

Additional information

Ecosystem Services

Social and cultural values:

The Ramsar site itself is widely used for hunting (mainly waterfowl, coypu), fishing (mainly crusian carp), reed harvesting (mainly for constructions) and in less extend cattle grazing.

The surroundings of the Ramsar site have exclusive cultural, archaeological, architectural, religious and historical values.

First settlements on this area are dated back to VIII millenium BC. In the neighborhood of Khor Virap Marsh on the 9 hills a new capital of Armenia Artashat was founded by king Artashes I in 166 BC. For the safety purposes it was located on the junction of Arax and Metsamor rivers. Romans called Artashat "Armenian Kartagen" for its fortifications. Artashat population exceeded 100 thousands. Many temples were built in the city, as well as the theatre. Ararat was destroyed in 58 AC by the Romans. However, it continued to stay Armenia's cultural and political center in the subsequent centuries. The ruins of Artashat were intensively excavated during the Soviet Period. The excavations renewed during the last decade.

Built at the site of the ruins of ancient capital Artashat, Khor Virap Monastery is significant because it is where Saint Gregory the Illuminator (the patron-saint of Armenia) was imprisoned in a deep dungeon for 13 years by the then pagan King Trdat III. After the King released Saint Gregory from the dungeon, Saint Gregory healed the King and converted him to Christianity in 301 AD, making Armenia the first country to adopt Christianity as its state religion. Currently Khor Virap is one of the most popular destinations in Armenia.

Local inhabitants use the neighboring land for vineyards, orchards, and crops.

Current recreation and tourism:

No; however, plans are to develop and implement various tourist activities together with «Khosrov Forest Reserve» SNCO and the community of Village Poqr Vedi with support of Dutch-Armenia Wetland Trust Fund and GEF Small Grants Programme.