



# Ramsar Sites Information Service

## Annotated List of Wetlands of International Importance

### Armenia

3 Ramsar Site(s) covering 493,511 ha

#### Khor Virap Marsh

Site number: 1,989 | Country: Armenia | Administrative region: Ararat Marz  
Area: 50 ha | Coordinates: 39°53'13"N 44°34'16"E | Designation dates: 25-01-2007  
[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Khor Virap Marsh.25/01/07; Ararat Province; 50 ha; 39°53'16"N 044°34'18"E. State Sanctuary. Located in the ancient Arax riverbed in the central part of the country, close to the capital city of Yerevan, this freshwater marsh of semi-artificial origin consists mainly of reed beds fed by an irrigation canal and surrounded by drainage channels. The site is important for over 100 species of migratory waterbirds of which 30 species are breeding here, including globally threatened Marbled Teal (*Marmaronetta angustirostris*) and endangered White-headed Duck (*Oxyura leucocephala*) as well as nationally threatened species such as Pygmy Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax pygmaeus*) and Gadwall (*Anas strepera*). The site also supports a number of mammal species such as Jungle Cat (*Felis chaus*), European otter (*Lutra lutra*), and the only non-native wild mammal Coypu (*Myocastor coypus*). Large numbers of dragonfly species occur, including nationally endangered *Hemianax ephippiger*. The marsh plays a significant role in flood mitigation downstream and in sediment trapping. It is used for hunting, fishing, reed harvesting and to a lesser extent for cattle grazing. The area surrounding the site is of social and cultural value, especially the Khor Virap Monastery, which was built on the site of the ruins of the ancient capital Artashat. The site itself is threatened by a decrease in water level due to unsustainable use of water for irrigation, overgrazing, fires during the winter period, and poaching. A management plan does not currently exist but is planned. Ramsar Site no. 1989. Most recent RIS information: 2011.

#### Lake Arpi

Site number: 621 | Country: Armenia | Administrative region: Shirak Marz Province  
Area: 3,230 ha | Coordinates: 41°03'33"N 43°38'33"E | Designation dates: 07-06-1993  
[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Lake Arpi.06/07/93; Shirak Province; 3,230 ha; 41°03'N 043°37'E. National Park, IBA, State Sanctuary (Government approval pending). Lake Arpi is a freshwater lake high in the Ashotzk Mountains, fed by small rivers, springs and melt-water and fringed by marshy areas giving way to meadows and meadow-steppe. The Ramsar site consists of four sub-sites including Lake Arpi, the human-made wetlands of Alvar Sanctuary as well as the ephemeral wetlands of Ardenis Sanctuary consisting of Ardenis pond and the wet meadows of Aghvorik. The area is of botanical importance, supporting several species rare in Armenia such as the Yellow water-lily (*Nuphar luteum*) for which the oxbow lakes of Alvar Sanctuary are the only habitat in the country. Numerous species of waterbirds occur and include species endangered in Armenia or globally threatened such as Dalmatian Pelican (*Pelecanus crispus*). The site also hosts the largest breeding colony of Armenian Gull (*Larus armenicus*) with 5,000-8,000 pairs, which equals 20-30% of all breeding individuals of this population. Furthermore, the site supports a diversity of mammals and fish, although the lake is threatened by overfishing resulting in the depletion of fish populations. Artificial increase in lake levels has replaced formerly rich aquatic vegetation with reed beds. Ramsar site no. 621. Most recent RIS information: 2011.

## Lake Sevan

Site number: 620 | Country: Armenia | Administrative region: Gegharqunik Marz Province

Area: 490,231 ha | Coordinates: 40°15'44"N 45°21'19"E | Designation dates: 07-06-1993

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Lake Sevan.06/07/93; Gegharquniq Province; 490,231 ha; 40°24'N 045°17'E. National Park, Ornithological Preserve, State Sanctuary. One of the largest freshwater, alpine wetlands in the world, Sevan lies at 1,900m asl and is surrounded by mountains. The Ramsar Site incorporates the entire hydrological system of the lake including its watershed, tributaries and outflow. About 1,600 plant species have been recorded, including rare and endemic species. The site is important for numerous species of nesting and staging waterbirds, several of which are endangered in Armenia. About 16% (about 4000 pairs) of the global population of Armenian Gull (*Larus armenicus*) uses the site for breeding. Other fauna present include 39 mammal, four amphibian, 18 reptile and six fish species. The lake is of paramount importance as a drinking water supply for Yerevan and is used for energy production, agriculture, industry, and recreation. Water loss is the most important threat to the site, and a project has been implemented since 2001 through which the water level has been artificially increased by 3m. However, large forested areas are waterlogged and submerged wood increases organic pollution of water. Fish stocks have decreased so that further commercial fishery (except for Crucian Carp and Crayfish) is questionable. Due to the lake's importance for the socio-economic growth of the country, the restoration of its ecological balance, its water quality and its biological resources is one of Armenia's priority goals. A management plan is being implemented for the period of 2007-2011. Ramsar site no. 620. Most recent RIS information: 2011.