxın bir dövrdə Azərbaycana qarşı davam etmiş hərbi təcavüzü nəticəsində Qarabağda olan bir sıra qoruq və yasaqlıqların nadir və unikal təbiət abidələrinin mövcud vəziyyətinin dəyərləndirilməsidir. Hazırda həmin regionda 2 dövlət qoruğu, 4 dövlət yasaqlığı mövcuddur. Zəngilan rayonunda yerləşən Arazboyu Dövlət Təbiət Yasaqlığının ərazisi hesabına Bəsitçay Dövlət Təbiət Qoruğunun ərazisinin genişləndirilməsi, onların bazasında Xudafərin Milli Parkının yaradılması zəruri olan məsələlərdəndir.

Açar sözlər: *Qafqaz, Azərbaycan, Qarabağ, flora, meşələr*

Освобожденные от оккупации особо охраняемые территории Карабаха

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Карабах - один из богатейших фитогеографических регионов не только Азербайджана, но и Кавказа в целом. Наряду с другими природными ресурсами, Карабах отличается богатой флорой и растительностью. Целью данной статьи является оценка современного состояния редких и уникальных памятников природы в ряде заповедников и заказников Карабаха, после почти 30-летней военной агрессии Армении против Азербайджана. В настоящее время в регионе действуют 2 государственных заповедника и 4 государственных заказника. Расширение территории Баситчайского государственного природного заповедника за счет территории Аразбоюского государственного природного заказника, расположенного в Зангиланском районе, создание на их базе Худаферинского национального парка является одной из важных и актуальных задач.

Ключевые слова: *Кавказ, Азербайджан, Карабах, флора, леса*