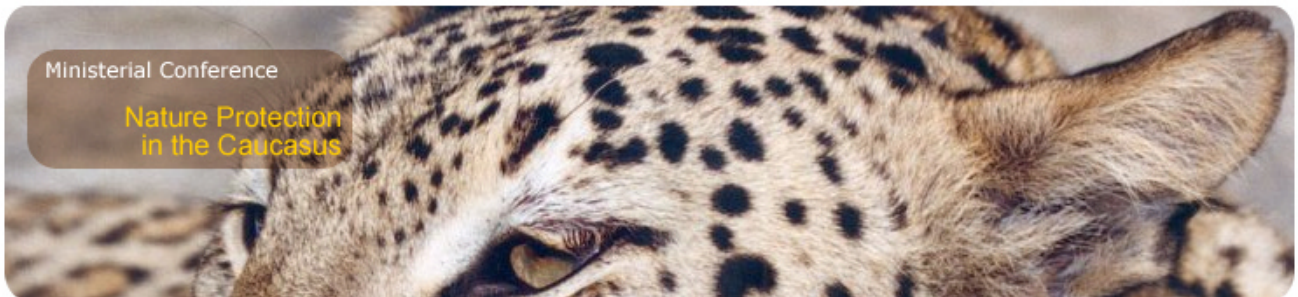


Ministerial Conference: Nature Protection in the Caucasus
Promoting Transboundary Cooperation for CBD Implementation
9-11 March 2006, Berlin – Germany



Conservation of Biodiversity in the Republic of Azerbaijan

Huseyngulu Baghirov, Minister of Ecology and Natural Resources - Azerbaijan

**Presentation by Mr. Hussein Bagirov
Minister of Ecology and Natural Resources
Republic of Azerbaijan**

Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,

First of all I would like to express my gratitude to the Government of Federal Republic of Germany, and you Ms. Heidemarie Wieczorek-Zeul and Mr. Sigmar Gabriel in particular for the invitation, warm hospitality and excellent organization of this important event.

Azerbaijan enjoys extremely diverse nature. Of the eleven climate zones nine are found in Azerbaijan. The climate of Azerbaijan is mainly affected by geographical position, relief and the Caspian Sea. It varies from subtropical and dry in central and eastern Azerbaijan to subtropical and humid in the southeast, temperate along the shores of the Caspian Sea, and cold at the higher mountain elevations.

The natural and geographical conditions of Azerbaijan have played indispensable role in the occurrence of rich biodiversity here. 4500 higher plant species have been recorded in Azerbaijan which accounts for 64 % of the Caucasus species composition. 240 of them are endemics and relicts. 140 rare and endangered plant species have been listed in the Red Data Book of Azerbaijan. The fauna of Azerbaijan is represented by 99 mammal, 360 bird, 54 reptile, 9 amphibian, 14 thousand insect and 123 fish species. 108 of them are listed in the Red Data Book of Azerbaijan.

Particular attention has long since been given to the protection of biodiversity in Azerbaijan. The first nature reserve areas to protect amazing nature of Azerbaijan were established in 30s of the last century. In recent years a tremendous work has been carried out on the expansion of old and creation of new specially protected nature areas in Azerbaijan. By the pace of development of specially protected nature areas Azerbaijan is likely to rank first in the world. Until 2003 the overall area of specially protected sites was 478 thousand hectares constituting 5% of the country's area. In the course of 2003 and 2005 the area of protected nature sites was expanded by almost 126,6 thousand hectares. At present there are 13 state nature reserves with a total area of 200,9 thousand hectares and 19 state nature sanctuaries with a total area of 274,5 thousand hectares which encompass major ecosystems. The overall area of the newly established National Parks in Azerbaijan is 117,7 thousand hectares comprising six national parks - Shirvan, Ordubad, Ag-Gol, Hirkan, Altiagaj and Absheon. The above figures show that within a comparatively short period the overall area of specially protected sites in Azerbaijan was enlarged from 478 thousand hectares to 604,6 thousands hectares now constituting 8% of the country's area.

The forthcoming creation of the Shag Dag National Park to protect the ecosystem of the Greater Caucasus mountain range, Samur-Yalama National Park encompassing part of the Caspian Sea to the north of the country as well as Goygol National Park will expand this area up to 12% of the country's area.

Of course, we face certain problems, however we manage to overcome them based on our enthusiasm. We value and appreciate any assistance that is provided to support our biodiversity conservation efforts. Regretfully, some overseas institutions exaggerate the assistance they provide in this area. These institutions sometimes by spending resources on a single action publicly disseminate information about remarkable input in biodiversity conservation in a particular country. For your comparison while half a million dollars are spent on the study of a single species we have erected an infrastructure of national parks at only a hundred thousand dollars.

Our wish to protect our nature is so great that we even attract international loans to save biodiversity of Azerbaijan. Recently, we lunched one the largest sturgeon hatcheries in the Caspian region at a credit of 8 million US dollars provided by the World Bank. Another, large project on establishing a Shah Dag National Park will be launched soon and part of resources are provided as a loan of the World Bank.

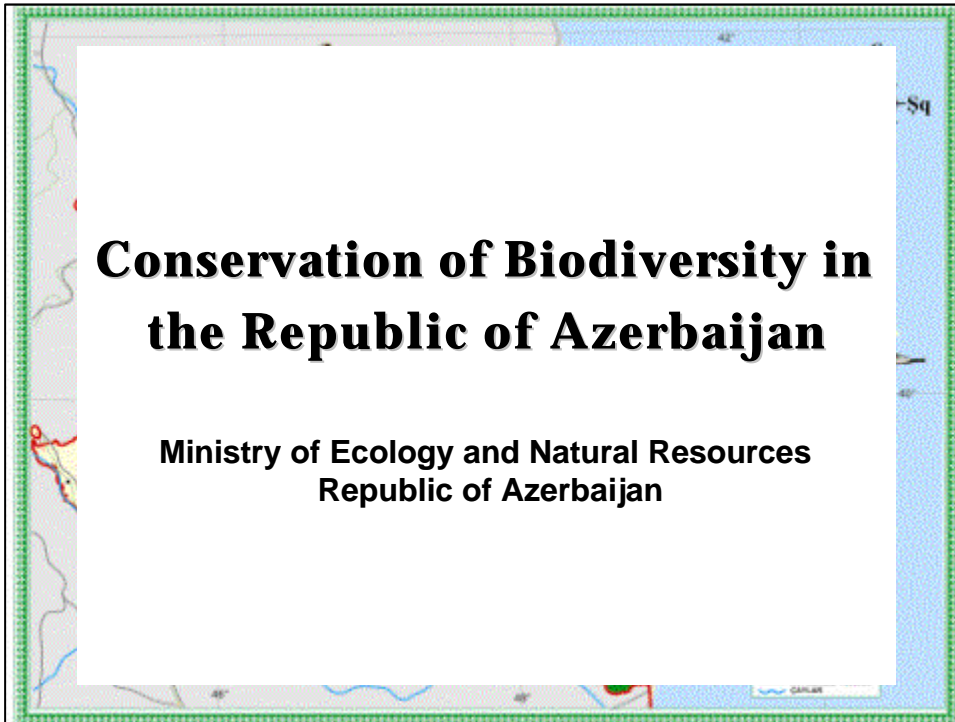
It has always been a challenge to ensure a proper balance in the relations between humans and nature. We identify our mission with creating a well-expanded network of national parks and ensuring that solicitous attitude to every single element of nature becomes an integral part of people's mind as a firmly accepted notion of a way of life.

One of the real threats to biodiversity is coming from desertification triggered by the extensive development of cattle breeding in the country. Desertification in Azerbaijan is one of the alarming issues. In Azerbaijan the number of cattle per a unit of area exceeds internationally accepted standards. The grazing of cattle is carried out without regulation. As a result pastures and meadows are depleted, the soil loses its protective vegetation cover, undergoes erosion and finally deteriorates. To avoid this negative trend it is important to persuade farmers to shift from traditional methods of cattle breeding on extensive grounds to one that is based on a confined farmland.

It is hardly possible to solve all the problems linked to biodiversity conservation by efforts of the government only. It is important that all layers of the society take part in this undertaking. One of the priorities in the involvement of public in this process is to raise their awareness and help develop personal attitude to the issue of nature conservation. Therefore, we mainly focus on the development of ecotourism in national parks to bring awareness about environmental problems by demonstrating to the public rare and unique representatives of landscapes, flora and fauna.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Government of Germany on behalf of the Government of Azerbaijan for the support in the establishment of the Samur-Yalama National Park and cooperation on the preparation of an Eco-Regional Nature Protection Program for the Southern Caucasus for the protection of biodiversity in Azerbaijan.

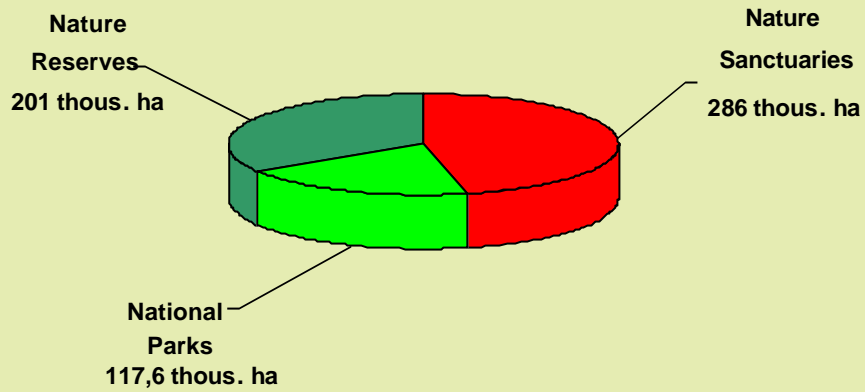
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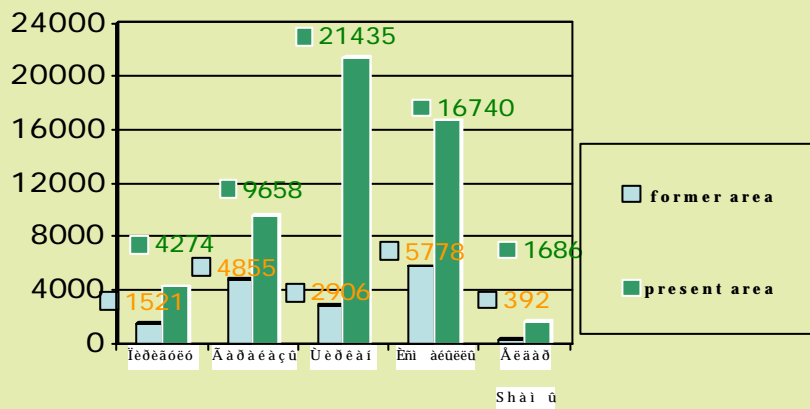
Biodiversity of Azerbaijan

Species	Total Number	No. of Red listed species
Plants	4500	140
Animals:		
Fish	99	5
Amphibians and Reptiles	67	13
Birds	357	36
Mammals	97	14
Insects	15000	40

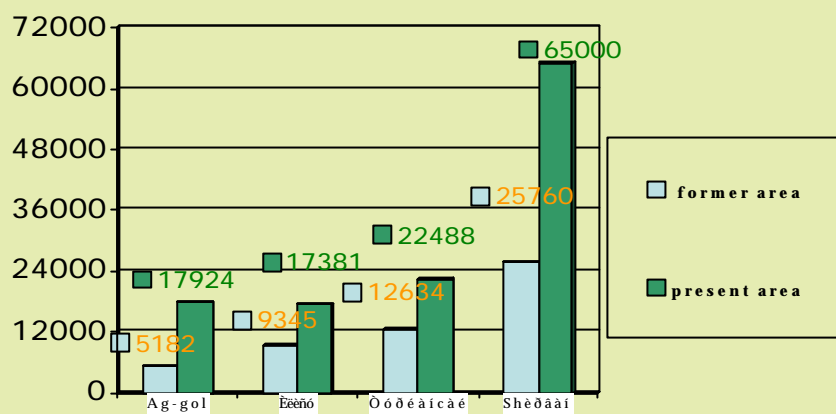
Specially Protected Nature Sites total area: 604 600 ha



Enlargement of Specially Protected Areas (hectares)



Enlargement of Specially Protected Areas (hectares)



Development of Specially Protected Nature Areas

	2002	2003	2004	2005
1.State Nature Reserves including:				
a) existing	14	14	13	13
á) enlarged		5	5	5
æ) newly established		1	2	2
2.National parks		3	5	6
3. State Nature Sanctuaries	20	20	20	21

**Newly Established National Parks
(During 2003-2005)**

Í àì á	É á à ð í ó	À ð á á (ù à)
N àì á á à ó ó á ð À æ á á á ì è æ è á í Û à ñ à ì À è è é á á	Á ñ ó á á è è ñ ù ì á í ò 2003	12131
Ñ ù à ñ á á á á á	2003	54373,5
À ý-ý í è	2003	17924
Û è ð è á í	2004	21435
À è ò ù à ý à æ	2004	11035
A á ñ ù á ð í í	2005	783
Ò í ò à è		117681,5

**National Parks and reserves to be established on
the basis of specially protected areas**

NAME	AREA (ha)
Ý í é - ñ í è NP	12 000
Ñ ù à ñ ä à g NP	343 000
Ñ à ì ó ð - É à è à ì à NP	12 435
Delta of Kura river NR	20 000
Korchay NR	5550
Total	392 985



ORDUBAD

National Park

- **LOCATION:**
Nakhchivan region
- **AREA:** 12 131 ha
- **FEATURES OF INTEREST:**
 - **FAUNA:** Leopard, *Amur Leopard*, Bezoar goat
 - **HISTORICAL MONUMENTS:**
Ship Rock (Ordubad Mountains)



SHIRVAN

National park

- **LOCATION:** Kura-Araz Lowland
- **AREA:** 54 374 ha
- **FEATURES OF INTEREST:**

- **FAUNA:** Goitred Gazelle, Migratory Birds, *Amur Leopard*
- **LANDSCAPE:** Wetland, Semi-desert step
- **HISTORICAL MONUMENTS:** Undersea archeological artifacts of ancient Bandovan town



AG-GOL National park

- **LOCATION:** Kura-Araz Lowland
- **AREA:** 17 924 ha
- **FEATURES OF INTEREST:**

- **FAUNA:** Little Bustard, Waterfowl, Swan
- **LANDSCAPE:** ñàìèääñáðò, Wetland - listed in the Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Significance



HIRKAN National park

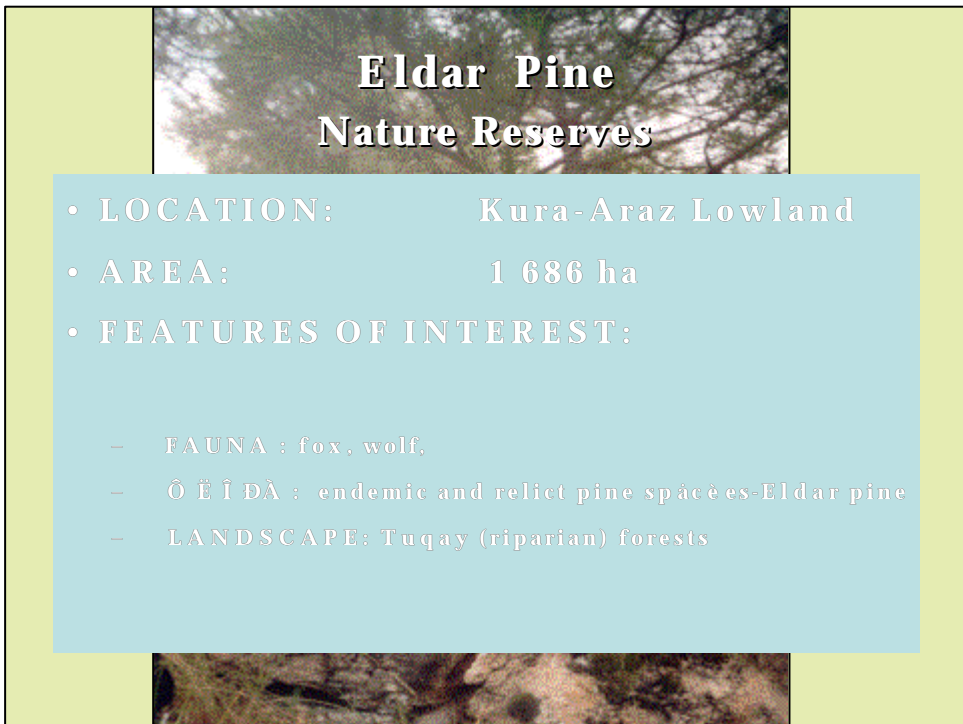
- **LOCATION:** Talish
- **AREA:** 21 435 ha
- **FEATURES OF INTEREST:**
 - **FAUNA :** Leopard, a large number of endemic species
 - **Ó Ë Í ÑÀ :** Sub-Tropical Forests, Ironwood
 - **LANDSCAPE:** 99% of forest area - nominated for the inclusion in the World Natural Heritage List





Shahbuz Nature Reserves

- **LOCATION:** Nakhchivan region
- **AREA:** 3 135 ha
- **FEATURES OF INTEREST:**
 - **FAUNA :** áááð, wolf, ô í õ
 - **Ô Ë Í ÐÀ :** ô orests
 - **LANDSCAPE:** í í ó í ò à è í í ó ñ forest area



Eldar Pine Nature Reserves

- **LOCATION:** Kura-Araz Lowland
- **AREA:** 1 686 ha
- **FEATURES OF INTEREST:**
 - **FAUNA :** fox, wolf,
 - **Ô Ë Í ÐÀ :** endemic and relict pine spácées-Eldar pine
 - **LANDSCAPE:** Tuqay (riparian) forests

Conservation of Biodiversity

- increase tendency in the number of Red listed species as a result of strengthening protection regime

Species	2000	2002	2003	2004	2005
Gazelle	4760	5822	7595	8350	9312
Bezoar Goat	810	920	1040	1072	1405
Ì ó ô ë î í	700	600	789	794	980
Wild Cat	3883	5642	6054	6235	7025
Lynx	308	347	325	337	378

