

# IMPORTANT BIRD AREAS IN TURKEY: UNPROTECTED AND UNDER THREAT\*

by

**R. F. A. Grimmett, M. Kasparek, A. Kılıç and A. Ertan**

In April 1989, the International Council for Bird Preservation and the International Waterfowl and Wetlands Research Bureau published an inventory of 2,444 'Important Bird Areas in Europe' (Grimmett & Jones 1989). For the purposes of the project, Europe was taken to include USSR east to the Ural mountains and western shore of the Caspian Sea, Greenland and all of Turkey. For the first time, individual sites for birds in each country were evaluated in a European context, and this paper highlights and updates the findings of the study as they concern Turkey.

## CRITERIA FOR SELECTION

Sites were included in the inventory because of their importance for at least one of the following categories of species:

1. Migratory species that congregate either when breeding, or on passage, or in winter.
2. Globally threatened species (Collar & Andrew 1988).
3. Species and subspecies that are threatened throughout all or large parts of their range in Europe, but not globally.
4. Species that have relatively small total world ranges with important populations in Europe.

Grimmett and Jones (1989) included a total of 79 sites in Turkey, covering an area of over 15,000 km<sup>2</sup> (excluding the Bosphorus, north-east Turkey and the Belen pass—large bottleneck sites for which boundaries have not been defined) (Table I and Figure 1). Of these 79 sites, three qualify for inclusion because they are bottleneck sites for migrating raptors, 44 meet the numerical criteria for selected waterfowl species which have been developed to identify wetlands of international importance in the context of the Ramsar Convention (Convention on Wetlands of International Importance Especially as Waterfowl Habitat), 50 are important for one or more globally threatened species (Dalmatian Pelican *Pelecanus crispus*, Bald Ibis *Geronticus eremita*, Marbled Teal *Marmaronetta angustirostris*, White-headed Duck *Oxyura leucocephala*, White-tailed Eagle *Haliaeetus albicilla*, Black Vulture *Aegypius monachus*, Imperial Eagle *Aquila heliaca*, Lesser Kestrel *Falco naumanni*, Great Bustard *Otis tarda* and Audouin's Gull *Larus audouinii*), and 57 are important for one or more species which are threatened throughout all or large parts of their range in Europe. In addition, some sites are included for other reasons: site number 4, despite the paucity of recent data, because of its former importance and the lack of recent surveys; numbers 26, 28 and 54 because each supports a very interesting variety of species; number 65 because of its breeding population of Armenian Herring Gull *Larus argentatus armenicus*; numbers 66 and 74 because of their breeding populations of Velvet Scoter *Melanitta fusca*, which are of considerable biogeographical interest. It must be stressed that there are certain to be many other sites in Turkey worthy of Important Bird Area status, and that only those sites known through surveys to be important are included. For more details of habitats, species and threats at the listed sites, see Grimmett and Jones (1989).

\* This paper is adapted from a talk given at the XVII ICBP European Continental Section Conference, Adana (Turkey), 15–20 May 1989.

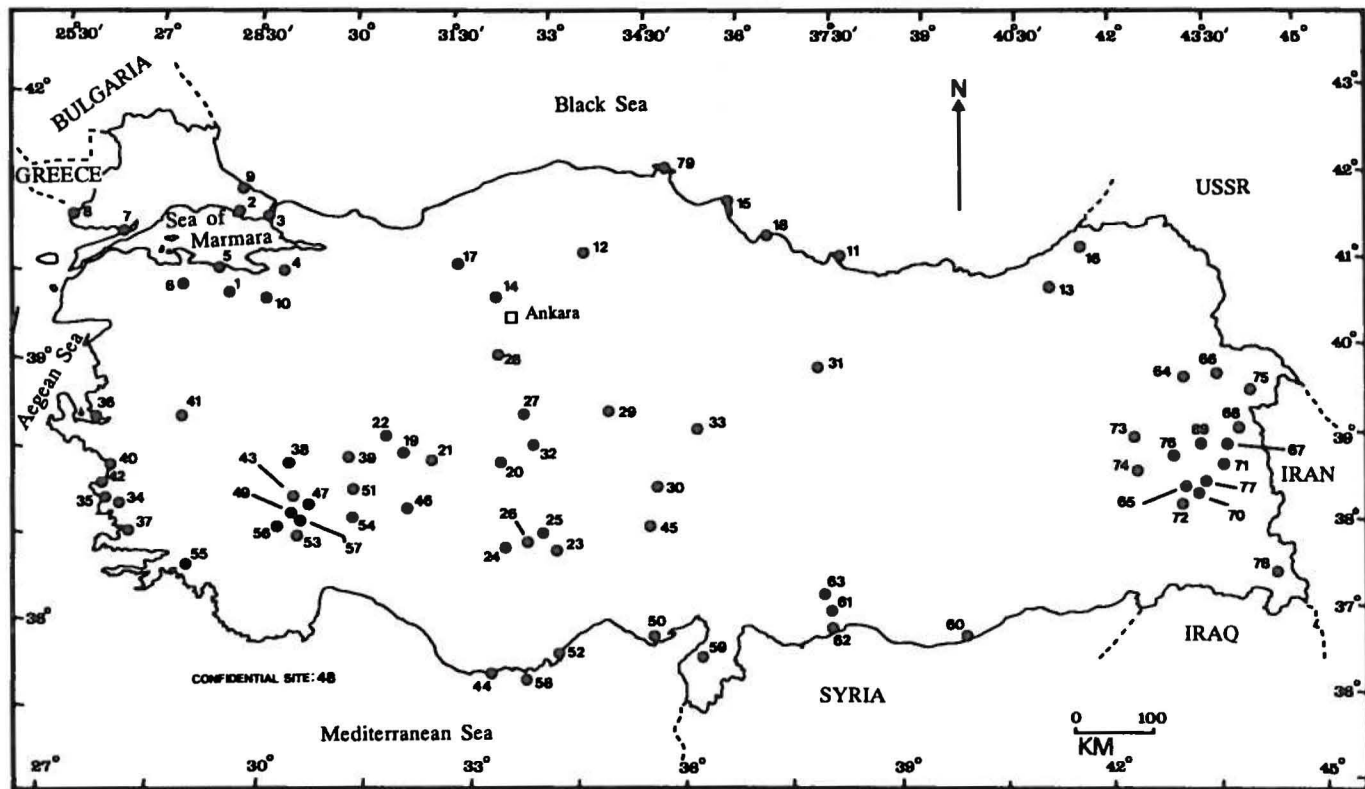


Figure 1. Location of Important Bird Areas in Turkey.

## PROBLEMS AND THREATS FACING IMPORTANT BIRD AREAS IN TURKEY

Of the 79 sites in Table 1, 59 are recorded as facing specific problems or threats (for a general discussion, see Akçakaya 1989). The most widespread problem, affecting 27 of the sites, is hunting pressure (often involving the illegal killing of protected species). Other widespread problems include: agricultural intensification, including drainage and steppe cultivation (16 sites); tourism and recreation, including the building of facilities (12 sites); livestock grazing (12 sites); human disturbance (12 sites); pollution (10 sites); reed burning or cutting (8 sites); and industrial development (6 sites). Other problems include dam construction (3 sites), the collection of gulls' eggs (at Turkey's only breeding site for Audouin's Gull), reafforestation (2 sites), deforestation (1 site), bird catching (1 site) and drought (3 sites).

## IMPORTANT BIRD AREAS COMPARED WITH THE PROTECTED AREA SYSTEM

Turkey's National Park Law, which was enacted in 1983, defined four main types of protected area: National Park (Milli Parkı), Nature Park (Tabiat Parkı), Natural Monument (Tabiat Anıtı) and Nature Reserve (Tabiat Koruma Alanı). To a varying extent, these types of protected area provide a degree of habitat protection. Of the 79 Turkish Important Bird Areas, three are protected as National Parks and three are partly so protected (see Table 1). These include Manyas Gölü (168 km<sup>2</sup>) where the Park covers only 64 ha and is one of the smallest in Europe. A further two sites (see Table 1) are Nature Reserves and one partly a Mediterranean Specially Protected Area (see below). None of the Important Bird Areas has been designated as a Nature Park or Natural Monument, and thus of the 79 sites only nine receive any habitat protection. The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Affairs has an ambitious plan to establish around 60 additional Nature Reserves, so it is to be hoped that many more Important Bird Areas will receive this protection in the near future.

In addition to sites which are at least partly covered by the above-mentioned designations, a further 11 are protected from hunting, as Hunting Reserves—though several of these reserves are very small by comparison with the Important Bird Area of which they are a part (e.g. Kızılırmak and Çukurova deltas). Hunting Reserve status has to be renewed for every site each year, and four Important Bird Areas (Burdur Gölü, Eber Gölü, Göksu delta and Karamik marshes) have lost this status in recent years, though in the case of the Göksu delta the area was redesignated as a Hunting Reserve in 1989.

Turkey is party to the World Heritage Convention and the Barcelona Convention (and has ratified the protocol concerning Mediterranean Specially Protected Areas), two international measures which oblige Turkey to protect outstanding natural sites (Temple Lang 1989). By April 1988, Turkey had designated only a single natural World Heritage Site and three Mediterranean Specially Protected Areas, but only a single Important Bird Area (Köyceğiz Gölü, etc.) is protected this way. Unlike most European countries, Turkey is not a party to the Ramsar Convention, and therefore none of its Important Bird Areas are Ramsar Sites, despite the considerable wealth of wetlands in the country.

In conclusion, 59 sites are not protected in any way by the country's protected area system, including 34 which are internationally important wetlands and 37 which are important for globally threatened species.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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TABLE 1. IMPORTANT BIRD AREAS IN TURKEY.

Site (see Figure 1)	Area (km <sup>2</sup> )*	Description	Importance <sup>†</sup>	Protection status <sup>‡</sup>	Threats
1 Apolyont Gölü (Uluabat or Ulubat Gölü)	134	Large inland lake, surrounded by agriculture and marshes	2, 3, 4	UP	Pollution, hunting, intensification of agriculture
2 Büyük Çekmece Gölü	11	Saline coastal lagoon surrounded by agriculture, marshes and urban/industrial areas	2, 4	UP	Hunting
3 Bosphorus	—	Bottleneck for migratory birds, mainly city of Istanbul	1	UP	Air pollution, urbanisation
4 Iznik Gölü	308	Freshwater inland lake, surrounded mainly by agricultural land	See text	UP	Development of Iznik as recreational centre, pollution
5 Kocaçay (Kocasu or Nilüfer) delta	100	River delta with lagoons, considerable variety of habitats	2, 3, 4	Partly HR	Replacement of natural forests with <i>Populus</i> plantations, reed-burning, illegal hunting, tourism development, pollution
6 Manyas Gölü (Kuş Gölü) including Bandırma – Kuş National Park	168	Large lake, surrounded mainly by agricultural land	2, 3, 4	Partly NP, partly HR, partly ED	Use of water for irrigation, pollution, illegal hunting, moth larvae destroying nesting trees of waterbirds
7 Saros bay (Kavak delta)	3–10	Small delta, lagoon and marshes	2, 4	UP	Livestock grazing, hunting
8 Meriç delta	48	Large delta, extensive reedbeds, lagoons, and agricultural land	2, 3, 4	UP	Agricultural intensification (especially rice growing), hunting, eutrophication
9 Terkos Gölü (Durusu Gölü or Durugöl)	58	Large coastal lagoon, with large sand-dunes	4	UP	Hunting
10 Uludağ	114	Mountain with maquis, woodland and alpine pastures	4	NP	Tourism development, livestock grazing, deforestation
11 Çam Burnu	<1	Rocky cliff and offshore island	4	UP	—



12	İlgaz Dağları	250+	Mountain ridge with coniferous forests, meadows and agricultural fields	3	Partly NP	Tourism development
13	Kaçkar Dağları	c. 800	Mountain ridge, coniferous forests and mountain pastures	3, 4	Partly HR	–
14	Kızılcahamam, including Soğuksu National Park	10+	Forested hills	3, 4	Partly NP	Road construction, tourism development
15	Kızılırmak delta	500	Large delta with lakes, now mainly agriculture	2,3,4	Partly HR	Tourism development, hunting, disturbance, cattle grazing
16	North-east Turkey	1000	Forested mountains and mountain pastures	1	UP	Shooting and trapping of raptors
17	Yeniçağa Gölü	18	Freshwater lake mainly surrounded by wet meadows	3, 4	UP	Cattle grazing, pollution
18	Yeşilirmak delta	600	River delta, now largely agricultural	4	Partly HR	Drainage
19	Akşehir Gölü	353	Freshwater lake surrounded by reedbeds	2, 3, 4	UP	Hunting, reed-cutting in breeding season, pollution
20	Bolluk (Bulak) Gölü	12	Inland saline lake	2, 3	UP	Industrial development
21	Çavuşçu Gölü	c. 10	Shallow freshwater lake with sparse lakeside vegetation	2, 3, 4	UP	Disturbance from quarry
22	Eber Gölü	52–176	Freshwater lake, overgrown with vegetation	2,3	UP	Pollution, hunting, reed-cutting
23	Ereğli marshes	59	Freshwater wetland with extensive marshes surrounded by steppe and agriculture	2, 3, 4	UP	Drainage, reed-burning, hunting
24	Hotamış marshes, including Bataklık Gölü	126	Extensive freshwater marsh	2, 3, 4	UP	Drought, changes in irrigation
25	Karapınar plain	c. 190	Steppe with salt lake	2, 3, 4	UP	–
26	Krater Gölü and Meketuzlası	c. 30	Volcanic lakes surrounded by ash	See text	UP	–

TABLE I (cont.)

Site (see Figure 1)	Area (km <sup>2</sup> )	*Description	Importance <sup>†</sup>	Protection status <sup>*</sup>	Threats
27 Kulu (Küçük or Düden) Gölü	8	Vegetationless steppe lake surrounded by agriculture and marsh	2, 3, 4	UP	Hunting, cultivation of steppe
28 Mogan (Gölbaşı or Gökçe) Gölü	6	Freshwater lake surrounded by agriculture and marshes	See text	UP	Industrial and recreational development
29 Seyfe Gölü	15–70	Brackish steppe lake	2, 3, 4	UP	Hunting, proposed drainage
30 Sultan marshes	c. 1,000	Extensive freshwater marshes, brackish and saltwater lakes	2, 3, 4	Partly NR, partly HR	Drainage, grazing, disturbance, reed-cutting, illegal hunting
31 Tödürge (Demiryurt) Gölü	3	Freshwater lake, surrounded by marshes, meadows and agriculture	3, 4	UP	—
32 Tuz Gölü	2,000+	Huge saline lake, surrounded by salt steppe	2, 3, 4	UP	Hunting
33 Tuzla Gölü	23	Small saline steppe lake	4	UP	—
34 Bafa Gölü	70	Slightly saline lake (former bay of sea)	2, 3, 4	UP	Drying-out of marshes, road building, hunting
35 Büyük Menderes delta	c. 130	Delta and lagoons, coastal steppe and agricultural land	2, 3, 4	UP	Hunting, disturbance of breeding colonies, agricultural intensification
36 Çamaltı Tuzlası	80	Coastal marshes, lagoons and salt pans	2, 3, 4	HR	Expansion of salt pans, illegal hunting, disturbance of breeding colonies
37 Güllük marshes	c. 12	Delta and river with dense vegetation	4	UP	Drainage, reed-cutting and burning
38 Işıklı (Çivril) Gölü	c. 35	Freshwater lake, overgrown with vegetation	2, 3, 4	UP	Hunting, disturbance
39 Karamık marshes	41	Freshwater marsh, surrounded by wet meadows, arable land and rocky steppe	2, 3, 4	UP	Drainage, hunting, reed-cutting

40	Küçük Menderes delta	c. 15	Delta with marshes and lakes, but mainly agriculture	4	Partly HR	Drainage, development of tourism, illegal hunting, road construction
41	Marmara Gölü	34	Shallow lake surrounded by thick vegetation, wet meadows and reedbeds	2, 3, 4	UP	Hunting
42	Samsun Dağı (Dilek peninsula)	110	Mountain ridge, covered mainly in maquis and <i>Pinus</i> woodland	4	NP	Construction of forest roads, tourism
43	Acıgöl (Acıtuz, Tuz or Çardak Gölü) and Çaltı Gölü	160	Saline lake, surrounded by steppe	2, 3, 4	Partly HR	Potential disturbance from airfield, drainage
44	Aksaz island	<1	Small rocky island	4	UP	–
45	Aladağlar (including Demirkazık Tepesi and Karanfil Dağı)	c. 850	Mountainous area with coniferous forests and alpine meadows	4	Partly HR	–
46	Beyşehir Gölü	656	Large freshwater lake	2, 3, 4	UP	–
47	Burdur Gölü	194	Saline lake	2, 3, 4	UP	Hunting, pollution
48	Büyük and Küçük islands	<1	Small rocky islands	3	UP	Collection of gulls' eggs
49	Çorak (Akgöl or Bayındır) Gölü	12	Shallow freshwater lake	2, 3	UP	Drought, diversion of inflowing stream
50	Çukurova, including Ceyhan, Seyhan and Tarsus deltas	625	Huge delta with lagoons, salt marshes, sand dune systems and agriculture	2, 3, 4	Partly HR	Agricultural intensification, pesticides and fertilisers, overgrazing, drainage, industrial and tourism development, hunting
51	Eğirdir Gölü and Hoyran Gölü	442–481	Large freshwater lake with extensive marshes	2, 3, 4	UP	–
52	Göксу delta, including Paradeniz Gölü and Akgöl	c. 130	Huge delta, with brackish lagoons surrounded by steppe and sand dunes	2, 3, 4	HR	Industrial and tourism development, proposed shrimp ponds, hunting, pollution
53	Karataş Gölü	8	Freshwater lake surrounded by arable land and marshes	2, 3, 4	UP	Agricultural intensification, disturbance

TABLE I (cont.)

Site (see Figure 1)	Area (km <sup>2</sup> )*	Description	Importance <sup>†</sup>	Protection status <sup>‡</sup>	Threats
54 Kovada Gölü	11	Lake mainly surrounded by forests	See text	NP, HR	—
55 Köyceğiz Gölü, including Dalyan delta, Sülüngür Gölü, and İztuzu Gölü	64	Rich variety of habitats, including freshwater and brackish marshes and lagoons	4	Partly MSPA	Tourism development
56 Salda (Yeşilova) Gölü	41	Deep saline lake	4	UP	—
57 Yanşlı Gölü	15	Saline lake surrounded by meadows and arable land	2, 3	UP	Hunting
58 Yılanlı island	<1	Rocky island	4	UP	—
59 Belen (Topboğazı) pass	—	Mountain chain	1	UP	—
60 Ceylanpınar	1,500+	Vast semi-desert/steppe plain, now largely cultivated	3, 4	UP	Cultivation of steppe, pesticides and fertilisers
61 Fırat (Euphrates) at Birecik	c. 15	River and riverine vegetation, barren limestone plateau	3	Partly HR	Dam construction up-river
62 Fırat (Euphrates) at Kargamış	10	Riverine marshes and islands, <i>Tamarix</i> scrub	2, 3, 4	UP	Dam construction up-river
63 Fırat (Euphrates) at Rumkale	20	River with cliffs, surrounded by hills and low scrub	4	UP	Dam construction up-river
64 Ağrı plain	c. 1,250	River plain with grassland and agriculture	4	UP	Agricultural intensification, disturbance
65 Ahtamar island	<1	Rocky island in Van Gölü	See text	UP	Disturbance
66 Balık Gölü	34	Lake surrounded by meadows, agriculture and mountain slopes	See text	UP	—
67 Bendimahi delta	2	Freshwater marsh and wet meadows	2, 3, 4	UP	Cattle grazing
68 Çaldıran marshes	c. 20	Complex of wet meadows along Bendimahi river	2, 3	UP	—



69	Çelebibağ marshes	3	Saltwater marshes on shores of Van Gölü	2, 3, 4	UP	Grazing, disturbance
70	Edremit marshes	<1	Shallow lake on shores of Van Gölü	2, 3	UP	Disturbance, construction of buildings
71	Erçek Gölü	98	Brackish lake with rocky shores	2, 3, 4	UP	–
72	Horkum Gölü (marshes between Balaban and Gevaş)	<1	Small lagoon of Van Gölü surrounded by marshes and meadows	2, 3	UP	Human disturbance, cattle grazing, hunting
73	Upper Murat valley near Yoncalı	c. 20	River valley and floodplain	2, 3, 4	UP	–
74	Nemrut Dağı	c. 250	Mountain and crater lake	See text	UP	Overgrazing
75	Saz Gölü (Doğubayazıt marshes)	c. 10	Lake covered with reeds	4	UP	–
76	Sodalı Gölü (Ann Gölü)	11	Saline lake (lagoon of Van Gölü) surrounded by agriculture	2, 3, 4	UP	Cattle grazing
77	Van marshes (marshes near Van Kalesi or Van Iskelesi or Van lagoon)	<180	Complex of small lagoons, marshes and wet meadows on shores of Van Gölü	2, 3	UP	Cattle grazing, disturbance, reed-cutting
78	Yüksekova	280	Large plain with marshes and wet meadows	3, 4	UP	–
79	Sarikum Gölü	1	Coastal lake	2	NR	Afforestation

\* The area given for some wetland sites refers only to the lake; any protected area would need to be expanded to include surrounding habitat of ornithological importance.

† Site important for: 1 - migratory non-waterfowl species; 2 - waterfowl, internationally; 3 - globally threatened species; 4 - species threatened in all or large parts of their European range.

\* UP - unprotected; NP - National Park; HR - Hunting Reserve; NR - Nature Reserve; ED - awarded European Diploma, on meeting certain criteria, by Council of Europe; MSPA - Mediterranean Specially Protected Area in context of Barcelona Convention.

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R. F. A. Grimmett, *International Council for Bird Preservation, 32 Cambridge Rd, Girton, Cambridge CB3 0PJ, ENGLAND.*

M. Kasperek & A. Kılıç, *Bleichstr. 1, D-6900 Heidelberg, WEST GERMANY.*

A. Ertan, *Körfez Cad. 37, 81610 A Hisar, Istanbul, TURKEY.*