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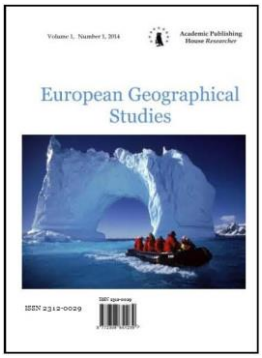

Fauna and Flora Biodiversity in Saros Bay

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Abstract

As of 21st century, our world became globalized and the consumption of the world resources was constantly increased. Over excessive consumption of the natural resource also brings different type of environmental problem with it. Nowadays, the people are moving from more demolished places to less corrupted places, in terms of recreational activities. But, forcing the limitation of those boundaries will reduce the size and amount of the recreational fields. As a result of that, the governments of many countries take some precaution in order to protect the fields with rich biodiversity, flora and fauna. These regions those intended to be protected called “SEPA – Saros Bay Environmental Protection Area”.

The diversity and richness of fauna and flora in terms of Turkey world constitutes an important part of the ecosystem. Approximately 12,000 species of flowering plants known to grow in the European continent, while in Turkey the number is around 10,000, 3 thousand of them are endemic, so swoop in and other countries of the world in Turkey. In addition, there is non-cultivated, plants are unique to Turkey 2.866 km 1.134 km² marine area with a coastline of Turkey and under the protection of the Mediterranean holds in the first place. Saros Bay, which is one of 16 special environmental protection area in Turkey, harbors its rich flora and fauna with “a northern version of the sea” is known as. 209 species in the Bay marine plants, 108 species of fish, 2 species of marine mammals and 233 species have been identified in marine invertebrates the diversity of the marine ecosystem a total of 552. In studies on fish fauna in the Saros Bay, 3 of the 22 teams that belong to the class, belonging to 59 families are defined type 124. Among these, 28 species belonging to 15 families of cartilaginous, bony fish species belonging to 44 families of the 96. The number of species designated 107 Atlanta 124-Mediterranean, 12 cosmopolitan, 5 species are endemic to the Mediterranean basin, the number of. The variety of underwater life and crystal clear water attracting attention with its charm, welcomes 1 million visitors during the tourist season in bay. The diversity of shapes and a half in need, being an island, it had an effect on biodiversity. Bay marine and terrestrial biodiversity marine and terrestrial ecosystems created by the presence of ekotoon in much of has been effective.

Keywords: Saros Bay, fauna, flora, ecosystem, biodiversity.

1. Introduction

The fact that the biological diversity, and especially the floristic richness, of a country are vitally important is an accepted fact all over the world today. When considering a region as being biologically rich or poor, it is based on the fact that the variety of fauna and flora species in the

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region is very large or small (Işık, 2000). We need to know their definitions. While fauna is all the animals that live in a region, flora is all the plants that grow in a region. Located in the temperate zone, Turkey is notable for its different properties from many countries around it in terms of its diversity of plants. The number of plant species spreading in Turkey is close to the number of plant species spreading throughout Europe. With the addition of the discoveries made in recent years, it has become clear that Turkey has about 12,000 plant taxon (at the species, subspecies or variety level), of which 3,000 are endemic (Davis et al., 1988; Ekim, 2005; Özhatay and Kültür, 2006). It is one of the richest countries of Europe in terms of endemic species diversity with an endemism rate of 34.4 % (Özhatay, et al., 2009). This property of Turkey is due to the diversity of geographical factors. Numerous geographical factors such as changes in climate characteristics resulting in short distances, variations arising from morphological characteristics, differences of soil types also lead to differentiation and species diversification of vegetation formations (Demir, 2013). It is known that about 60,000 animal species grow in Europe. It is estimated that animal species living in Turkey have a number of 40.000 species known at present, with no complete inventory yet, and that this number may reach the European figure or even pass in the future. We can compare these numbers with those of European countries and our neighbors, especially those given about plants. The richest European countries in terms of flora are the Mediterranean ones. The number of flowering plants in the flora of the richest ones (Greece, Italy, France, Spain, Old Yugoslavia) is between 5-6,000 species. The total number of endemic species in all European countries is around 2600. In Greece, which is the richest, this number is around 1000. If we think that there are 3,000 endemic plant species in Turkey, then we can see how fortunate we are in this regard. The richest Flora among our neighbors is in Iran and around 8,000. Since its flora is not fully written yet, the number of endemic species is not known exactly, but it is thought to be around 2.000 (Ekim, 2002). Moreover, the fact that Turkey was not been affected too much by the four glacial periods of the earth until 12 thousand years of the last 1 million years caused a very different variety in Turkey while thousands of species disappeared in Europe due to the fact that plants that fled, migrate in various ways from the ice coming down from Northern Europe to Mediterranean found Turkey as a kind of refuge area (Ocak, 2012).

The importance of biodiversity increasingly continues from past to present. Biodiversity has provided many services throughout history that human societies are materially, spiritually, culturally and aesthetically dependent. Biodiversity is the basis for the operation of the ecosystem (Harrop, Pritchard, 2011: 474). Similarly, according to the Convention on Biological Diversity, biodiversity is of value both on its own and in ecological, genetic, social, economic, scientific, cultural, recreational and aesthetic aspects. In addition, biodiversity is important for the maintenance and evolution of life support systems in the biosphere (Biodiversity-related Conventions, 1993").

In the 1960s, Turkey experienced intense environmental problems due to the rapid urbanization and industry, policies that are followed in the field of tourism without consideration of the environmental conditions, and incentives given. Coming to the point of destruction and demolition of nature and some biological riches by environmental problems encountered has resulted in the thought of preserving these places. Areas protected according to the data of the Ministry of Environment and Urbanization are; water, land or marine areas with conservation status governed by the relevant legislation in order to ensure the preservation and continuity of biodiversity, natural and related cultural resources.

Special Environmental Protection Area (SEPA): Areas that have an ecological importance in Turkey and world scale due to the obligation imposed to the party countries by the Convention for the Protection of the Mediterranean sea against Pollution (Barcelona), but that are protected by the Decree of the Council of Ministers because they are under risk of deterioration or destruction due to pressures such as industry, tourism and housing (Ministry of Environment and Urbanization, 2104).

There are a total of 16 special environmental protection areas in Köyceğiz/Dalyan, Fethiye/Göcek, Gökova Bay, Patara, Göksu Delta, Kaş/Kekova, Gölbaşı, Pamukkale, Ihlara, Foça, Datça/Bozburun, Belek, Tuz Gölü (Salt Lake), Uzungöl, Saros Bay and Finike Submarine Mountains determined and announced by the Council of Ministers in Turkey as of 2015. These SEP areas have a marine area of 2,866 km^2, a terrestrial area of 10,493.08 km^2, a coastal length of 1,134 km, an area of 13,335.86 km^2 in total. With these figures, Turkey is the country with the largest environmental protection area in the Mediterranean (Anon 1).

2. Material and Method

In this study, it was aimed to examine Saros Bay Special Environmental Protection Area, one of the 16 Special Environmental Protection Areas, which stands out with its natural richness and geomorphology. The attractiveness that causes the area to be announced as a special environmental protection area and the ecological supply it creates as a result are also to be examined. This study features a qualitative case evaluation study. In the study, the methodology was determined in the light of data provided by the relevant ministry and relevant studies made in the area.

3. Aim and Assumptions

The aim of the study is to provide information that belongs to the fauna and flora of the Saros Bay. In this direction, table maps of fauna and flora of Saros were utilized in the study. Another aim of the study is to examine the impact of announcement of Saros as a special environmental protection area on the fauna and flora of the region.

4. Study Area Location

Saros Bay, which is the study area, is located in the Thrace side of Turkey and it runs along the Çanakkale-Edirne provinces administratively. The Bay, being the northeastern extension of the Aegean Sea, has an area of approximately 730.21 km2. The area along the line is surrounded by the Thrace shores in the north and the Gelibolu peninsula in the south (Figure 1). The southern regions, which are on the Gelibolu peninsula side of the Bay, do not allow settlement. The settlement is mostly located in the eastern and northern regions. The highest point in the basin is Mount Koru (385 m.) which is located at the north-north eastern tip of the Bay. The only stream that feeds the basin is Kavak Creek.

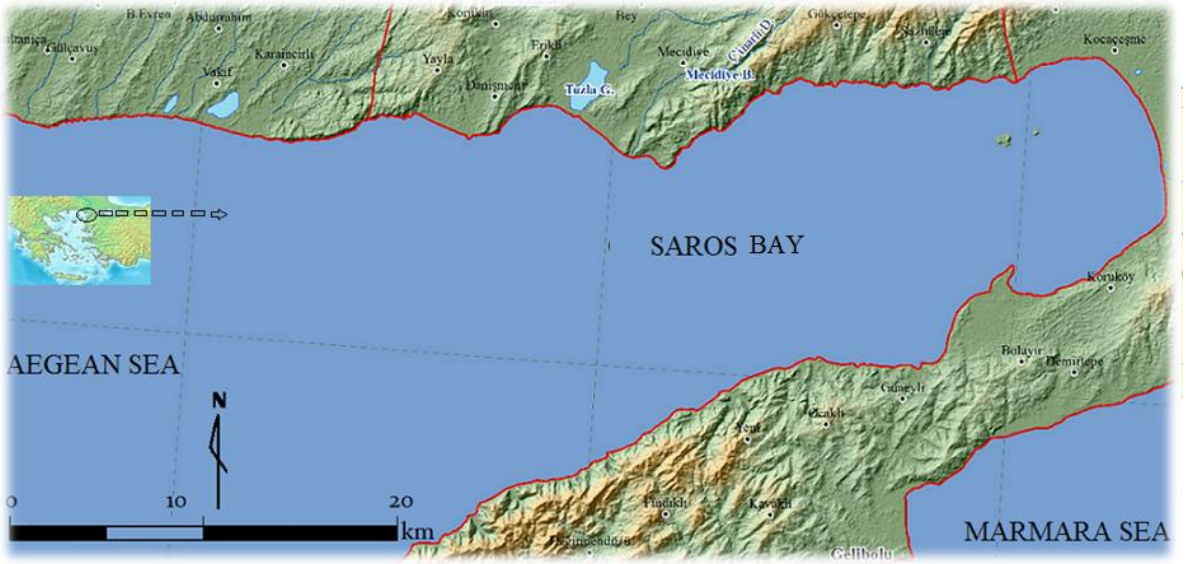

Fig. 1. Study Area, Saros Bay

5. Findings

The Bay was decided according to Article 9 of the Environmental Law No. 2872 on 11.10.2010 by the Council of Ministers and announced as the Special Environmental Protection Area in the Official Gazette with Decision No. 27793 on 22.12.2010. Approximately 75 thousand hectares of the said area has been announced as the SEP Area. Approximately 7 thousand people reside in the area announced as the SEP Area. Saros Bay is described as a large and natural aquarium among marine biologists and diving enthusiasts due to the rich variety of fish it houses. In addition to its protected underwater wealth, its historical and cultural riches of the mainland also put under protection.

Fig. 2. Saros Bay and Other Special Environmental Protection Areas (SEPA) in Turkey

It has been determined that 243 kinds of marine species were living in the researches made in the Bay. However, after 2001, there have been interesting ecological developments, a number of fish belonging to the "Red Sea" have begun to be seen in the Bay waters. One of these, called "ANTIAS", is a species which is expressed as lunate-tailed and has red and yellow colors. And one is a species, called "ZEBRA", with a white vertical stripe on black (Anon 2). The reason for the high living diversity is the abundant oxygen in the Bay waters and the nutrient salts brought by rivers.

The first studies on living diversity of Saros Bay were made by Koç et al. (2004) about the fish fauna of the Bay and 30 species belonging to 21 families were identified. Among these species, 3 are chondrichthyes and 27 are teleost. In the study made by İşmen et al. (2011) on fish fauna in Saros, 22 species belonging to 3 classes and 124 species belonging to 59 families were identified. Of these, 28 species of 15 families are chondrichthyes and 96 species of 44 families are teleost fishes. 124 of identified species are Atlanta-Mediterranean, 12 are cosmopolitan, and 5 are endemic species for the Mediterranean basin. Endemic fish species include: *Callionymus fasciatus, Gadiculus argenteus, Ophidion rochei, Raja radula. Cosmopolitan fish* are; *Carcharias taurus, Hexanchus griseus, Heptranchias perlo, Hoplostethus mediterraneus, Lepidopus caudatus, Macroramphosus scolopax, Raja clavata, Raja miraletus, Scomber japonicus, Squalus acanthias, Squalus blainville, Zeus faber.*

Saros Bay has a rich flora and fauna because it is fed by the waters of the Black Sea and the Mediterranean Sea and the daylight goes into depths. Some of the species found in the Saros Bay and also met in the depths of the Mediterranean and Aegean Seas are as follows by local names: *Kırmızı Dal Süngerleri (Axinella polypoides), Mercan Kolonisi (Parazoanthus axinellae), Sardalya (Sardina pilchardus), Hamsi (Engraulis encrasicolus), Lüfer (Pomatamus saltador), Kefal (Liza carinata), Uskumru (Scomber scombrus), Mercan (Papellus acarne), Mezgit (Merlangius merlangus), Tekir (Mullus surmuletus), Orkinos (Thunnus thynnus), Karagöz (Diplodus vulgaris), İzmarit (Spicara smaris), Çırçır (Symphodus sp.), Gelin (Coris julis), Kupez (Boops boops), Hani (Serranus cabrilla), Mırmır (Lithognatus mormyrus), Kaya Balığı (Gobius bucchichi), Karides (Periclimenes aegylios), Dülger Balığı (Zeus faber), Müren (Muraena helena), Mığrı (Conger conger), İstakoz (Homarus gammarus), Yengeç, Karabaş Balığı (Tripterygion tripteronotus), Barbun (Mullus barbatus), Orfoz (Epinephelus guaza), Böcek (Palinurus elephas), İskorpit (Scorpaena porcus), Leopar Kum Balığı (Tborogobius ephipoiatus), Sinarit (Dentex dentex), Çipura (Sparus aurata), İstavrit (Trachurus Mediterraneus), Sübye (Sepia officinalis), Deniz Tavşanı (Hypselodoris valenciennesi), Eşkina (Sciaena umbra), Köpek Balığı (Scyliorhinos canicula), Vatoz (Raja clavata), Fener Balığı (Lophius piscatorius) ve Ahtapot (Octopus vulgaris)dur (Yaşar, 2011; Edirne İli Çevre Durum Raporu, 2003).*

To the north of Saros Bay, in the narrow strip of 40-50 fathoms, demersal and semi pelagic fish such as red mullet, hake, tub gurnard, sea bream, boops boops, salema, picarel are fished. The region is also a hunting ground for native fish such as chup mackerel, sardines and for fish

coming outside the region such as mackerel and blue fish. Although horse mackerel stocks have not developed here, their quantities have reached catchable dimensions. In the Bay, it has been determined that there was about 17,000 tons of horse mackerel stock. It was observed that schools of mackerel survived scattered in the waters of 16-17 degrees between 50-90 meters and were found in the waters with an average of 37 ‰ salinity. Another important aspect of Saros for fishery is that it is suitable for spawning and development of Swordfish. A good Swordfish hunting is made especially in May and June. Marine species such as gilthead sea bream, blue fish, red mullet, sea bream, two banded sea bream, sea bass, gray mullet and octopus are found abundantly in Saros by the season (Anon 4) but main type is sardines.

Fig. 3. Main fish types, Sardine from Soros Bay (Ilgar, 2016)

Saros Bay SEPA (Special Environmental Protection Area) is a location where bluefin tunas, which have several breeding areas around the world, come to breed from the Atlantic. It is strictly forbidden to fish these fish in the Bay until May 26. After this time, the hunting is allowed only for a month. It is forbidden to go beyond the quotas established by the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) during a month of hunting. Turkey's quota for 2014 is 556 tons (Anon 5). Although the principles related to the hunting of tuna are clearly stated in the directives of the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock, the amount of illegal hunting of this fish species in Turkey is increasing every year.

As a result of the project carried out by the Ministry of Environment and Urbanization (2014) to form a basis for the Management Plan and Environmental Plan in Saros Special Environmental Protection Area; A total of 941 species were identified, including 6 endemic species in terrestrial and marine areas and 8 new species in Turkey (Table 1). The project aims to identify biological diversity, to classify, to zone (mapping etc.) endemic, rare, threatened and endangered species and habitats, to reveal their threats and protection measures.

Table 1. Terrestrial and Marine Biological Diversity Of Saros Bay Special Environmental Protection Area (Anon 6)

TYPE SPECIFIED IN TERRESTRIAL ECOSYSTEM				
	Type	**Endemic**	**New registration for Saros Bay SEPA**	**New Record for Turkey**
Veined Plants (plantarum)	176	6	-	-

Birds (avium)	106	-	-	-
Mammals	33	-	-	-
Reptilia and Amphibians	20	-	1	-
Terrestrium invertebrates	54	-	-	-
Total	389	6	1	-
TYPE SPECIFIED IN MARINE ECOSYSTEM				
Marine plantae	209	-	7	3
Fishes (Pisces)	108	-	-	-
Marine Mammalia	2	-	-	-
Marine invertebrates	233	-	-	-
Total	552	-	7	3
General Total	941	6	8	3

The area, which has a rich underwater flora and fauna, is also very important for those interested in underwater activities. The Bay is considered to be one of the 3 seas available in the world for windsurf sport. However, the Bay is one of the three self-cleaning gulf (Hudson Gulf, Baffin Gulf, Saros Bay) in the world. The Bay performs self-cleaning starting on the 15th or 18th day of February, April, July and ending on the 25th or 28th day of the month. The streams created by the cold water at the bottom and the hot water at the surface free the Bay from all garbage and waste materials during these periods. Other factor that contributes to the cleanliness of the Bay is that it is away from industrial plants. With its rich underwater flora – fauna and clear water, it is important for underwater diving enthusiasts. Important diving centers in the Bay are; İbrice Harbor, Cennet, Cehennem, Toplar Cape, Asker Stone, Üç Islands, Minnoş Island, Bebek Rocks, Lundy Wreck (Yaşar, 2011). During the tourist season, 1 million people are accommodated in the Saros region (Anon 3).

The high coasts where limited transport connection is provided have a decreasing risk of concretion and opening to coastal tourism. For this reason, these coasts are characterized by coasts that are remote from pollution, whose sea flora and fauna are protected, and are attractive for underwater diving tourism. Especially the islands that are spread out in front of the high coasts are the most popular diving sites for underwater diving tourism. The gulfs in the islands are less exposed to sea and coastal pollution than the mainland (Doğaner, 2001: 6-7).

On the north and south coasts of Saros Bay, diving spots where the coastal rocks attract quite attention. Asker Stone and Minnoş Island diving sites are a good example of this (Yaşar, 2011). Important projects are underway in Saros Bay for underwater diving tourism to gain an international dimension and underwater diving tourism season to extend. One of these projects is the establishment of an underwater history museum. Within the scope of this museum;

a- One closed museum area in the form of a "starfish";

b- Two open museum sites are aimed to be established. In these closed and open museum spaces, Çanakkale Wars will be visualized with monuments and sculptures on all sides (Anon 8).

Within this project, sculptures representing Çanakkale wars were brought under the sea, and then a ship was sunk in September of 2014. Apart from that, it is also considered to sink a scrap aircraft. With such projects, Saros Bay is desired to be made attractive in terms of tourism

(Anon 9). Undoubtedly, these works, which are to be done, will significantly increase the cultural and ecological attractiveness of the region in future.

7. Recommendations

Saros Bay, while being one of the three gulf of the world that can self-clean, takes its place among Turkey's alternative venues in the ascendant in terms of ecological values and tourism with 552 varieties of marine species it incorporates. The Bay, located in the North Aegean Sea, incorporates marine species types unique to both the Black Sea and the Mediterranean Sea due to effects of salty streams flowing into the sea and currents. Some of these species are common antlers sponges, coral colony, sardinella, tuna and blue fish. 7 of the 209 species of marine plants determined are new registers for Saros Bay SEPA Region. 3 of these 7 plants are new registers in terms of endemic plant variety of Turkey. Apart from this, Saros coasts, with respect to the Western Mediterranean and Southern Aegean coasts, are still free from settlement and industry. Care should be taken to protect this characteristic of the Saros. If this feature is carefully maintained Saros Bay, which is close to İstanbul, can be one of Turkey's most attractive diving centers in the following years. Things to do for the achievement of sustainability of the fauna flora and ecological values of the Saros Bay and the development of tourism in the Bay:

• An important negativeness for the underwater diving tourism in Saros Bay is the damage done to the sea flora and fauna by the trawler fishing. Trawler fishing should be reduced to prevent this damage.

• Many projects such as artificial reef work should be developed to protect marine fauna and flora.

• Promotion activities should be emphasized for the development of tourism activities in the region.

• In diving areas, visits by boat or by surfing should not be allowed. Because in such a case, the health and life of the divers can be imperiled. Therefore, boundaries of the places where surfing and diving tourism are done should be drawn definitely.

• Environmental awareness needs to be developed to protect the ecological variety and the number of marine national parks must be increased.

• Aquatic products should not be hunted for sportive scuba diving, and no living or non-living thing should be taken out of the water.

• Checks for compliance with hunting laws should be increased and penalties should be applied to deter illegal hunting.

• In order to increase diversity of marine species in the region, new species can be brought in which can adapt and can not harm other living things in the long run.

• By researching and evaluating the effects of the ship, boat and yacht maintenance and repair facilities in the region on the flora and fauna and alternative to transport to a different location should be applied when necessary.

• The sewerage problem in the Bay settlements should be resolved.

• The financial resources allocated to the works of conserving biological diversity should be increased.

• Studies should be done on the development and more widespread use of domestic species.

• Priority should be given to studies aiming at economic assessment of biological diversity.

If such measures are taken, tourism activities in the region will be revitalized and sustainability of ecological diversity will be ensured.

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