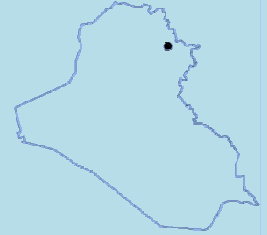


Chami Razan (S10)



Surveyed in winter and summer 2007, in summer from 2008 to 2010 and also in spring from 2009 to 2012.

Admin Area: Sulaimani

Coordinates: N 35° 46' 53" E 44° 58' 38"

Area: 4906 ha

Altitude: 600-800 m

IBA Criteria: A1 and A3

IPA Criteria: Under assessment

Status: Unprotected

Ecoregion: Zagros Mountains Forest Steppe (PA0446)

Directional information: Chami Razan is located approximately 40 km northwest of the city of Sulaimani.





Chami Razan Area looking west (photo by Korsh Ararat, 2010)

Yellow	Orange	Green	Yellow	Yellow	Orange	Red	Orange

Site Description: The Tabin Stream flows from the northeast through a long valley into a narrow winding gorge, eventually joining the Lesser (Little) Zab River. The landscape is characterized by hills and rocky ridges, with sparse oak woodlands. Several villages are situated in and around the area. There is a spring from an intersecting valley that flows into the Tabin as well as a spring-fed waterfall (Bafil) that has been developed into a tourist site. Archaeological ruins and several important caves lie within the area, including Qizqapan cave, a Midean (728 BC–549 BC) tomb, located west of the village of Zarzi; an ancient village site further downstream in the gorge; and the Zarzi and Sara caves. According to Rosti (2011) traces of Neanderthals have been found in Zarzi and Sara, although the caves have not been fully explored. Within the gorge are also the remains of an Islamic-era fort. The valley is used for grazing and growing vegetables, and there are a number of hoop-greenhouses upstream along the Tabin. The narrow gorge areas are used primarily for grazing. Much of the area, especially near the caves, spring and streams, is a popular picnicking site in spring.

Important Bird Area Criteria	Observation made 2007-2011. Unless stated otherwise numbers are estimates based on extrapolations using area/transect counts and area of known habitat (see methodology on p. XX).	
A1. Globally threatened species		
	Breeding	Winter/Passage
Egyptian Vulture <i>Neophron percnopterus</i> (Summer visitor)	2-10 pairs (counts, 2007-2010)	
A3. Biome-restricted species		
Irano-Turanian biome		
	Breeding	Winter/Passage
See-see Partridge <i>Ammoperdix griseogularis</i> (Resident)	20 pairs (2008, 2010)	
Menetries's Warbler <i>Sylvia mystacea</i> (Summer visitor)	60 pairs (2009-2010)	
Eastern Rock Nuthatch <i>Sitta tephronota</i>	80 pairs (2008-2010)	

(Resident)		
White-throated Robin <i>Irania gutturalis</i> (Summer visitor)	1-2 pairs (counts, 2009)	
Finsch's Wheatear <i>Oenanthe finschii</i> (Resident)	10 pairs (2008-2010)	
Eastern Cinereous Bunting <i>Emberiza semenowi</i> (Summer visitor)	1-2 pairs (counts, 2009)	
Mediterranean biome		
	Breeding	Winter/Passage
Masked Shrike <i>Lanius nubicus</i> (Summer visitor)	1-2 pairs (counts, 2008-2009)	
Sombre Tit <i>Poecile lugubris</i> (Resident)	12 pairs (2008-2010)	
Western Rock Nuthatch <i>Sitta neumayer</i> (Resident)	1-2 pairs (counts, 2010)	
Eastern Black-eared Wheatear <i>Oenanthe melanoleuca</i> (Summer visitor)	1-3 pairs (counts, 2009)	
Black-headed Bunting <i>Emberiza melanocephala</i> (Summer visitor)	300 pairs (2008-2010)	

Additional Important Bird Observations: During the surveys 65 species were seen. In addition to those listed in the table the following Near Threatened species were observed but in sub IBA-threshold numbers: Pallid Harrier *Circus macrourus* (passage), European Roller *Coracias garrulus* (breeding) and Semi-collared Flycatcher *Ficedula semitorquata* (passage). The Sahara-Sindian Desert biome-restricted White-eared Bulbul *Pycnonotus leucotis* was breeding, but did not trigger the inclusion under criterion A3. Note that Eastern Cinereous Bunting *Emberiza semenowi* mentioned in the table above is a Near Threatened species.

Other Important Fauna

Mammals, Reptiles and other Fauna: Spur-thighed Tortoise *Testudo graeca* are often seen here in pairs, and could likely meet KBA Vulnerability criteria with more study.

Fish: Fish exist in the Tabin Stream but have not been assessed. On one occasion, electro-fishing was observed in the stream.

Plants & Habitat: Approximately 200 plant species are found in the area. Two waypoints within the two main habitat types of Chami Razan have been surveyed (see table):

1. Mountain Forest Vegetation-Mountain Riverine Forest (N 35° 48' 5" E 44° 58' 49"). This was characterized by *Salix* spp., *Populus* spp., *Fraxinus* spp. (trees), *Rubus sanctus*, *Lythrum salicaria*, *Paliurus spina-christi*, *Vitex* spp., *Nerium oleander* (shrubs), *Nasturtium officinale* and *Mentha longifolia* (herbs). Most of the tourist activities are close to these stream habitats.
2. Mountain Forest Vegetation-Oak Forests- Lowest and Medium Zones (N 35° 46' 53" E 44° 58' 38"). This habitat was characterized by *Quercus aegilops*, *Q. infectoria*, *Pistacia eurycarpa* and *P. kbijnjuk* (trees).

The ecological condition ranged from very disturbed, with an ecological scale of four (especially near the streams), to moderately disturbed with an ecological scale of three (at the top of the surrounding mountains). The steep cliffs especially those with less exposure to the sunlight may provide a refuge area for plants from lower altitudes affected by climate changes. The site is located in the Zagros range, where the geology is a sedimentary limestone, and soil is sandy clay. About 30% of the area near the streams and less than 10% in the forested area was non-vegetated.

Conservation Issues: Tourism and the pollution it generates are the greatest threats, but development, road construction; hunting and animal grazing affect this area as well and were considered medium threats. In the winter of 2010, people were observed electro-fishing in the stream. We believe this is an infrequent practice and thus rated hunting as a medium threat. Development and road construction seem to be increasing in areas that are the most popular for tourists. In 2010, development around the Qizqapan cave caused localized erosion. Also in 2012, construction began on the Surqawshan Dam downstream on the Tabin just above where it flows into the Lesser Zab River. The lower riparian zone on the stream has been severely damaged by a gravel mine created for dam construction. This is also releasing high levels of sediment into the Lesser Zab River. The resulting reservoir will submerge much of the lower valley in the delineated area causing extensive ecological change to the biodiversity as well as possibly flooding the ancient Islamic fort (this should be determined). In addition, no plans for fish passages are included in the dam, which will cut the stream corridor in two.

Recommendations: The site needs to be cleared of garbage left by tourists and regular garbage collection implemented during the peak periods for visits (spring). An education program aimed at raising awareness amongst locals and visiting tourists would aid in improving and protecting the site. It is strongly recommended that electro-fishing be stopped, though it is likely only a rare practice. The authorities should re-examine construction projects such as Surqawshan Dam and others like it to determine their environmental impact and, if they go forward, mitigate the negative effects. The resulting reservoir is to be used for irrigation and recreation, though the reservoir will flood the agricultural land behind the dam and the recreational value of the existing valley gorge could be equally developed.

References

Rosti, N. (2011). "Zarze and Sara caves: Neanderthal Shelters." Kurdish Globe, No. 288, Sunday, January 16, 2011. nadr_rwsty@yahoo.com