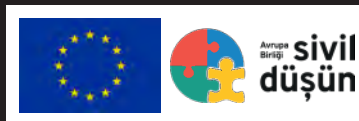




Northern Forests Advocacy Guide

Northern Forests Research Association





Masthead

Northern Forests Advocacy Guide

Adress	: Göksu District, Sadri Alışık Avenue, No:33 Beykoz/İstanbul
Contact	: kuzeyormanlariarsder@gmail.com
Social Media	: Twitter: Kuzey_ArDer Facebook: KuzeyArDer Instagram: Kuzey_ArDer
Broadcasting Board	: Ayse Yıkıcı, Banu Uzpeder, Basar Alipaça, Seçkin Barbaros, Seda Elhan
Editor	: Banu Uzpeder
Graphic Design	: YKC Proje Danismanlık ve Organizasyon A.S.

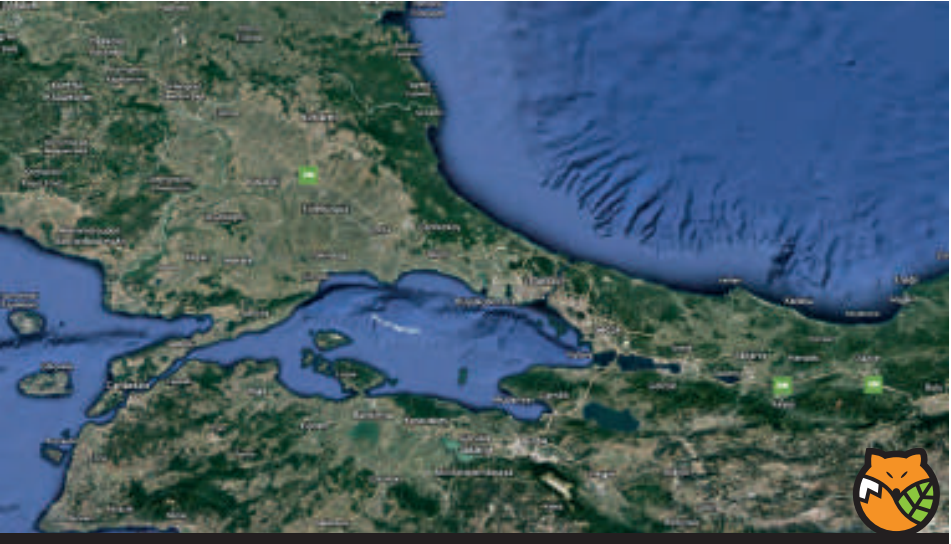
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Northern Forests Advocacy Guide

This guide has been prepared by the Northern Forests Research Association to assist citizens seeking to recognize, protect and defend the Northern Forests.





Introduction

The geography of the Northern Forests

Northern Forests, which is an intercontinental forest belt bridge, is a forest ecosystem, Located alongside a forest corridor of vital importance for both Turkey, for the region as well as for the world, it expands across over 1 million 500 thousand hectares.

The geography of the Northern Forests is in, and expands across and beyond, the provinces of Edirne, Kırklareli, Tekirdağ, İstanbul, Kocaeli, Yalova, Sakarya, Düzce and in the north of Bursa, Balıkesir and Çanakkale, stretching along the Black Sea and Marmara coasts; consists of forest, degraded forest, open fields, wetlands, rocky, dune, floodplain and cave ecosystems.

Northern Forests form an ecologically similar ecosystem and have a forest structure consisting of moist-temperate and leafy trees. It contains dense and closed oak, beech, hornbeam forests, aquatic ecosystems and glades.

Northern Forests; covering the north of the Marmara and Western Black Sea regions; it is a union of multiple ecosystems extending

from the Istranca Mountains in the west to the Abant Mountains in the east, and between the Black Sea coasts in the north and the Marmara Sea coasts and Samanlı Mountains in the south. Northern Forests; it is a forest belt bridge stretching between Asia and Europe continents.

Administratively, it is located within the borders of 11 cities, with four of them provinces in Thrace (North Çanakkale, Edirne, Kırklareli and Tekirdağ), İstanbul and six of them are provinces in Anatolia (Kocaeli, Sakarya, Düzce, Yalova, Kuzey Bursa and Northern Balıkesir), and constitutes the integrity of ecosystems that are vital for the settlement areas of these provinces.

The Northern Forests are composed of forests that are close to sea level, which largely have deciduous broad-leaved trees; highly productive and well-developed forests in less-treated areas. It is home to an extremely rich biodiversity as it forms the meeting and transition areas of three different climatic zones and is on the plant migration route



More than 80 lakes, ponds and wetlands in the Northern Forests are of vital importance in terms of geography. Your geography; Snow and rain water falling on the high-altitude sections of the Istrancalar, Samanlı and Abant Mountains and the water collection basins feed the surface and underground water transmission channels and the Northern Forests lakes and dams. These resources meet the drinking water needs of tens of millions of people and countless living things, and are used in excessive amounts in the industrial and agricultural activities carried out in the region.

The Northern Forests geography is intertwined with a region that is the center of Turkey's most dense population, industry and trade movements; so for many years it has been under the intense threat and destruction due to various kinds of human activities such as construction, energy and mining.

Millions of people living in the region, especially citizens who want to defend the Northern Forests; do not have enough information about the forest asset, the factors that threaten or destroy it, and its advocacy activities.

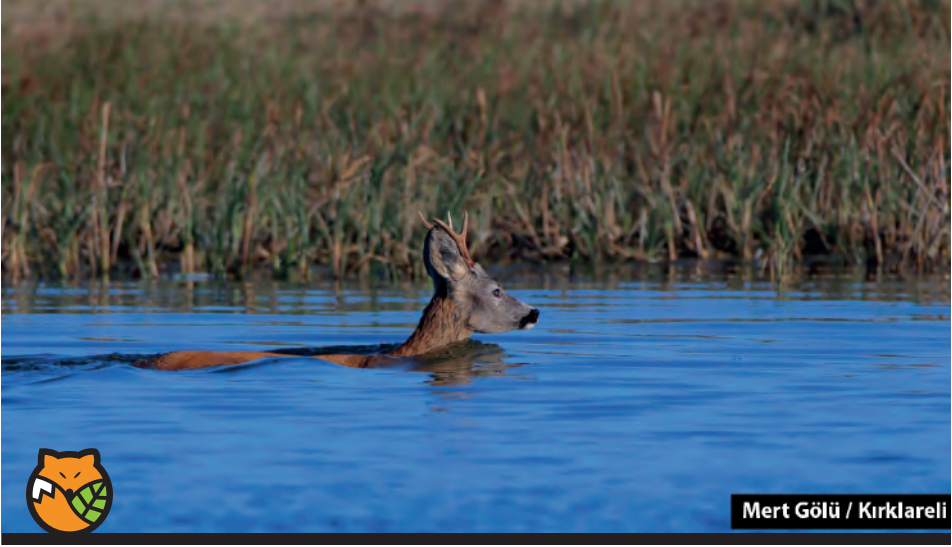
The Northern Forests and Advocacy Training program aims to contribute to making local people more effective subjects of defense in terms of quantity and quality, gaining regularity and prevalence of advocacy activities and making them a network.

Within the scope of '**Northern Forests and Advocacy Trainings**', natural and cultural assets (Flora / Fauna / Water resources / Key Biodiversity Areas / Sub-ecosystems / Human settlements / Cultural and historical assets) in the Northern Forests geography, threats to the area and destruction advocacy activities

will be handled with a holistic approach. These trainings will be continued regularly and shared with the relevant and citizens.

The Advocacy Training Guidebook is a summary of the 14-hour Northern Forests and Advocacy Training program organized by the Northern Forests Research Association. The guidebook has been prepared to contribute to the provision of information needed by environmental activists and local advocates, who are against the projects that are destroying the Northern Forests, in order to defend more effectively.





The lakes of Northern Forests

Northern Forests; is the only water source for tens of millions of people and countless creatures living in its geography.

There are nearly 100 lakes, dams and large ponds within the ecosystems of the Northern Forests. Sapanca, İznik, Ulubat and Manyas-Kuş lakes, which are the main lakes of the region, were formed in the deepest parts of the depression areas in the region.

Sapanca and Iznik lakes are part of the gulf separated from Marmara. The North Anatolian Broken Line passes through the middle of the region. Ergene, a branch of Meriç, collects the waters of the basin that takes its name, and the lower course of Sakarya remains within the boundaries of the region.



Gala Lake / Edirne



In the provinces of the 1st Region (Thrace) of the Northern Forests;

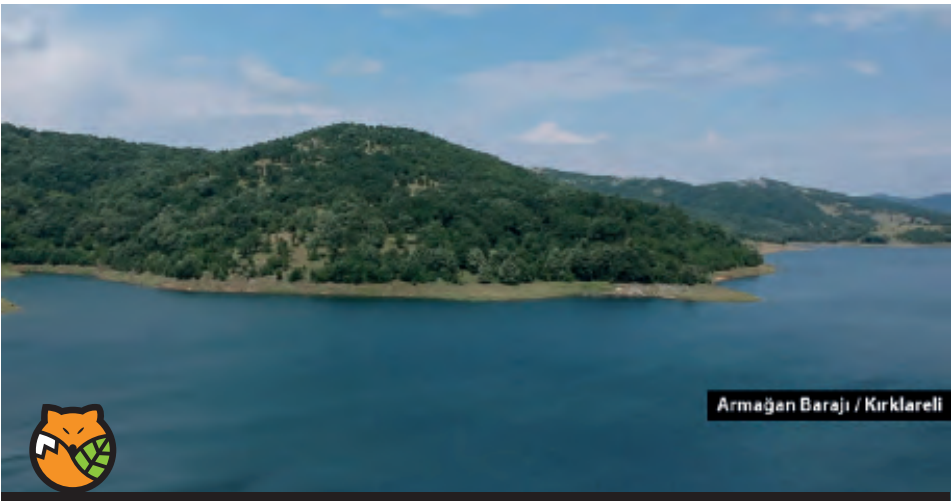
in Edirne; Gala Lake, which is also a bird paradise, Hamzadere Dam (İpsala), Sultanköy Dam (İpsala), Sazlıdere Dam (Keşan), Dombay Dam (Lalapaşa), Süloğlu Dam (Süloğlu), Altinyazı Dam (Uzunköprü), Çakmak Dam (Uzunköprü),

in Çanakkale; Tayfur Dam (Gallibolu), Zeytinli Dam (Gökçeada), Umurbey Dam (Lapseki), Bayramdere Dam (Lapseki)

in Tekirdag; Karademir Dam (Malkara), Çokal Dam (Malkara-Şarköy), Naipköy Dam (Süleymanpaşa), Ferhadanlı Dam (Süleymanpaşa)

in Kırklareli; Iğneada Longoz lakes (Demirköy), Kırklareli Dam (Center), Kayalıköy Dam (Center), Armağan Dam (Center), Pabuçdere Dam (Vize), Kazandere Dam (Vize), Aksicim Dam (Vize), Sergen Dam (Vize), Kurudere Dam (Pınarhisar) are located.

Armağan Dam / Kırklareli





Within the borders of the 2nd Region (İstanbul) of the Northern Forests;

Sazlıdere Dam (Arnavutköy), Terkos Lake (Çatalca, Arnavutköy), Büyükçekmece Lake (Büyükçekmece), Küçükçekmece Lake (Küçükçekmece), Alibey Dam (Sultangazi), Darlık Dam (Şile), Elmalı Dam (Beykoz) and Ömerli

Dam (Çekmeköy) Strandzha dams (Kuzuludere, Düzdere, Büyükdere, Sultanbahçedere, Elmalidere) are located.

Alibey Dam / İstanbul





In the provinces of the 3rd Region (North Anatolia) of the Northern Forests;

in Kocaeli; Yuvacık Dam (Başiskele), Namazgah Dam (Kandıra), Kızderbent Dam (Karamürsel), Sapanca Lake (Kartepe),

in Sakarya; Poyrazlar Lake (Adapazarı), Taşkısı Lake (Adapazarı), Küçük Akgöl (Adapazarı), Acarlar Lake-Longozu (Karasu,

Ferizli), Büyük Akgöl (Karasu, Ferizli), Sapanca Lake (Sapanca), Gökçeören Lake (Serdivan, Adapazarı)

and in Düzce; There are Akçakoca Dam (Akçakoca), Efteni Lake - Melen (Gölyaka), Kuru Lake (Kaynaşlı), Hasanlar Dam (Yığılca) are located.





In the provinces of the 4th Region (South Anatolia) of the Northern Forests;

In Bursa; Lake Iznik (Iznik), Lake Uluabat (Mustafakemelpasa, Karacabey, Karacabey Floodplain (Karacabey),

In Balıkesir; Lake Manyas,

in Yalova; Sarpdere Dam (Armutlu) and Gökçe Dam (Thermal) are located.

The Northern Forests Geography is very rich in terms of wetlands. In addition to important streams such as Ergene, Meriç, Tunca, Riva and Sakarya, there are dozens of streams and ponds in the region.





Key Biodiversity Areas of the Northern Forests

The concept of (KBA) is a prioritization approach used to identify sensitive and unique natural areas. For this, a number of ecological indicators are used, primarily endangered and/or living species with a limited geographical distribution.

KBAs are selected through standards based on the distribution and population of species and habitats in need of area protection, and concrete criteria based on globally applicable thresholds. On the other hand, a number of quantitative threshold values are used in determining KBAs.

An international team that included experts from Doğa presented the first design for KBA criteria in 2004, based on the "Important Bird Area" studies by BirdLife International. Later, in 2016, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) developed the method of KBA further and recognised it as an international standard to determine the areas of top priority.

According to the new standards determined by IUCN in 2016, there are five major KBA criteria and a series of sub-criteria:

1. Threatened Biodiversity

1.1. Threatened species

1.2. Threatened ecosystem types

2. Geographically restricted biodiversity

2.1. Individual geographically restricted species

2.2. Co-occurring geographically restricted species

2.3. Geographically restricted assemblages

2.4. Geographically restricted ecosystem types

3. Ecological integrity

4. Biological processes

4.1. Demographic aggregations

4.2. Ecological refugia

4.3. Recruitment sources

5. Irreplaceability through quantitative analysis

As one of the World's first KBA inventories on a national scale, "**Key Biodiversity Areas of Turkey**" book was completed in 2006 with Doğa's coordination and the contributions of many organizations and scientists. In this work concerning eight different groups of living creatures, the data regarding plants, dragonflies, butterflies, inland water fishes, amphibians, reptiles, birds and mammals were synthesised to identify 305 KBAs. Important Bird Areas, Important Plant Areas, the sea turtle and the Mediterranean monk seal areas, identified previously by other experts and organizations, provided important bases for this work of Doğa.

The Northern Forests is a forest belt bridge stretching between Asia and Europe continents.

Northern Forests, which is an intercontinental forest belt bridge, is a forest ecosystem, located alongside a forest corridor of vital importance for both Turkey, for the region as well as for the world, it expands across over 1 million 500 thousand hectares. The geography of the Northern Forests has coasts to three seas (Black Sea, Marmara Sea and Aegean Sea) and two straits (Bosphorus and Çanakkale).



Geography of the Northern Forests; it is a union of ecosystems in which many sub-ecosystems of the diversity and richness that can be found and interact in a country geography such as dense forest, open field, wetland, dune, rocky, bush, scrub, canyon, cave, longoz, strait, sea, mountain.



Samanlı Mountains



Strandzha Forests

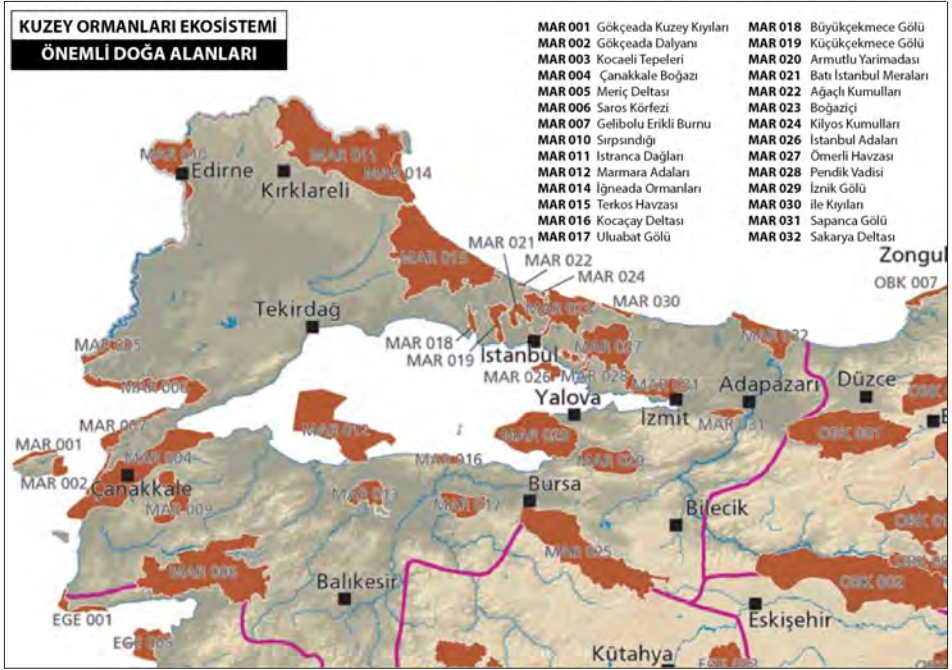
Northern Forests spread over an area of more than 1 million 500 thousand hectares.

According to the data of the General Directorate of Forestry; The forest assets of the provinces where the Northern Forests spread are 110 thousand hectares in Çanakkale (Gökçeada, Eceabat and Gelibolu), 114 thousand hectares in Edirne, 290 thousand hectares in Kırklareli, 103 thousand hectares in Tekirdağ, 250 thousand hectares in Istanbul, 146 thousand hectares in Kocaeli, 195 thousand hectares in Sakarya, 124 thousand hectares in Düzce, 47 thousand hectares in Yalova, in Bursa (Karacabey, Mudanya, Gemlik, Orhangazi, Iznik districts as well as the north of districts Osmangazi Yenişehir, Gürsu and Kestel) is 120 thousand hectares, and in Balıkesir (Erdek, Bandırma and Marmara districts) it is 130 thousand hectares.

There are 28 Key Biodiversity Areas (KBAs) that meet the criteria of sensitive and unique natural areas in the Northern Forests Geography, which has an extremely rich biological diversity.

Key Biodiversity Areas in the Northern Forests geography; North Shores of Gökçeada, Gökçeada Dalyan, Kocaeli Hills, Çanakkale Strait, Meriç Delta, Saros Bay, Gelibolu Erikli Cape, Serbsindigi, Strandzha Mountains, Marmara Islands, Igneada Forests, Terkos Basin, Kocacay Delta, Uluabat Lake, Büyük Çekmece Lake, Küçük Çekmece Lake , Armutlu Peninsula, West Istanbul Pastures, A°açılı Dunes, Bosphorus, Kilyos Dunes, Istanbul Islands, Ömerli Basin, Pendik Valley, Iznik Lake and its shores, Sapanca Lake, Sakarya Delta and Abant Mountains.

Although almost all of the Important Natural Areas mentioned above have been under significant destruction in the last 20 years, the species that meet the KBA criteria still exist to a large extent. Updating the Northern Forests KBAs is a scientific requirement. This will also make an important contribution to the defense activities carried out to stop the heavy destruction conditions on the geography.



There are 28 KBAs in the Northern Forests geography. Almost all of the KBAs have experienced serious declines in the species that meet the KBA criteria due to more than 30 threats and destruction factors that put the Northern Forests under pressure



Kilyos Dune



Ballıkaya Canyon



Ballıkayalar Canyon is a valley with a length of 40–80 m and a length of approximately 2 km. Ballıkaya Stream formed the valley. Middle Triassic limestones were processed by rivers in 200 million years, forming a canyon valley. Canyon valley, waterfall, giant boilers, caves, cavities, vegetation form the main values of the ecosystem. Its size is 6.029.73 decares. The natural vegetation consists of bushes, coppice oaks, pseudomaquis and maquis. It is the place where rock climbing sport started in Turkey. Climbing routes were first opened in the 1970s..



Floodplain Forests of Northern Forests

Floodplain forests, which is a kind of forest ecosystem, is also defined as 'floodplain'. These are special regions that are formed where the stream accumulates as a result of the accumulation of sand brought by the streams flowing towards the sea, forming a barrier on the shore and closing the mouth of the stream. In the floodplain forests that are flooded in winter and spring, the water is

partially drawdown in summer and autumn. Floodplain forestland ecosystems, which are similar to tropical forests, lose their Floodplain forests ecosystem characteristics in a short time when the ground water levels decrease. The most basic condition for the continuity of this ecosystem is the continuous existence of abundant water.



İğneada Floodplain Forest



Iğneada Floodplain forests are located on the Black Sea coastline of the Northern Forests, in Kırklareli - Iğneada. In the spring - winter season, when the amount of precipitation is high, the bottom is covered with water. The southern part of the Floodplain Forests National Park consists of Saka Lake, Deniz Lake, Hamam Lake, Pedina Lake, Mert Lake and the reeds, floodplain

forests and deciduous forests around these lakes; The northern part of the National Park consists of Erikli Lake and the reeds around it and the floodplain forests surrounding this region.

Mert Lake / Kırklareli





Karacabey Floodplain Forests in Bursa is the largest of the 3 large floodplain forests in Turkey. There are mainly ash, willow and alder in the floodplain forests. The floodplain forest is home to 217 bird species, insect families, wild horses and

fish species. Bird species, including endangered species such as white pelican, black stork, flamingo and swan, breed in the delta.





Acarlar Floodplain Forest is a single piece floodplain forest located between Karasu and Kaynarca districts in the north of Sakarya. Some endemic plant and animal species live in the floodplain forest. It is especially the breeding and wintering ground of migratory birds. Ash, alder, beech and elm species are common in the forest area. Catfish, rudd, carp, rabbit, fox, wild boar, weasel, falcon and squirrel live in the floodplain. As an endemic species in our country, the water violet is only found in Lake Acarlar. In addition, a rare tulip species called *Leucojum aestivum* is also found in Acarlar Lake.



Acarlar Floodplain Forest



Northern Forests Flora

Northern Forests; It is located in the European Forest Belt which is vital for both Turkey and the World, consists of humid and broad-leaved trees of great importance, and serves as an important corridor between Asia and Europe.

The Northern Forests are located at the intersection of three different climatic-flora belts (Europe-Siberian, Mediterranean and Iran-Turanian) in Turkey due to its location.

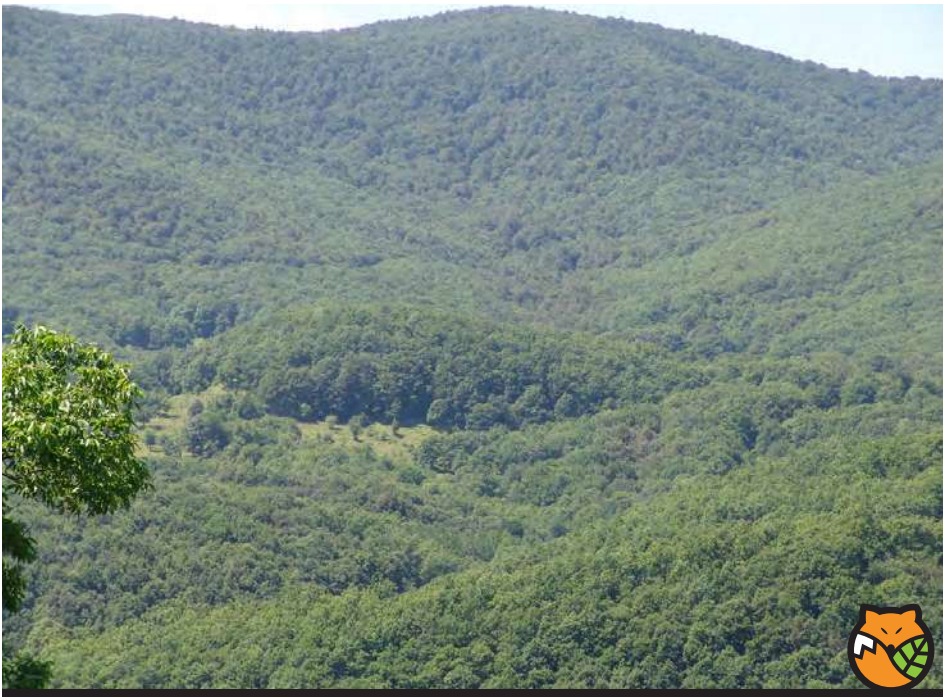
For this reason, the northern regions, which are under the influence of the Black Sea climate, are dominated by humid-temperate forests formed by broad-leaved trees such as oak, beech, hornbeam and elm.

There is a distinct willow tree and alder hegemony in stream vegetations. The northern forests, especially around the Marmara region, interact with the Mediterranean climate and flora to a large extent and in places carry the Iranian-Turanian influences. In the southern parts, where the effect of the Mediterranean climate begins to be seen, there are maquis vegetation, and coniferous forests of especially turkish pines.

There are black pine forests in the high mountain areas in the south of Marmara. In the southeastern parts of the Northern Forests, there are cold-resistant eastern spruce and Black Sea fir trees in a narrower area. In the anthropogenic forest areas in the south of Istrancalar, there is a density of oak trees in the form of shrubs which are resistant to heat and cold by the effect of the continental climate.

As we mentioned above, the Northern Forests have more plant species than many countries in the world in terms of species diversity, as they are located at the intersection of three climate zones. There are about 3000 plant species that have been identified so far, and this number leaves countries such as England, Poland and the Netherlands behind in species diversity. There are 2200 plant species in Istanbul alone.

The high flora diversity is also due to the fact that the Northern Forests are on the migration route of the plants. However, endemism rates in the region are lower than the national average. Turkey's endemism rate is 34%, while the endemism in the Northern Forests is 2%. The density of endemism in the Northern Forests is especially concentrated in the regions with dune ecosystems and open rocky areas, especially in the Bosphorus region.



Strandzha Forests



There are four types of ecosystems in the Northern Forests.

- 1- Dense, closed (Beech, Oak, Hornbeam, Redwood, etc.) forest ecosystems, which are destroyed day by day in the Northern Regions,
- 2- Aquatic ecosystems formed by the Longozlar and lake and stream vegetations, especially in the northern regions of Istrancalar and Sakarya,
- 3- Coastal dune ecosystems with a density of endemism, mostly located in the Black Sea coasts of Istanbul



Belgrad Forest



Beech / Belgrad Forest



4- Maquis and open field ecosystems with dense herbaceous plants and shrubs

Due to these ecosystems, the Northern Forests are home to many Key Biodiversity Area (KBA), Important Plant Areas/ Key Botanical Sites and Important Bird Areas (IBA) as a result of the studies carried out by national and international institutions and organizations and scientists.



Acarlar Floodplain Forest



Northern Forests Fauna

The Northern Forests are home to countless wild animals of various kinds.

The Northern Forests is the habitat of 48 mammals, 350 birds, 350 fish and 45 reptile-frog species and also one of the most important bird migration routes in the world.

Northern Forests have been trying to preserve their existence in a geography that has been under heavy destruction for many years. Wild animals such as the brown bear, which is at the top of the food chain, the wild boar, which is the cleaner of the forests, and the endangered wolf, whose existence is important in terms of the food chain, still live.

The fact that Northern Forests are still widespread in an area larger than 1.5 million hectares is one of the most important reasons for fauna species richness.

The wilds of the Northern Forests are the most basic link to the life cycle, but the most fragile link affected by continued destruction.

Wild areas are becoming more fragmented and narrowed day by day. Wildlife protection development areas are not large enough to protect wildlife. Wild areas are transformed into recreation areas by both de facto and 'legal' ways.



Red Deer



Wolf

Mammals

48 species of mammals at the top of the food chain live in the Northern Forests. Mammals found in this area are:

European Wildcat, Wild Boar, European Rabbit, Black-tailed Jackrabbit, Roe Deer, Pine Marten, Wolf, Badger, Fox, Weasel, Otter, Marbled Polecat, Long-eared Bat, Rhinolophus, Long-fingered Bat, Common Pipistrelle, Greater Noctule Bat, Mole, Marmot Squirrel, Mouse-tailed Dormouse

European Ground Squirrels, Marmot Squirrel, Coypu, Hedgehog, Badger, Grizzly Bear, Mouse, Gray Dwarf Hamster, Striped Field Mouse, Bicolored Shrew, Lesser White-toothed Shrew, Lesser Mole-rat, Black Rat, The Brown Rat, Wagner's Gerbil, Mus.



Otter



Roe Deer



Grizzly Bear



Badger



European Rabbit



There are also marine mammals living in the fresh waters and seas of the Northern Forests geography. . These are: Delphinus, Tursiops Truncatus, Harbor Porpoise, Mediterranean monk seal and shark.

In the study of the Turkish Marine Research Foundation (TÜDAV), which lasted for 5 days and covered an area of 600 kilometers in July 2019, 38 dolphin and harbor porpoise observations were recorded in our 'inland sea', the Marmara Sea.

According to the research conducted by the Underwater Research Association - Mediterranean Monk Seal Research Group (SAD-AFAG) in 2019, it is estimated that the coasts of the Marmara Sea are still a habitat for Mediterranean monk seals. And despite all the construction and human pressure 5-10 Mediterranean monk seals continue to live in the region.



Mediterranean Monk Seal



This geography is also one of the most important bird and fish migration routes in the world

Approximately 600 thousand storks use the Northern Forests Geography to migrate twice a year.

Northern Forests are on the migration route of 250 thousand raptors. In this geography, egyptian vulture, lesser spotted eagle, common buzzard, european honey buzzard, black kite, eurasian sparrowhawk, levant

sparrowhawk and short-toed snake eagle also stop over Turkey by following this migration route.

At the same time, two straits (Istanbul and Çanakkale straits) and three seas (Black Sea, Marmara, Aegean seas) in the Northern Forests geography also host fish migration in spring and autumn. With this feature, the Northern Forests are one of the rare forest ecosystems through which the sea passes.





Birds

350 bird species live in the Northern Forests. Some of the bird species are:

White-tailed Eagle, European Green Woodpecker, Lesser Spotted Eagle, Owl, Eurasian Hoopoe, Black Stork, Kingfisher, Black Woodpecker, Euroasian Scops Owl, Ferruginous Duck, Little Bittern, Squacco Heron, Red-breasted Goose, Greater Spotted

Eagle, Black Stork, Collared Pratincole, Kentish Plover, Nycticorax, Squacco Heron, Little Egret, Grey Heron, Swan, Mallard, Garganey, Red-crested Pochard, Pochard, Euroasian Coot, Oystercatcher, Common Tern, European Nightjar, Woodlark.

Marsh Tit





Green Frog

Fishes

Approximately 350 fish species live in the Northern Forests, together with the sea and fresh water. Some examples of these are:

Sturgeon, Carp, Pearl Fish, Sea Needle,
Turbot.

Reptiles

45 frog and reptile species live in the Northern Forests geography. Examples of these types are:

Hermann's Tortoise, Glass Lizard, Southern Banded Newt, Southern Crested Newt, Italian Wall Lizard, Elaphe Longissima, Tree Frog.

Insects

Insect species found in the Northern Forests are divided into butterflies, ants and bees.

Numerous insect species live in this geography.

There are at least 160 species of butterflies in the Northern Forests. Some of the butterfly species living in this area are as follows:

Freyer's Purple Emperor, Balkan Pierrot, Map, Polyommatus Anteros, Kretania Sephirus/Plebejus Sephirus, Peacock Butterfly, Large Tortoiseshell/Blackleg Tortoiseshell



Catfish



Northern Forests and Climate Crisis

In addition to the socio-economic and political effects (such as the decrease in water resources, food shortage, energy shortage, drought, desertification, migration) of the global warming and global climate change, which have become more evident especially since the 1980s,

the deterioration of the natural landscape texture also negatively affects the systems such as ecosystems, species and gene resources which are the basic parts of biological diversity. In addition to the socio-economic and political effects (such as the decrease in water resources, food shortage,



energy shortage, drought, desertification, migration) of the global warming and global climate change, which have become more evident especially since the 1980s, the deterioration of the natural landscape texture also negatively affects the systems such as ecosystems, species and gene resources which are the basic parts of biological diversity. Today, it is more correct to consider this complex process, which is based on human-induced activities, which is difficult or even impossible to recycle, "global warming and global climate change", as a 'climate crisis'.

In the last 40 years, the effect of climate change has been seen intensely in terrestrial ecosystems. Plant species, which are the benchmark of terrestrial ecosystems, can only reproduce and grow successfully under a certain set of climatic conditions. If these conditions change, these species will either adapt or have to migrate. The reduction in plant species richness limits all biodiversity, which can lead to reduced ecosystem stability.



Düzce, Akçakoca, Esmahanım Village



Ömerli Dam, İstanbul



In addition, changes in plant species distribution and regional vegetation composition may have some consequences on the climate system. At high latitudes, for example, the displacement of shrub tundra vegetation by trees can have a noticeable effect on the radiation balance. This situation may increase the regional and global climate crisis.

The climate crisis is predicted to exacerbate species extinctions, particularly plant species with limited climate and habitat requirements and limited migration capabilities. Extreme drought will endanger the diversity of living things, both in terms of habitat and species, with some events such as loss of the natural structure of the soil, salinization and barrenness. The heavy rains that will follow the extreme drought can accelerate virus mutations. This may result in the re-emergence and spread of many rare or completely absent diseases. However, the relief of night and winter cold, which causes the death of insect eggs, brings with it many problems.

The forest ecosystem is extremely important in the fight against the climate crisis. It has a forest climate regulatory effect; forests filter dust particles in the air, release oxygen into the atmosphere, contribute to the reduction of the greenhouse effect and the regularity of groundwater. Trees also make the surrounding air more humid and cooler with the water they release through their leaves.



The Northern Forests are an extremely important ecosystem with its impact on the geography and, of course, its global impact owing to the presence of forests. However, over the years, as a result of the destruction of the northern forests, there has been a decrease in forest areas, damage to the ecosystem, habitat fragmentation, decrease in underground and surface waters, and these destructions have weakened this geography in the fight against the climate crisis.

At this point, the geography of the Northern Forests is faced with the problems of the climate crisis; such as extreme weather events, forest fires, the weakness of the forest against invasive species, the risks of decreasing biodiversity, the uncertainty of the migration of species, and drought.





Northern Forests Threat Destruction Elements

Northern Forests; After the 1950s, as a result of the import substitution industry and mechanization policies of the future in agriculture, it became one of the geographies where intensive population movements, defined as 'migration from rural to urban', were experienced.

There is no housing stock and infrastructure that can meet the labor migration coming to the city to work in industrial activities concentrated in

Istanbul and its surroundings. The new and young labor force accumulating in Istanbul tried to 'solve' the need for shelter by constructing illegal/unhealthy structures on lands, most of which belong to the public, such as the treasury/foundation/municipality mostly in the Northern Forests geography.

This lawlessness was first ignored and encouraged by many practices and amnesty laws enacted by construction in



Maslak, İstanbul



the following years, due to reasons such as land ownership in İstanbul and the weak capital on the assembly industry needed cheap labor.

'Distorted urbanization', which means the uncontrolled, unplanned growth of urban space in points, has been one of the first threat/destruction elements against the Northern Forests. The intense migration waves that started from the Anatolian countryside towards İstanbul and the

region caused the open areas such as agricultural lands, meadows and pastures in the Northern Forests geography to turn into illegal settlement areas, gradually becoming illegal settlement areas. İstanbul started to grow rapidly on the west-east axis, then towards the north in an unplanned/ uncontrolled way.

The new liberal urbanization policies, which were put into practice especially after the 80s, on the one hand made the forest open





to building plunder, on the other hand, aimed at transferring the forested areas occupied by illegal construction in favor of capital.

Authorities, relevant ministries and local administrations that condoned the destruction/construction of forest areas have gradually become implementers of this and this has led to the emergence of 'new' settlements that started to grow as spots in the Northern Forests.

The most irregular forms of this destruction factor, which causes habitat fragmentation, which is the biggest threat to the forest ecosystem, continue today.

The titles determined within the scope of the Northern Forests Threat and Destruction Report; It covers all of the current problems stated in the focus group meetings held within the scope of the project and the threats and destruction factors that stand out in the monitoring study carried out



Istanbul Alibey Dam, Mağlova Aqueduct



within the Northern Forests Research Association. All projects that divide and disintegrate the Northern Forests, disrupt the integrity of the ecosystem and harm wildlife are threatening/ destructive. Projects announced/ announced to be built are in the nature of threats, projects that have been started/completed and put into operation are in the nature of destruction. As a result of the focus

group meetings and researches on the elements that threaten/destroy the Northern Forests, it has been seen that the region is under intense threat and destruction.



Quarries in Istanbul Belgrad Forest



In addition, as seen in the monitoring studies carried out within the scope of the Northern Forests Monitoring Report carried out by the Northern Forests Research Association, these threats/destruction elements are 30 in total and are listed as follows:

1. Mega Rent-Seeking Projects (5 units)

- 1.1. Bridge and Northern Marmara Motorway
- 1.2. Third Airport and complementary transportation projects (Metro line etc.)
- 1.3. Channel Istanbul

- 1.4. Çanakkale Bridge
- 1.5. Osmangazi Bridge and Gebze-Orhangazi-Izmir Highway

2. Power Plants (5 units)

- 2.1. thermal power plants
- 2.2. nuclear power plant
- 2.3. Wind Power Plants (WPP)
- 2.4. Geothermic Power Plants (JES)
- 2.5. Hydroelectric Power Plants (HEPP)



Istanbul Sultangazi District, Forest fire in Cebeci stone quarries



3. Dams
4. Mining Activities
5. Industrial Activities
6. Garbage Facilities, Excavation Dump Sites
7. Coastal and Marine Destruction
8. Forest Fire
9. Tourism Activities
10. Water Companies
11. Law and regulation changes
12. Hunting Activities and Wildlife Disposal
13. Construction and Construction Activities
14. Opening of Agricultural Fields to Construction
15. Infrastructure Activities
16. Russian Natural Gas Line Project 'Turkish Stream'
17. Forest Industry
18. Climate Crisis
19. Lost Forest Areas - Loss of Habitat
20. Abandonment of Stray Animals
21. Treasure Migration-induced habitat fragmentation



Promenade destruction in Istanbul Belgrad Forest



Northern Forests Cultural Historical Heritage

What is Cultural/Historical Heritage?

Cultural heritage is all of the tangible and intangible values that societies have accumulated over the centuries.

Societies, whose members remind of a common past, strengthen their unity and solidarity, and ensure the continuity of their traditions and diversity.

Why Protect?

- Extending from the past to the present,
- Without the property of persons,
- Constantly changing values,
- A reflection of their beliefs, knowledge and traditions,
- The sum of tangible and intangible cultural values created by previous generations and passed on from generation to generation.



Sislioba Castle, Demirköy, Kırklareli



How to Protect?

Individuals should be aware of their environment.

While examining his environment, he should realize the importance of values from the past.

Protecting it should be a government policy.

Content that will increase cultural heritage awareness should be added to the education curriculum.

International Conventions must be followed in the protection of all cultural heritage sites as well as those protected by international conventions.



Volçan Bridge, Demirköy, Kırklareli



Church of St. Nicholas, Vize Kırklareli



Taraklı, Sakarya



Kirazlı Water Dam, Belgrad Forest, İstanbul



Yoros Castle, Anadolu Kavağı, İstanbul

Cultural Heritage sites are the common heritage of humanity.

Cultural / Historic heritage of the geography of the north forests

There are more than 300 cultural/historical/natural heritage cultural assets in the Northern Forests Geography.

In the Northern Forests;

- Inns
- Bathrooms
- Mounds
- Caravanserais
- Canyons
- Bridges
- Lighthouses
- Foundries
- Monasteries
- Temples
- Historic Walls
- Historical Villages
- Basilicas
- Necropolises
- Tumuli
- Rock Tombs



Incegiz Caves Areas, Çatalca, İstanbul



Kurşunlugerme Aqueduct, Çatalca, İstanbul



- Castles
- Ancient Settlements
- Ancient Ports
- Historic Waterways
- Amphoras
- Ancient Theaters
- Mosques

These are some examples and different types of these cultural assets.

The geography of the Northern Forests contains hundreds of cultural assets that have hosted different civilizations for centuries and shed light on history.

The periods in which these civilizations lived are paleolithic age, early and early bronze age, medieval, early iron age, late neolithic age, pre-Christian and post-Christian periods.



Kralkızı Basilica, Enez, Edirne



Civilizations living in this geography; Ancient Greece, Ancient Rome, Thrace, Hellenistic, Roman, Genoese, Byzantine, Greek, Melen, Mysia, Seljuk and Ottoman Empire. Although most of the cultural assets were built by the people living in this geography, there are also natural heritage items formed as a result of natural events.

Dupnisa Cave is a cave formed after natural events and is a natural and cultural heritage item.



1,800-year-old aqueducts built to meet the water needs of Izmir during the Roman period



Northern Forests and Advocacy

What is Defender?

Defender is the attempt of citizens, NGOs to influence any public policy for a common interest.

1. It can also be defined as the process of using information strategically to change laws or policies in favor of nature and society by influencing decision makers.
2. Defender aims to solicit or contribute to policy or law changes. (Defender Guide for NGOs / Yiğit Aksakoğlu)

Defender is an organized process that affects decision makers. Defender can include the formulation, change, implementation and enforcement of policies.

“Defender” is the process of ensuring that the rights of communities are respected and implemented.

Anyone can initiate defender action. The more organized and structured this action is, the higher the chance of achieving tangible results.

It is possible to define defender as a set of actions aimed at concretely influencing the decision-making process. (Defender Guide / TEMA- Turkish Foundation for Combating Erosion, Forestation and Conservation of Natural Assets)



Güngörmez Village, Saray, Tekirdağ



Northern Forests advocacy

There are hundreds of human settlements in the Northern Forests Geography, from the smallest village to the giant metropolises where millions of people live.

Especially in the last ten years, the violence of looting, which has turned into a nature massacre and forest destruction, has brought about the formation and strengthening of the tendency of the people living in the region to defend/resist nature and their habitats.

Every plundering project carried out by destroying the Northern Forests ecosystem causes the rapid depletion / extinction of the natural resources of the region. The local people, who are in and around the forest and try to maintain their traditional lifestyle, constitute the most severe and directly affected part of this destruction. Villagers, especially peasant women, are the first to react to demolition projects and start advocating.

The forest is their home where they have lived for hundreds of years, their bread, stream water, and the wild is their family. In the area of influence of the Northern Forests Geography and in cities built on scarce resources, the ecological crisis caused by forest destruction is experienced more openly and harshly than in the past, with the effect of global disasters such as climate crisis, so the defense of the countryside is much more rewarding in the cities.





Almost every village in the Northern Forests Geography is under threat or destruction by hundreds of projects of more than thirty species that have tended to destroy the forest. Dozens of Northern Forests villages actually started organized defense activities, did not allow some projects to be carried out, some of them were stopped after they started, and some of them are still struggling.

In every town or city in the Northern Forests Geography, defense support activities are carried out in the nearby countryside, and city-centered mega projects that will fragment/destroy the forest ecosystem are tried to be retarded and stopped. The legal struggle ground of the defense is mostly created in cities, and local/national media channels are tried to be used effectively in order to increase the public pressure on decision makers.





Northern Forests Defense

Defense activities in the Northern Forests Geography became an organized, united, regular, effective and solidarist power with the Northern Forests Defense movement created in 2013. Over the years, the defense gradually spread all over the geography and started to support the resistance tendencies that started spontaneously in dozens of villages and to unite them into a defense network.

NFD has attempted to organize an defender line that will never lose hope and love for nature in the face of an authoritarian regime and unruly capital rampage that has engaged in an unprecedented forest destruction, and has succeeded in achieving this to a certain extent.

The NFD movement has also become a ground of struggle where many local and regional defender institutions, as well as individual citizens, combine their experience, power and opportunities





Northern Forests Defense; Forest existence of Northern Marmara (Thrace and Anatolia); It has become a collective union of volunteer citizens working to protect the forest as a natural, historical and culturally holistic ecosystem, to defend the forest against the threats and destruction elements on it, and to ensure the reforestation of the occupied/destroyed areas, and it has gradually turned into an organized and social defender movement.

With the defense gaining experience and the organization of long-term resistance/ campaign and defense processes, many destruction attempts planned both near the city and around the village were stopped at the project stage or shortly after they started.

Kirazlıyayla Village, Yenişehir, Bursa



Çatalca, İstanbul



The fact that the Northern Forests Defense took all its decisions in forums where direct democracy could be applied protected the movement against erroneous tendencies such as hierarchy, bureaucracy and clique and ensured the continuity of self-management, which enabled the internalization of the collective will.

Every action, every activity was organized with a collective work, and various working groups were formed for more concentrated and regular labor-intensive activities. A form of movement that goes beyond protest with mass and direct actions has been adopted, and efforts have been made to develop relations of solidarity and fellowship with those who defend nature and life both in the country and around the world.



Demirköy, Kırklareli



Kuzey Ormanları Araştırma Derneği