

### State Natural Reserves

**Name:** Basut-Chay State Reserve

**Year of foundation:** 1974

**Area (hectare):** 107

**Location:** Within the territory of Zangilan administrative district, Basut-Chay valley.

**Description:** The Basut-Chay State Reserve was established for the protection of a unique plan-tree grove. In October 1980, the area of the reserve was reduced by 10 hectares. It is consisting of *Quercus iberica* and Caucasian hornbeam, while on the hilly plateau of the left bank, forest of *Celtis caucasica* and Indian Juniper (*Juniperus polycarpus*), *Pistacia* and others are developed. Platan trees have an average age of 170 years; however, there are some real giant trees, which are up to 1,200-1,500 years old. The height of these trees is 50 m with diameter of up to 4 m. The main protected object is the unique plane-tree grove, which is the biggest in the world. Five settlements were located around the reserve, inhabitants of which traditionally considered this plane-tree grove as their private plots.

**Name:** Gara-Yaz State Reserve

**Year of foundation:** 1978

**Area (hectare):** 9,658

**Location:** Within the territory of Gazakh administrative district, on the bank of the River Kura in the Agstafa forestry.

**Description:** The Gara-Yaz State Reserve for the protection and restoration of the Kura tugay forests. The Gara-Yaz reserve is in the western part of Azerbaijan. Its territory covers the flood lands of the River Kura and the Gara-Yaz Lowland on the left bank of the River Kura. In the region where the reserve is situated, the tugay forest and steppe lowland landscapes are typical. In the past, a continuous line of tugay forest extended along the middle and lower reaches of the River Kura, which was surrounded by forest to an extent of 600 km. The territory of the reserve is part of the quaternary accumulative lowland, sloping slightly to the River Kura. Here the climate is that of moderate warm semi-desert and arid steppe, for which a warm and dry summer and moderate winter are typical. The main protected objects are the biggest tract of tugay forests of the middle reaches of the River Kura and the rare and endangered ecosystems of tugay. Along the river, shrubbery of willow, hawthorn, barberry, *elaegnus* and others grow.

**Name:** Gara-Gel State Reserve

**Year of foundation:** 1987

**Area (hectare):** 240

**Location:** Within the territory of Lachin administrative district, on the border with Goruss district of Armenian Republic.

**Description:** The Gara-Gel State Reserve was established for the protection of the unique ecosystem of the rare mountain Lake Gara-Gel, which is of glacier origin and to guarantee the safety of the surrounding natural complex. Lake Ishigli-Gara-Gel is situated at a height of 2,658 m above sea level in the southern part of the Karabakh volcanic plateau near the foothills of several mountains with a height of 3,200-3,500 m. The lake is a relict water reservoir, which was formed in the crater of an extinct volcano. The length of the lake is 1,950 m, its maximum width is 1,250 m, length of its coastline is 5,500 m, maximum depth – 7.8 m, volume of water – 10 million m<sup>3</sup>, area of the lake 13 km<sup>2</sup>. Water flow is mainly due to melted snow and rainwater, partially spring water. In terms of botany and geography the Karabakh Plateau is situated between the Caucasian and Armenian-Iran provinces, which determines the specifics of the local flora. The flora of the reserve includes 102 species and subspecies of vascular plants from 68 general and 27 families. The lack of flora is explained by the fact that the reserve covers only the lake, and many rare and endemic species grow beyond the reserve area, but close to its borders. The vegetation of the coastal area of the lake is represented mainly by meadows with the dominance of *Trifolium* and *Tragacantha* and *Astragalus*. The swamp flora and vegetation are limited because of the height of the area. There are only two species of plants in the lake: *Polygonum amphibium* and *Ranunculus*. In 1967, a type of Sevan trout, included in the Red Book, was introduced into the lake. The reserve is an inter-republic reserve. The reserve is under occupation. It should be noted that adjacent to the borders of the reserve there are areas with rare and endangered species of plants such as *Euphrasia*, *Potentilla* and others.

**Name:** Gey-Gel State Reserve

**Year of foundation:** 1925

**Area (hectare):** 6,732

**Location:** Within the territory of Khanlar administrative district, north-eastern part of the Minor Caucasian Ridge.

**Description:** The Gey-Gel State Reserve was the first reserve in Azerbaijan. The fate of this state reserve can serve as an illustrative example of the wrong approach to the organization and functioning of state reserves, their dependence on immediate and determined resolution. The reserve was liquidated in 1950, and restored again in 1958. Having existed for three years, it was liquidated once again in 1961. On July 14, 1965 the Gey-Gel State Reserve was restored for the third time. The reserve consists of two territories: the main Gey-Gel reserve and a subsidiary that is called "The Eldar Pine" Grove. The distance between them is 80-85 km. The subsidiary part of the reserve is protected by the arid forest landscapes on the right bank of the Gabirli River near the border with the Georgian Republic, where on the slopes of the "Eldar Oyugu" Ridge a unique natural grove of Eldar pine has been preserved. The Eldar pine grove has been protected since the end of the 19th century and this area can be referred to as the oldest specially protected area on the territory of Trans-Caucasia. The area of the Gey-Gel State Reserve is 7,131 hectares, of that 3,806 hectares are forest tracts. It is situated in the northeastern part of the Lesser Caucasus Range at a height of 1, 100-3,060 m above sea level. The reserve was established to protect and study the typical landscapes of mountain forest and sub-alpine areas of the Lesser Caucasus, preservation of the purity of water in Lake Gey-Gel as a source of drinking water, as well as a unique grove of naturally growing Eldar pine. On the main territory of the reserve, the relief is mountainous and erosive. The northeastern slopes of the Murovdag Ridge are a sequence of longitudinal secondary ridges and deep river valleys. The highest peak is the Kapaz Mountain (3,065 m). In 1139, a strong earthquake destroyed a considerable part of this peak. Great boulders fell down and blocked river hollows, including the Aghsu River. As a result, many lakes appeared, among which was Lake Gel-Gel. The earthquake completely destroyed Ganja city as well. Not only the lakes remind us of this terrible event, but rocks are spread along the slopes of the Kapaz Mountain creating a spectacular view. Gey-Gel is the biggest and the most beautiful lake in Azerbaijan. It is situated at a height of 1556 m. Its maximum length is 2450 m, width– 525 m, depth–93 m, length of the coastline– 6,460 m. the area of the lake is 79 hectares, volume of water – 30 million m<sup>3</sup>, its water is fresh, transparent and seems to be blue, due to which it is called Gey-Gel ("blue lake" in Azeri). As a whole, there are 8 big lakes on the territory of the reserve, the biggest among them are: Maral-Gel (Deer Lake), Zali-Gel (Leech Lake), Gara-Gel (Black Lake). Like Gey-Gel all of them are surrounded by mountains. The fauna of the reserve is represented by many species of animals and birds, among which are: Caucasian red deer, roe (*Capreolus capreolus*), badger (*Meles meles*), West-Caucasian auroch, Caucasian goat, brown bear, pine marten (*Martes martes*) and stone marten (*Martes fiona*), Griffon-vulture, partridge (*Alectoris kakelik*), Tetraogallus and others. Two species of trout: lake and rivertrout, are observed in the waters of the reserve. A population of the lake trout (Gey-Gel) was formed in Lake Gey-Gel and other lakes of this region after their formation in the 12th century. More than 50 species of birds are nesting in the reserve including 35 species in the forest area. The partridge (*Alectoris kakelik*) and Tetraogallus caspica (included in the Red Book) and others are nesting in the Subalpine and Alpine zones. The flora of the reserve consists of 420 species of plants including 76 species of wood and bush types. About 20 species of flora are endemic to the Caucasian region. There are: *Quercus Iberica*, Troutfetter's maple, Nizami's dog-rose, *Aconitum*, *Alchenilla*, *Astragalus*, pinks, Ruprech's geranium, and others. The main protected objects are natural complexes of the middle mountain, forest, partially subalpine area in the region of the northern slopes of the Lesser Caucasus, as well as the ecosystems of the Gey-Gel, Maral-Gel, Zali-Gel and other mountain lakes.

**Name:** Gyzyl-Agach State Reserve

**Year of foundation:** 1929

**Area (hectare):** 88,360

**Location:** Within the territory of Lankaran administrative district, in the Great Gyzyl-Agach bay.

**Description:** The Gyzyl-Agach State Reserve is situated on the southwestern coast of the Caspian on an area of 88.4 thousand hectares including 62 hectares of water area. It was established in 1929 for the protection and reproduction of wintering and migratory waterfowl, wader and steppe birds. In 1975, the reserve was classified as being of international significance, mainly as a habitat for waterfowl and coastal birds. The territory of the reserve is an important place for the rest and wintering of migratory birds in the Caspian region, where many bird species from northern Europe stay. A typical feature of the Gyzyl-Agach reserve is the extreme dynamic connected between the variation in the level of the Caspian Sea, the wandering of the Kura and Araks River beds, and anthropogenic activity. At present the territory of the reserve is coastal lowlands, which is below sea level and with a different set of natural and artificial water reservoirs. The maximum height is in the Kulagin area in the center of the reserve – 24.5 m below sea-level; the minimum height varies depending on the level of the Caspian and during the period of the reserve's existence has ranged from 26 to 29 m; in 1995 it was 26.4 m. At present the relief of the reserve is characterized by the alternation of low (up to 1 m) ridges and open

hollows and old silty riverbeds. In some places there are separated former riverbeds – akhmazes; for the northern part Ishores plain lowlands with salines are typical. There are 248 species of birds in the reserve, including *Francolinus francolinus*, grey goose (*Anser anser*), white-fronted goose (*Anser albifrons*), Little bustard (*Otis tetrax*), *Plegadis falsinellus*, *Platalea leucorodia*, *Nycticorax nycticorax*, *Phoenicopteri*, *Branta ruficallis*, peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*), *Pelecanidae*, buff-backed herons (*Cochlearis cochlearis*), pond herons (*Ardeola ralloides*), swans and others. The rise in the level of the Caspian has resulted in the formation of vast shallow gulfs with rich feeding grounds, due to which the number of wintering waterfowl has increased. The great concentration of ducks and coots on the open areas of the gulfs, pink flocks of feeding flamingos (*Phoenicopteri*), white clouds of swans, white herons standing alone in the water. Rallidoe and flumerous other *Limicolae* and typical features of a winter view of the GyzyI-Agach reserve. On the migration route along the western coast of the Caspian great flocks of migratory birds feed and rest. Ducks and swans are attracted by the shallow waters that are rich in sub-water vegetation and mollusks. Flocks of geese and little bustard (*Otis tetrax*) feed in semi-deserts. The mild climate crates favorable conditions for the wintering of hundreds of bird species. In some years 5-7 million birds have wintered here. There are also wild boar, wolf, jackal, jungle cat, badger, otter, fox and other mammals. There are 54 species of fish in the waters of the reserve: sazan, pike perch, *Rutilus frisii kutum*, *Mugilidae*, *Salmonidae* and others.

**Name:** Ilisu State Reserve

**Year of foundation:** 1987

**Area (hectare):** 17381,5

**Location:** Within the territory of Gakh administrative district, southern slope of the Major Caucasus, between Zagatala and Ismailli reserves.

**Description:** The Ilisu State Reserve was established for the protection and restoration of the natural complex of the central part of southern macro-slopes of the Greater Caucasus; the preservation species of flora and fauna, and the localization of centers of erosion to lessen the threat of mud flows. The relief is formed by a combination of mountain ridges and deep river valleys. The climate is conditioned by the geographical location of the territory, which is protected from the north by the Major Caucasus Ridge, the area's height amplitude and the highly indented relief. The favorable climatic conditions (soft winter, mild summer, warm spring and autumn, plenty of precipitation during the vegetation period, absence of prolonged droughts and strong frost) contribute to the forming of luxuriant vegetation, particularly, forest vegetation. The main protected objects are the natural complexes of the middle area of the macro-slopes of the Greater Caucasus. On the territory of the reserve there are about 300 vascular plants with more than 90 species of the arboreal-shrub type. The flora of the reserve includes medicinal (about 50 species), endemic, rare and endangered species. The yew-tree (*Taxus baccata*) and Raddle birch are included in the Red Book. 93% of the state reserve is under broad-leaved forests, where oak, beech and hornbeam are dominating. Also, there are lime, nut, chestnut, ash, maple, etc. More than 150 species of vertebrates inhabit the territory of the reserve and its fauna is the same as that of the southern slopes of the Greater Caucasus Range. On the territory of the reserve there are aurochs, deer, chamois, roe, bear, wild bear, marten and others. Its rivers are inhabited by *Forea*, *Barbus*, etc. Amphibians are represented by the tree frog, green and common toad, frogs of Asia Minor and Caucasus. Reptiles are represented by 12 species. The territory of the reserve is inhabited by more than 90 species of birds belonging to 11 orders: black hawk, goshawk (*Accipiter gentilis*), kite, golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetus*), *Gypaetus peregrinus*, bearded vulture (*Gypaetus barbatus*), black vulture (*Aegyptius monachus*), peregrine (*Falco peregrinus*), eagle owl (*Bubo bubo*), long-eared owl (*Asio otus*), scops owl (*Otus scops*), *Picnae*, etc. There are more than 60 species of migrant birds. Six species of vertebrates are included in the Red Book: wood snake (*Coluber*), golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetus*), bearded vulture (*Gypaetus barbatus*), duck hawk (*Falco peregrinus*), etc.

**Name:** Ismailli State Reserve

**Year of foundation:** 1981

**Area (hectare):** 16,740

**Location:** Within the territory of Ismailli administrative district.

**Description:** The Ismailli State Reserve was established for the protection of the natural complexes of the central part of the southern slopes of the Major Caucasus Ridge. It consists of two parts; the distance between them is about one kilometer. The Topchi area is situated at a height of 800-2250 m above sea level. Its length is 18 km, its width is 6 km and area is 5589 hectares. The Galighchi area is situated in the eastern part of the Alazan Agrichai valley, at a height of 600-650 m and this part protects mainly the natural forests of *Quercus Castaneifolia*. The organization of the reserve was conditioned by the necessity to protect, restore, study and reproduce the rare and endangered species of this region's fauna and flora. The Topchi area has a mountainous relief and the ridges and valleys of meridian direction alternate with plateaus. With the increase in the absolute

height of the area, sediments of quaternary, tertiary, Jurassic and Cretaceous periods alternate with each other. In the Galinchi area quaternary sediments with tertiary terrigenous and carbonate strata prevail. The vegetation of this region was formed during the quaternary period but the local flora has preserved some tertiary species, for example, *Taxus baccata* and *Quercus castaneifolia* are included in the Red Book. In the Galinchi area forest of oak-trees and hornbeam-trees are developed. The typical species of Hirkan flora – *Quercus castaneifolia*, which grows here – is of particular interest. 112 hectares of the territory are forest consisting of this tree. The forest species are mainly represented by beech, hornbeam and oak; also there are forests of apple and ash. The rare forest of the tertiary period, which consists of *Taxus baccata* and *Quercus castaneifolia* are of particular value. During the last century forests of this area were intensively felled. This resulted in the replacement of beech – oak forests by hornbeam forests with underbrush of shrubbery and bushes of hawthorn, comel, dog-rose, meddler, cherry-plum and others. There are approximately 170 species of vertebrates in the reserve. In its rivers there are Forelle, barbus and others. Amphibians are represented by six (6) species. *Triturus cristatus*, which are rare in Azerbaijan, inhabit the forest zone. There are 17 species of reptiles in the reserve: swamp turtles, Caspian and Mediterranean turtles, *Coluber jugularis*, *Coluber najadum*, banded chicken snake (*Elaphe quadrivittatus*), *Telescopus* or *Tarbophis caucasicus*, *Vipera lebetina* and *Coronella austriaca*.

**Name:** Pirguli State Reserve

**Year of foundation:** 1968

**Area (hectare):** 4,274

**Location:** Within the territory of Shamakha administrative district, at the eastern end of the Major Caucasian Ridge.

**Description:** The Pirguli State Reserve was organized for the protection of the typical natural complexes and landscapes of the Shamakha Plateau, which is one of the most beautiful regions of the southeastern part of the Major Caucasian Ridge. The area of the reserve is 1,521 hectares, 1,362 hectares of which are forest tracts, where 45 rare and endemic species occur. The reserve consists of 3 parts: Arakhchi – situated on the slopes of the Gart and Girkh-bulag mountains in the upper area of the forest tract (1,600–2,000 m above sea-level); Pirguli – covers the forest part of the Pirguli mountain (1,500 m) and is represented by a landscape of middle area forest tract, and Jangi which is a low mountainous plot covering the whole northern slope of the Jangi mountain (800–1100 m). The relief of the reserve area is mountainous, strongly indented; watershed ridges alternate with canyons of a depth of 600 m. there are several rock denudations, landslides and small ravines of mud flow origin. The main protected objects are: forest ecosystems preserved near the eastern border of the modern forest area on the southern (southeastern) macroslopes of the Greater Caucasus; also some species of flora and fauna, such as *Taxus baccata*, which are included in the Red Book. The dendroflora of the reserve accounts for 60 species, of which Caucasian hornbeam, oriental beech (*Fagus orientalis*), *Quercusiberica* are the main forest forming types of trees. The animal world of the reserve is practically unstudied and there is only some information about the fauna of the mammals. Among insectivorous species there are *Crocivura*, common hedgehog and mole. There are seven species of rodents. Among predatory mammals there are brown bear, wolf, jackal, fox, lynx, badger, pine and stone marten and weasel, the hyena, which is a rare species for the whole Caucasus fauna has been observed here. Wild bear and roe, also chamois and red deer live in the reserve permanently. The natural environment, where Pirguli reserve is currently situated, has been exposed to evident anthropogenic changes during the last centuries. Vast territories of forests have been felled, in some places they were replaced by secondary, mainly hornbeam forests. In many places there are meadows located after forests. Erosion processes have increased and became more widespread. Also the water reserves in springs and rivers have decreased. Elimination of forest felling and a certain regulation of cattle pasteurization stopped the process of natural degradation, and with the establishment of the reserve the natural landscape has started to be restored.

**Name:** Turian-Chay State Reserve

**Year of foundation:** 1958

**Area (hectare):** 22488

**Location:** Within the territory of Agdash, Oguz, Yevlakh, Gabala administrative districts, on the right bank of the River Turian-Chay.

**Description:** The Turian-Chay State Reserve was established for the protection and restoration of arid-arch light forest and other natural resources; and for the localization of centers of erosion at the foothills. The reserve is situated on the spurs of the Buz-Dag Ridge, in the southern foothills of the Major Caucasus, on the right bank of the River Turian-Chay in the Agdash area of the Republic. Its territory lies at a height of 400-650 m above sea level and extends for 35 km from east to west and for 5 km from north to south. The reserve is situated in an area of semi-desert and arid light forests, which mainly consist of pistachio, juniper, oak, having an important soil protecting, water protecting and climatic significance. In the relief of the reserve lowland

mountains dominate with the peaks: Pirsei-Dag (609 m), Nulbon-Dag (437 m), Archan-Dag (476 m), Olmes-Dag (544 m) and others. As a rule they have steep, in some places denuded eroded slopes, and are separated by deep narrow valleys. The northern slopes are more gentle and covered with forests; the southern slopes are steep and strongly eroded. The general process of wind erosion has developed on the territory of the reserve. On the territory of the reserve 60 species of trees and bushes grow. The main types of sparsely growing trees are: Pistacia, fudian juniper (*Juniper polucarpus*), prickly juniper (*Juniperus oxicedrus*), *Quercus Iberica*, ash-tree, *Celtis caucasicus* and pomedranate. Moreover, *Quercus Iberica*, *Populus*, willow, alder, *Elaeagnus* and other trees also grow in this area. Two dendraflora species of the reserve – *Juniperus* and pomegranate are included in the Red Book. There are 24 species of mammals and 112 species of birds, 20 species of reptiles and 3 species of amphibians in the reserve. Among the birds there are partridge (*Alectoris kakelik*), Columbi formes, *Cercheneis tinnunculus*, griffon (*Gyps fulvus*), black vulture (*Aegypius monachus*) and others. Among mammals there are wild boar, brown bear, badger, stone marten, lynx, jackal, European wild cat, hare and others. Among reptiles there are: *Coluber jugularis* and *Vipera lebetina*. Along the former river- beds and channels the Caspian turtle can be found, and on the slopes of the mountain the Mediterranean turtle can be observed, which, as well as the *Coluber caucasicus*, is included in the Red Book. The main protected objects are the model natural complexes of the Boz-Dag Ridge with the developed pistachio-arch light forests, area of semi-desert, arid and tugay vegetation. The state of arid light forest on the Boz-Dag are of great concern primary primarily because in spite of the productivity of the majority of tree species, including juniper, the regeneration of these forests in general is very slow. The establishment of the Turian-Chay reserve brought -an improvement in the situation with the regeneration of these forests. During the 40 years of the reserve's existence the pistachio-juniper light forest has extended its area and the general quality of trees has increased. The replacement of juniper by pistachio has almost stopped. Shrubbery and herbage have also developed well, considerably reducing the process of soil erosion.

**Name:** Zagatala State Reserve

**Year of foundation:** 1929

**Area (hectare):** 23844

**Location:** Within the territory of Zagatala and Blakan administrative districts, on the southern micro slope in the middle part of the Major Caucasus Ridge.

**Description:** The Zagatala State Reserve was established on an area of 25218 hectares, including 48 hectares of water reservoirs. During the period of its existence, the reserve has belonged to different organization and its area and borders have been changed. The reserve is situated at a height of 650 – 3,646 m above sea level. The reserve territory has a complicated relief due to spurs of the major ridge extending to the south and south-east: Agkemal, Katslar, Rochigel, Pichgel, Khalagel, Ruchug, Mrovdag and others, which are separated from each other by deep river valleys (canyons). Slopes with a steepness of 40-80 m and more occupy an area of more than 450 hectares; slopes with a steepness of 25-40 m prevail. The relief reflects the activity of glacier and other forms of erosion. The asymmetry of the river basin is typical: the mountain slopes, deep canyons and valleys are sharply shaped. The Zagatala reserve was organized with the purpose of protecting and studying the fauna and flora of the southern slopes of the Major Caucasus. The reserve territory is referred to by botanists as the Iberian area of the Caucasus flora province. At the end of the Tertiary period, the forests of this area had a different composition, with a considerable touch of elements of the Hirkan forests, and were much richer than the present ones. Contemporary flora of the reserve has more than a thousand species. Such representatives of ancient plants as rhododendron yellow, *Laurocerasus officinalis*, Caucasian bilberry-bush, *Taxus baccata*, maple, Polypodiophyta and others are preserved on this territory. The main forest – forming species of the reserve – *Fagus orientalis*, as well as *Quercus iberica* and *Corylus colurna* are also referred to as ancient plants. The representatives of rare plants: *Taxus baccata*, apple-tree, ash-tree, birch-tree, cherry-tree, pear-tree and others are observed as well. The fauna of the reserve is rich in species composition. They are: Dagestan aurochs, chamois, red deer, roe, brown bear, fox, badger, *Mustela nivalis*, pine marten and stone marten, lynx, squirrel and others. There are 104 species of birds, including some birds of prey: long-eared owl, golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*), *Cerchneis tinnunculus*, *Neophron percnopterus*, griffon (*Gyps fulvus*), bearded vulture (*Cypaetus barbatus*), black vulture and others. There are some rare, specially protected species of birds: bearded vulture (*Gypaetus barbatus*), golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*), peregrine (*Falco peregrinus*), *Tetraogallus*, *Accipiter badius*, which are registered in the Red Book.

**Name:** Eldar pine-tree State Reserve

**Year of foundation:** 2004

**Area (hectare):** 1686

**Location:** Within the territory of Samukh administrative district.

**Description:** The Eldar pine-tree State Reserve was established to preserve the genetic heritage, biological diversity of ecological systems, unique forests of Eldar pine trees. The pine trees growing here are of 100-120 years old and 2-6 m high. Fauna in this reserve area is not very variable – among animals only hares inhabit here and among birds – partridges. Eldar pine tree is included in the Red Book of Azerbaijan Republic.

**Name:** Shahbuz State Reserve

**Year of foundation:** 2004

**Area (hectare):** -

**Location:** Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic, on the territory of the Bichenek pass and Lake Batabat.

**Description:** The Shahbuz State Reserve was established to preserve the unique flora and fauna of the highlands in Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic. The territory lies at a height of about 2200-2400 m above sea level in the mountainous region. About 2899 types of flora and 285 species of fauna are represented in this reserve.

**Name:** Shirvan State Natural Reserve

**Year of foundation:** 1969

**Area (hectare):** -17745

**Location:** Within the territory of Salyan and Neftchala administrative districts

**Description:** The reserve was established in a part of Bendovan State Nature Reserve for the purpose of protecting and increasing the number of gazelles and water birds. The area of the reserve was expanded to 25.8 thousand hectares in 1982. Water reserves account for 3.5 hectares of the area. The reserve is characterized by rich ornithological fauna. Rare and valuable birds nest and winter in the swampy areas. The biggest part of the reserve was transferred to the Shirvan National Park in 2003 and the area of the reserve currently totals 6232 hectares. Shirvan National Park was established by a decree of the president of Azerbaijan on July 5, 2003 and thus the area of the reserve remained changeless (6232 hectares).