

ARMENIA

Political Administrative Region (marz): Gegharkunik

Location: Gegharkunik is situated in the East of the territory of the Republic of Armenia, surrounding the Lake Sevan. It borders RA Lori and Tavush marzes from the North, from the East it borders the state border of Azerbaijan, from the South – RA Vayots Dzor marz, from South-West – RA Ararat marz and from the West – RA Kotayk marz. The longest extension of the marz from the North-West to the South-East comprised 115 km, from the West to the East - 85 km, the deepest landslide is the canyon of the Getik river (village of Dsoravank, 1325 m), the highest peak – Ajdahak mountain (3598 m). Yerevan-Sevan-Dilijan highway of republican importance runs through the territory of the marz. “South-North” highway passing through the mountain of Selim is being constructed.

Total Area: 5,348 km², Gegharkunik is the largest province in Armenia by area. However, approximately 1,278 km² of its territory is covered by Lake Sevan.

Demographics: Total population – 240.1 ths. (7.4% of the total population of Armenia) of which 160.6 ths. are rural population and 79.5 ths. urban. There are 5 towns and 87 rural communities.

Climate

The climate of Gegharkunik is mild mountainous. The winter is cold, snowy. The summer is warm, few clouds, comparatively humid weather. The Sevan Lake mitigates the winter frost and summer heat. Because of the lake, the average temperature in January is almost the same as in Yerevan. Precipitation is not abundant, 400-450mm on the lake surface, up to 1000 in the mountains.

Water resources

The Lake Sevan (1260 km², is 1898m above sea level) is located in RA Gegharkunik marz, which is of particular importance not only for the marz but for the republic as well. It is the largest pool of fresh water of the Southern Caucasus. The lake has vital influence not only on balance of environment protection but on economy of the whole marz as well. Other lakes are comparatively small lakes of crater lakes of Ajdahak and Aghmaghani, - up to 50 m in diameter and at a depth of 15 m.

The longest **rivers** Gavaraget (47 km) and Masrik (45 km) are the longest rivers. Masrik is of great importance, since its a spawning place for such endemic species as Gegharkunik trout (*Salmo ischchan gegarkuni*), Sevan koghak (*Capoeta capoeta sevangi*) and Sevan beghlu (*Barbus geokschaikus*). Besides, the young fish of the aforementioned species also live in these rivers till 1 year of age. This period is very important for the future survival of the species. The Sevan trout (*Salmo ischchan*) and Sevan beghlu are included in the Red Book of Armenia.

Specially Protected Areas

“Sevan” national park

“Sevan” national park was established to protect Lake Sevan, is located in the territory of the marz (founded in 1978). It occupies the territories of the Lake Sevan comprising the bed of intermontane concavity of Sevan and those freed from its bed. The surface area comprises 150.1 ths. ha, 24.9 ths. ha of which are lakeside land territories. It is surrounded with the slopes of mountain chains of Areguni, Geghama, Vardenis, Pambak and Sevan. The species of 1600 plants and 330 animals are preserved here. The park is divided into 3 zones: a reserve, a recreation zone and a zone for economic use.

“Akhnabad Yew Grove” State Reservation

“Akhnabad Yew Grove” State Reservation was established in 1958. It is located on Mt. Tsaghkot of the Miapor mountain range near Aghavnavank. The main species of the reservation is yew (*taxus baccata* L.). On the territory of the reservation yew grows in the mixed forest (beech, oak, maple etc). 300-400 year, 25m and 70-90cm trunk diameter can be found there.

“Getik” State Reservation

Getik State Reservation was established in 1971. Main protected objects are forest fauna.

“Juniper Forest” State Reservation

Juniper Forest State Reservation was established in 1958. Main protected object is relict juniper, as well as other numerous species.

Fauna

Scientific knowledge about the **mammals** of the Sevan basin is quite poor and fragmental. Wolf, jackal, fox, marten, cat, hare, small rodents are usually mentioned.

Sevan lake and its vicinities are rich in **avifauna**. Up to 267 bird species are registered in Sevan Basin. The existing avifauna can be grouped into *podicipediformes*, *pelecaniformes*, *pelecaniformes*, *phoenicopteriformes*, *falconiformes*, *anseriformes*, *galliformes*, *gruiformes*, *charadriiformes*, *columbiformes*, *cuculiformes*, *strigiformes*, *caprimulgiformes*, *apodiformes*, *coraciiformes*, *piciformes*, *passeriformes*. 39 species are included in the Red Book of Armenia. There is also an endemic species Armenian gull (*larus armenicus*).

In the Masrik river valley, the following species of **reptiles** can be met: *Bufo viridis Laurenti*, *Hyla arborea schelkownikowi*, *Rana ridibunda*, *Rana macrocnemis*, *Laudakia caucasia*, *Anguis Fragilis*, *Eremias arguta transcaucasica*, *Lacerta agilis brevicaudata*, *Lacerta strigata*, *Parvilacerta parva*, *Darevskia unsexualis*, *Darevskia valentini*, *Platiceps najadum*, *Hammerhois ravergeri*, *Coronella austriaca*, *Eirenis punctatolineatus*, *Natrix natrix*, *Natrix tessellata*, *Vipera (Pelias) eriwanensis*.

On the whole territory of Gegharkunik there are 55 groups of **invertebrates**, mainly arthropoda, mollusks, crustacea, arachnida, etc. There are a few dozens of endemic species, of which 44 coleoptera, 2 lepidoptera, 2 orthoptera, 2 mollusks. There is no Red Book in Armenia for the invertebrates. In the Red Book of the USSR, there were 12 species of arthropoda, of which 6 butterflies, 5 hymenoptera and 1 cricket. In the MCOP Red List, there are 4 invertebrate species, inhabiting Sevan Basin, one of which is included in the list of Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention).

Flora

The basin of Lake Sevan is a crossroad for mezophile and Armenian-Iranian xerophile flora belts. In the territory of Sevan National Park 1145 species of vascular plants can be met, in the protection belt - 1587 species. The flora of the park is presented by 28 species of trees, 42 species of bushes, 866 perennial herbs and 307 species of annual and biennial plants. The territory of Sevan National Park and its protection belt, 23 plants, endemic for Armenia, can be met, of which 13 are endemic for Sevan floristic area. Only on the territory of Sevan National Park 3 Armenian endemic and 5 Sevan basin endemic plant species can be met. 17 species are included in the Red Book of Armenia (in the protection belt there are 48). In the territory of Sevan National Park and its protection belt, about 60 herbs can be used for officinal purposes. More than 100 are edible. More than 90% of natural forests of

the marz are situated in Tchambarak area.

Economy

In 2007 the share of economy main branches of RA Gegharkunik marz in total volume of correspondent branches of the republic comprised

industry	1.3 %,
agriculture	14.2 %,
construction	0.8 %,
retail trade	1.3 %,
services	0.8 %.

The leading branch of economy of the marz is agriculture, particularly production of grain, potato, vegetable and animal husbandry product. The marz of Gegharkunik is the main supplier of fresh fish to the population of the republic.

Mining industry is the main trend of industry of the marz. Manufacturing is also of great importance, in which the following branches of industry have bigger share: machinery, building materials and food industry.

Environmental data in figures (as of 2007)

	In Gegharkunik	Total in Armenia
Emissions from stationary sources (t)	36.6	34239.1
Emissions (per inhabitant, kg)	0.2	10.6
per square km, kg	9.0	1202.1
t per organization	3.1	40.8
Dust emissions (t)	19.7	2916.5
Total water consumption mln. cubic metre	47.0	2145.2
Losses during transit displacement mln. cubic metre	11.0	866.9
Waste water discharge	7.3	294.5
Quantitative indicators of formed wastes (per inhabitant, kg)	0.4	4136.4
per square km, kg	20.7	468567.6
per organization, t	7.7	16537.8
Payments for environmental protection and use of natural resources (payment, mln. drams)	29.5	4117.2
payment per inhabitant, dram/person	123.1	1272.6
per organization, ths. drams	90.3	1384.3

Current expenditures for environmental protection (mln. drams)	13.6	2945.8
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Main environmental concerns

Main environmental concerns include issues of Lake Sevan (reduced water level, increased eutrophication, detrimental impact of human activity on the biodiversity of the lake), wastewater treatment as well as mining activities.

Environmental Organizations

Gavar city

“Barekamutyun” National minorities and women council of Gegharquniq region NGO
 (0264) 2 36 58
 Siranush Manukyan

“Russian community of Gavar”
 (0264) 2 36 58
 Siranush Manukyan

Armenian Red Cross Gegharquniq region branch
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 (091) 65 58 94
 Norayr Mukhsyan,
 Khachik Maregasparyan

“Bari huys” social, support in health protection of children with special needs” NGO
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 (093) 80 57 75; (0264) 6 11 14
 Sargsyan Mnacakan

“Geghama” young regional association NGO
geta@freenet.am
 (093) 53 06 98
 Vahan Davtyan

“Azhdahak” Journalists' association branch in Gavar
dvahagn@yahoo.com
 (093) 31 65 17; (0264) 2 16 96
 Vahagn Dabaghyan (also member of Aarhus council)

A.D.Sakharov Armenian Human Rights Center Gegharquniq branch office
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Lusine Toplaghacyan

“Blejan” environmental, social, business support NGO

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Lianna Asoyan

“Gavar progressive naturalists union”

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Martuni city

Martuni women community council

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Anahit Gevorgyan

“Erkir Molorak” human and environmental advocacy support / legal support NGO

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Vardan Sirakanyan

Martuni “Tatev” NGO

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Tatev Grigoryan

Sevan City

“Kaputachya Sevan” NGO

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Meruzhan Vardanyan

Tshambarak city

“Areguni” NGO

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Gayane Khachatryan

Vardenis city

“Dzgtum” NGO of Gegharquniq region Vardenis city

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Vahram Aghabekyan

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Zangak

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E-mail: zangak@miom.am

Mangasar

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STV1

Director: Suren Barseghian

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