

Botanical diversity of Wetlands of the Javakheti upland (Lesser Caucasus).

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Abstract

Wetland plant communities are widespread. In the Javakheti plateau are ca. 60 large and small lakes. Items floristically important are Tabatskuri, Paravani, Saghamo, Madatapa, Bugdasheni, Kartsakhi or Khozaphini Lakes with Eurasian, West Asian-Caucasian and European-Mediterranean species such as *Carex juncella* (considered as a relict species), *C. vesicaria*, *C. distachia*, *C. oreophila*, *C. medwedewii*, *C. tristis*, *C. acutiformis*, *C. acuta*, *Calamagrostis canescens*, *C. neglecta*, *Sagittaria sagittifolia*, *Menianthes trifoliata*, *Utricularia vulgaris* etc. Presence of elements of the boreal flora is noteworthy as they presumably penetrated into this area during the Quaternary glaciation through Minor Asia and Middle Asia.

Tufted sedge communities are particularly noteworthy of this vegetation type in detail studied on the Javakheti plateau. Carices (*Carex acuta*, *C. disticha*, *C. vesicaria*) are key components of the mentioned community. Other constituents are: *Ranunculus lingua*, *Poa palustris*, *Calamagrostis neglecta*, *C. arundinacea*, *Comarum palustre*, *Bistorta carnea*, *Eleocharis meridionalis*, *Rumex acetosa*, *Alisma plantago-aquatica*, *Utricularia vulgaris*, *Menianthes trifoliata*, *Potamogeton gramineus*, *Elatine alsinastrum*, *Lemna trisulca*, *Myriophyllum spicatum*, *Equisetum fluviatile* etc. It is known that these physiologically unique communities are formed in places where the water level changes seasonally.