

## Overview in building nationally designated protected areas

The territory of Azerbaijan, a part of the Southern Caucasus, is distinguished by its rich biodiversity. The flora of Azerbaijan is rich in the number of species. About 66% of the species growing in the whole Caucasus are present in Azerbaijan.

To preserve biodiversity, protect the rare and endangered plant and animal species, and preserve nature's complexity, a **network of specially protected natural areas** was established in the country:

### Phase I

- the establishment of the first special protected natural area (Eldar pines sanctuary, 1910);

### Phase II

- the establishment of reserve areas (in 1925 - 1936 the Goygol, Gizilagac, Zagatala, Hirkan and in 1958 - 1993 Turanchay, Shirvan, Aghgol, Pirqulu, Ismayilli, Iliu, Garagol nature reserves and sanctuaries);

### Phase III

- Establishment of the first national parks in 2003.

- Infrastructure development activities in the national park are implemented;
- Development of ecotourism potential of national parks is a priority;
- The project "Establishment of the Zagatala Biosphere Reserve" started. At the end of the project, the first biosphere reserve will be established in the country in Zagatala-Balakan region;
- As the majority of mud volcanoes are in Azerbaijan, a geopark will be established and integrated into the UNESCO Global Geoparks Network.

## List of relevant websites

- The Ministry of Ecology and Natural Resources of the Republic of Azerbaijan: <http://eco.gov.az/az>
- The State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan: <https://www.stat.gov.az/source/environment/en/>
- Development Concept "Azerbaijan-2020: Future Outlook": [https://president.az/files/future\\_en.pdf](https://president.az/files/future_en.pdf)
- Order of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan on the Approval of the "National Strategy of the Republic of Azerbaijan on Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity for 2017-2020": <https://www.cbd.int/doc/world/az/az-nbsap-v2-en.pdf>
- Action Plan for the Implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity's Programme of Work on Protected Areas, Azerbaijan: <https://www.cbd.int/doc/world/az/az-nbsap-powpa-en.docx>
- Law of the Azerbaijan Republic On the Protection of the Environment: [http://ardda.gov.az/uploads/images/ganunvericilik/Eng/Codes\\_of\\_Az/Law%20of%20the%20Azerbaijan%20Republic%20Environment.pdf](http://ardda.gov.az/uploads/images/ganunvericilik/Eng/Codes_of_Az/Law%20of%20the%20Azerbaijan%20Republic%20Environment.pdf)
- Status of the Emerald Network of Areas of Special Conservation Interest (ASCI) in 2018: <https://rm.coe.int/status-of-the-emerald-network-of-areas-of-special-conservation-interes/16808d46c7>
- ENI SEIS website: <https://eni-seis.eionet.europa.eu/east/countries/azerbaijan>

## List of relevant contacts



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European Environment Agency



photo: Isr Obvius/shutterstock.com

# Nature protection in the Republic of Azerbaijan

## State and trends in building nationally designated protected areas in Azerbaijan

Since 2003, Azerbaijan has made substantial progress in designating protected areas.

- Three major protected area categories are implemented in Azerbaijan: state nature reserves (equivalent to IUCN categories Ia and Ib), state nature sanctuaries (equivalent to the IUCN category IV) and national parks (equivalent to the IUCN category II)
- The system of specially protected nature areas includes 10 national parks, 10 state nature reserves, and 24 state nature sanctuaries
- The total area of nationally designated areas has more than doubled (133.8% increase) from 1990 (382 000 ha) to 2019 (893 000 ha)
- In 2018, the first marine National Park – Gizilagaj National Park was established on the basis of cognominal reserve and sanctuary
- In 2019, the share of protected areas reached 10.31% of the total territory of Azerbaijan

Since 2000, Azerbaijan has been a State Party to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD, 1992).

- In line with the fundamental principles of the CBD, several constructive measures related to the protection of biological diversity have been implemented, notably the expansion of the network of nationally designated protected areas
- However, much effort is needed to meet the Aichi biodiversity target 11 of the CBD (17% of terrestrial and inland water should be conserved by 2020)

Azerbaijan has also made substantial progress in designating Emerald sites.

- There isn't any site from Azerbaijan on the list of Emerald network yet
- However, Azerbaijan has nominated 17 sites in the Emerald network, with a total area of 1 679 533 ha, corresponding to 19.4% of the country's territory

## Nature protection policy framework

### International level

The United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD, 1992; Azerbaijan since 2000);

Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety to CBD (Montreal, 2000; Azerbaijan since 2005);

Convention on Wetlands of International Importance Especially as Waterfowl Habitat (Ramsar, 1971; Azerbaijan since 2001);

Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention, 1982; Azerbaijan since 2001) - Emerald Network of Areas of Special Conservation Interest;

Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (Paris, 1972, Azerbaijan since 1993);

Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES, 1973; Azerbaijan since 1999).

### National level

The Law on Environmental Protection (1999);

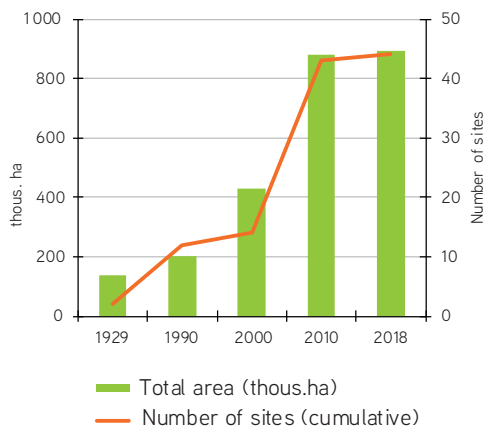
The Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan on specially protected natural areas and facilities (1999);

Regulations governing the international trade of endangered species of wild fauna and flora (2009);

Azerbaijan 2020: Look into the Future, Concept of Development (2012);

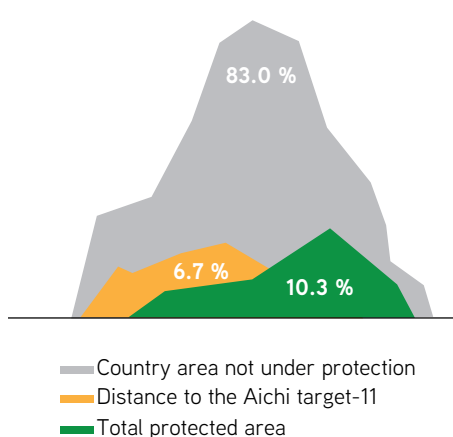
The National Strategy for the Protection and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity in the Republic of Azerbaijan for 2017-2020 (2016).

Change in the number and size of nationally designated protected areas in the Republic of Azerbaijan (1929-2018)



Source: State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan

Share of nationally designated protected areas of the territory of the Republic of Azerbaijan (2018)



Source: State Statistical Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan

## Selected objectives and their evaluation

The adoption of the national development plan, Azerbaijan – 2020: Look into the Future, Concept of Development:

- One of the main targets: to achieve sustainable socio-economic development from an ecological point of view + measure: to protect biodiversity
- provide cross-sectoral strategic policy implementation for the protection of biodiversity across the country.

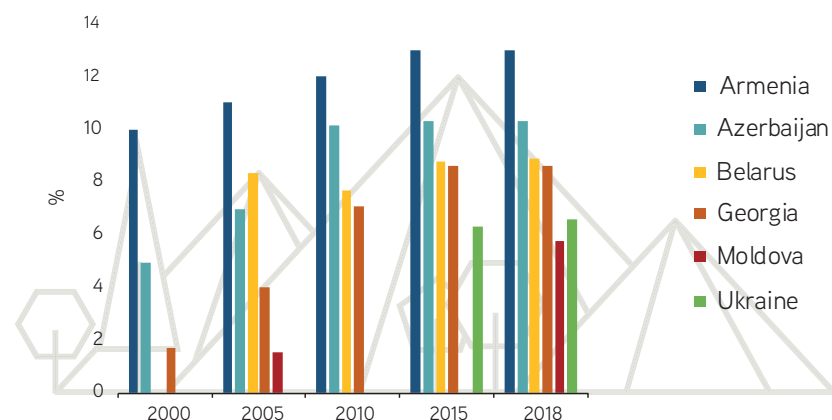
The national strategy for the protection and sustainable use of biodiversity in the Republic of Azerbaijan for 2017-2020:

The strategy has identified a number of qualitative targets, such as, by 2020, the environmental and biodiversity conservation efficiency should be increased, however, no quantitative target has been specified at the national level.

- main goals: i.a. conservation of biodiversity and transfer to future generation; development of the protected areas network; and reducing the threats to biodiversity
- priority objectives: developing and effectively managing the protected areas and expansion of the current network
  - Activities:
    - Expansion of protected areas, including in the Azerbaijani sector of the Caspian Sea and terrestrial areas;
    - Improvement of the system of management of protected areas;
    - Development of Emerald Network areas within European Neighborhoods Policy framework.
- requires interagency coordination and collaboration to incorporate the biodiversity aspects of environmental protection into development plans.

## International comparison

Protected areas as a share of total country area



Source: ARMSTATBANK, AZSTAT, BELSTAT, GEOSTAT, MOLSTAT, UKRSTAT