Kolkheti National Park is one of the most distinctive and unique places in Georgia. Here, visitors can observe hundreds of migratory bird species and enjoy boat trips on Lake Paliastomi, as well as explore the valleys of the Pichori and Churia rivers.

Kolkheti National Park is located in western Georgia. It covers the eastern coastline of the Black Sea and the basin of Lake Paliastomi. The park was established to protect and preserve wetlands of international importance.

According to IUCN criteria, Kolkheti National Park belongs to Category II protected areas. Since 1997, it has been protected under the Ramsar Convention, which aims to conserve habitats suitable for migratory and waterfowl species. Since 2021, "Colchic Forests and Wetlands" have been included on the UNESCO World Natural Heritage List.

Kolkheti National Park features living sphagnum peat bogs, relict Colchic forests, natural freshwater ponds and lakes, wet meadows, and the marine waters of the Black Sea.

Kolkheti National Park was established in 1999. Its total area is 44 980 hectares, of which 15,751 hectares are marine waters.



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NATIONAL PARKS GEORGIA

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Agency of Protected Areas of Georgia

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KOLKHETI NATIONAL PARK



ECOTOURISM

In Kolkheti National Park, visitors can enjoy boating tours on Lake Paliastomi and in the valleys of the Pichori and Churia rivers, take part in birdwatching activities, and join eco-educational tours. Sport fishing is also permitted within the park.

The park offers four tourist routes, all featuring boating experiences. Visitors can explore the area by motorboat, pontoon boat, or kayak:

- Lake Paliastomi (Motorboat or Pontoon Tour) - This route offers stunning views of Lake Paliastomi's scenic shoreline. Visitors can observe migratory and wintering bird species along the route.
- Paliastomi–Pichori Route (Pontoon or Motorboat Tour) - This route allows visitors to travel by pontoon boat or motorboat, exploring the beautiful shores of Lake Paliastomi and the relict Colchic forests of the Pichori River valley. Sport fishing is permitted along this route.
- Paliastomi-Pichori-Small Paliastomi route (Pantoon or Motorboat tour) - possible only in case of the proper water level in the Small Paliastomi area. This route allows visitors to travel by pontoon boat or motorboat, exploring the beautiful shores of Lake Paliastomi, the Colchic relict forest in the Pichori river valley and the breathtaking views of the Small Paliastomi.
- Churia River Route - Located approximately 50 km from Zugdidi, this tour offers picturesque views of peat bogs and relict Colchic forests in the Churia River valley. Throughout the year, visitors can observe waterbirds as well as certain species of birds of prey in the Churia Valley.

Around 200 bird species nest, winter, or migrate through Kolkheti National Park. Birds of prey are best observed in early spring and early autumn, while waterbirds are most easily observed in winter (December–February).

BIODIVERSITY

The relict-origin forests of the Kolkheti Lowland are particularly distinctive. Approximately 10 million years ago, these forests formed a continuous belt across the Eurasian continent. Today, the area preserves plant species characteristic of wetland ecosystems found in the distant northern tundra and taiga, including sphagnum moss, Rhynchospora, peat sedge, and Drosera.

Among the rare and endangered species listed in the Red List of Georgia, Kolkheti National Park is home to Colchic oak, Caucasian wingnut , and Colchic boxwood. Marine mammals found in the park's waters include the Black Sea bottlenose dolphin, Black Sea common dolphin, and harbor porpoise.

The Eurasia–Africa migratory flyway passes through the area, making Kolkheti National Park an important resting, nesting, and wintering site for many bird species. During winter, flocks of ducks, geese, swans, common goldeneye, and grebes migrate here from the north.

During the winter season, the following species can be found in Kolkheti National Park: woodcock, Mediterranean shearwater, common coot, grebes, white-fronted goose, whooper swan and mute swans, Dalmatian pelican, and great white pelican. With a bit of luck, visitors may also encounter one of the most beautiful birds of Georgia's fauna — the common pheasant.

The ichthyofauna of the national park is represented by 88 fish species (23 migratory, 21 freshwater, and 44 Black Sea species). Among cartilaginous fish, the Atlantic sturgeon is particularly noteworthy, while bony fish species include Black Sea salmon, herring, mullet, pike, and mackerel.





KOLKHETI NATIONAL PARK – A UNESCO WORLD NATURAL HERITAGE SITE

Georgia is home to several cultural heritage monuments inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List. However, for the first time in the country's history, four protected areas have now been granted UNESCO Natural World Heritage status. In 2021, for the first time in Georgia's history, four protected areas — Mtirala and Kolkheti National Parks, as well as Kintrishi and Kobuleti Protected Areas — were inscribed on the UNESCO World Natural Heritage List under the title "Colchic Rainforests and Wetlands." This inscription once again highlighted the unique natural values and global significance of these territories.

Of particular importance is the Imnati living sphagnum peat bog, which represents not only a national but also a global natural treasure. These ancient and unique peatlands, dating back approximately 10,000 years, survived the glacial period, and the process of peat formation continues uninterrupted to this day.

