

Armenia

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Location and area

Armenia is a republic in the Transcaucasia region of western Asia, bordered by Georgia to the north, Azerbaijan to the east, Turkey to the west and south, and Iran to the south. The Azerbaijani enclave of Naxçivan also forms part of its southern boundary. Armenia occupies about 29,800 km². (Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia 2002).

Topography

Armenia is an extremely mountainous country with an average elevation of about 1,800 m and Mount Aragats as the highest point (4,090 m). (Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia 2002).

Water

A dense network of small rivers and streams that are part of the Aras-Kura river basin covers Armenia. Population is concentrated in river valleys, especially along the River Hrazdan, where the capital Yerevan is located. The republic contains numerous mountain lakes, the largest being Lake Sevan. (Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia 2002).

Climate

Armenia's climate is continental, with wide temperature variations. Rainfall varies greatly by location and elevation, with the greatest precipitation occurring on mountain slopes. The most arid region of the country is found along the River Aras in the south, where average annual precipitation is less than 300 mm. (Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia 2002).

Land use

Agriculture, the largest economic sector, is highly dependent on irrigation, especially in areas near the Aras (Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia 2002).

Peatlands

Neishtadt (1946) (in Kazakov 1953) gives a total area of "peat resources" of 17 km² with peat reserves of 5.5 Mt of air-dried peat. Markov (1976) gives a total area of "peat deposits" for Armenia of 10 km² (0.3 % of the country area) with peat resources of 2 Mt. Lappalainen & Žurek (1996a), based on Barsegian (1974), mention a recent peatland area of 30 km². 50% (15 km²) of this area was used for agriculture, the other 50% for peat extraction (balneology, fertilizer, litter, fuel).

According to the interpreted World Soil Map (Van Engelen & Huting 2002) no histosols exist in Armenia and 205 km² of gley soils.

Based on data of the Agricultural Map of Armenian SSR (1984), Barseghyan (1990), the Armenia National Environmental Action program (1999), and Jenderedjan et al. (2001), Jenderedjian (2002 in prep.) estimates that the area of mire (peat accumulating peatland with > 30 cm peat) at the beginning of the 20th century was 180 km² of which at present 45 km² remain. An additional area of 10 km² of largely cutover peatlands may still exist.