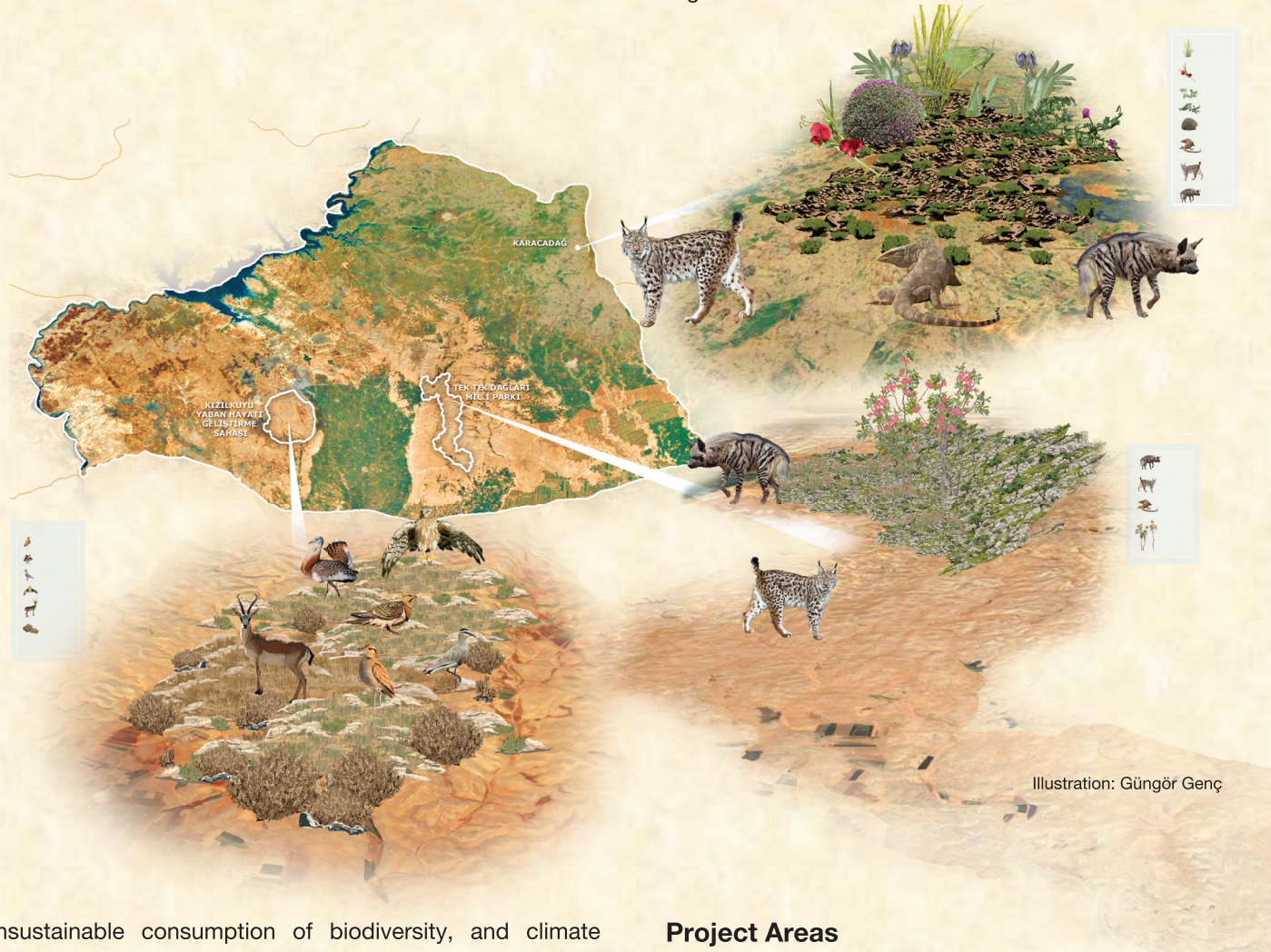


Why do we need to protect these steppes?

Steppes, covering approximately 40% of the country, are one of the most ecologically important and vulnerable ecosystems in Turkey. Şanlıurfa hosts a substantial percentage of Turkey's intact steppe areas, yet it is highly threatened by habitat loss,

Who are the stakeholders?

Stakeholder at national, provincial and district level will play an active role in the project. The groups also include farmers and herders, private enterprises engaged in natural resource utilization, universities, research institutions and civil society organizations.



unsustainable consumption of biodiversity, and climate change. The cumulative impact of these threats is causing the deterioration of biodiversity at a fast pace; approximately 75,000 hectares of natural steppes have been lost since 1970s. Today, approximately 250,000 hectares of steppes remain in the Şanlıurfa, and only 40,000 hectares of them benefit from protected area status. The remaining steppes are highly vulnerable, with approximately 33% being severely degraded.

Project Areas

With the project, steppes of Şanlıurfa will be established as national and regional models for steppe habitat conservation. Currently, 234,000 hectares of steppe exist within Şanlıurfa Province, with approximately 50,000 hectares within protected areas. The project effort will concentrate on three distinct Şanlıurfa steppes: Kızılırmak Wildlife Development Area, Tek Tek Mountains National Park, and Karacadağ steppes.

Conservation and Sustainable Management of Turkey's Steppe Ecosystems



Great bustard (*Otis tarda*)
Photo: Ignacio Yufera (iyufera.com)

Protecting Turkey's Steppes

The main goal of the project is to improve the conservation of Turkey's steppe ecosystems through effective protected area management and mainstreaming steppe biodiversity conservation into production landscapes.



Wild Pistachio (*Pistacia terebinthus*)
Photo: Fehmi Yüksel

Expanding protected areas of Turkey

The project aims at creating a new protected area in the Karacadağ steppes and enhancing biodiversity within the pilot sites. This requires improving the conservation of currently degraded steppe lands, while reducing the degradation rate - which peaks due to urbanization or conversion of steppes into agricultural lands, resulting in loss of steppe biodiversity.



Wild Lathyrus (*Lathyrus cicera*)
Photo: Hans Hillewaert



Sociable Lapwing (*Vanellus gregarius*)
Photo: Mustafa Sözen

Strengthening livelihoods of rural Settlements

The project is ultimately designed to empower local communities and secure their livelihoods. Pastoralists are among the main inhabitants of steppe regions and they usually rely on public-owned pasturelands. The project will help rural communities to work collaboratively with partners while deepening their understanding on environmental issues that have a direct impact on their livelihoods and social stability.



Desert Monitor (*Varanus griseus*)
Photo: Bayram Göçmen

Setting institutional frameworks for Landscape level conservation

The project will make improvements on-the-ground and at policy level that can create models for scaling up practices that could advance sustainable management and conservation of steppe ecosystems in Turkey.



Goitered Gazelle (*Gazella marica*)
Photo: Sükrü Gürler

For more information

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