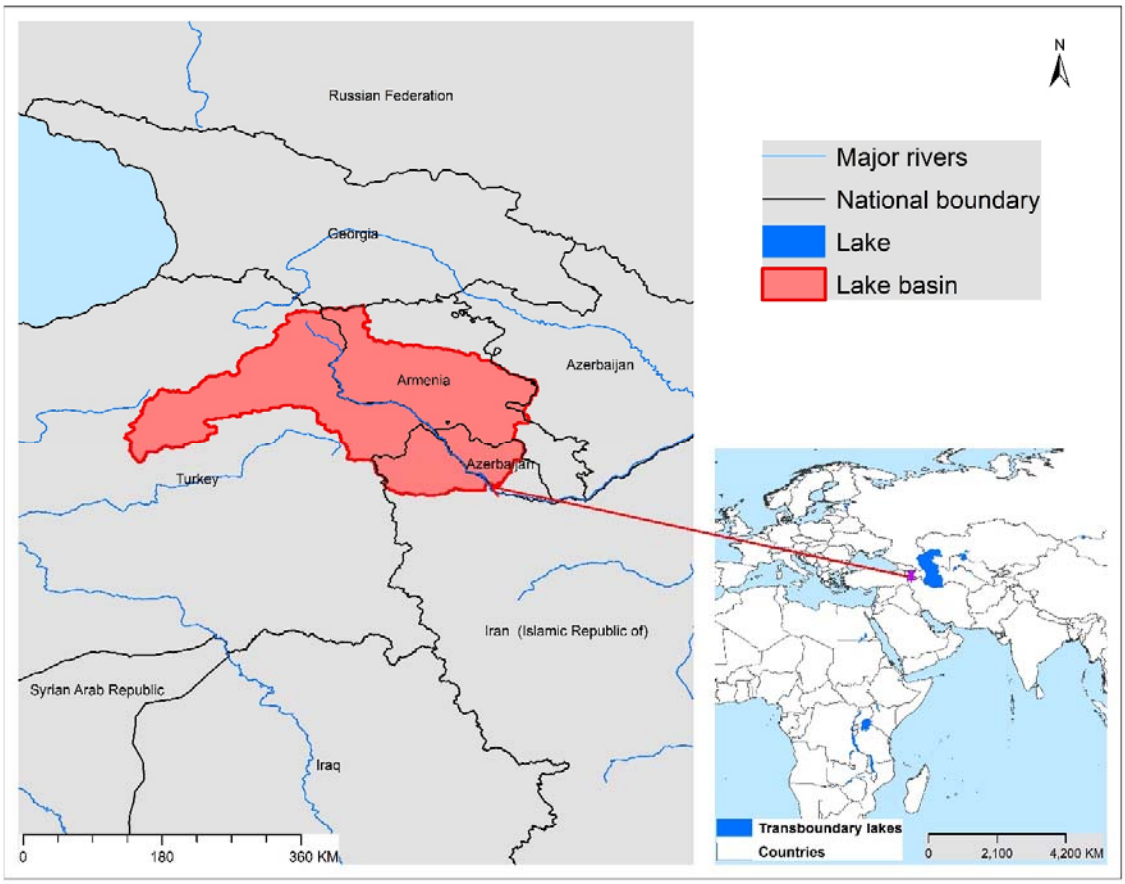
Lake Profile Brief

This is based on the results of Multiple Lake Threat Assessment and its Scenario Analysis. Refer to the Technical Report for details.

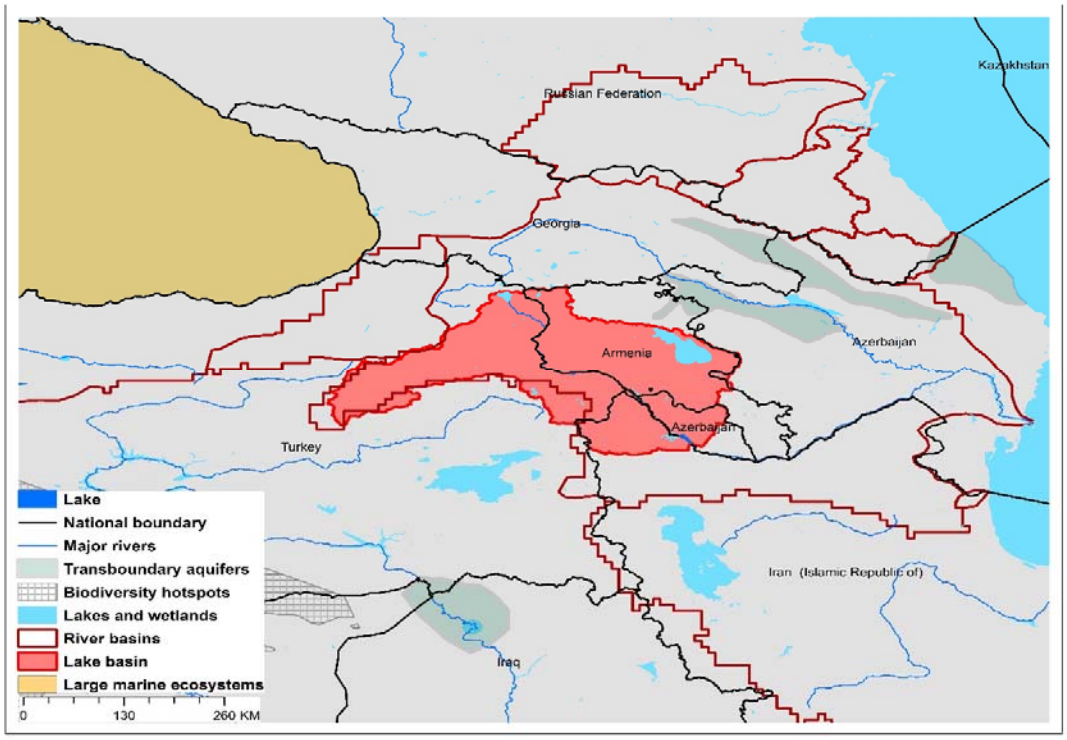
Aras Su Qovsaginin Su Anbari — Geographic Information

Aras Su Qovsaginin Su Anbari is a reservoir on the Aras River constructed for hydropower production, being shared by the Azerbaijan Republic and the Islamic Republic of Iran. Since its opening, the reservoir also has provided irrigation water for more than 400,000 ha of arable land in the two countries. At its normal water elevation, the reservoir capacity is 1.35 km^3. The reservoir has a long history of bilateral discussions between Iran and Azerbaijan regarding its operation and management. There is little information, however, regarding the need for GEF-catalyzed management interventions for any transboundary environmental issues.

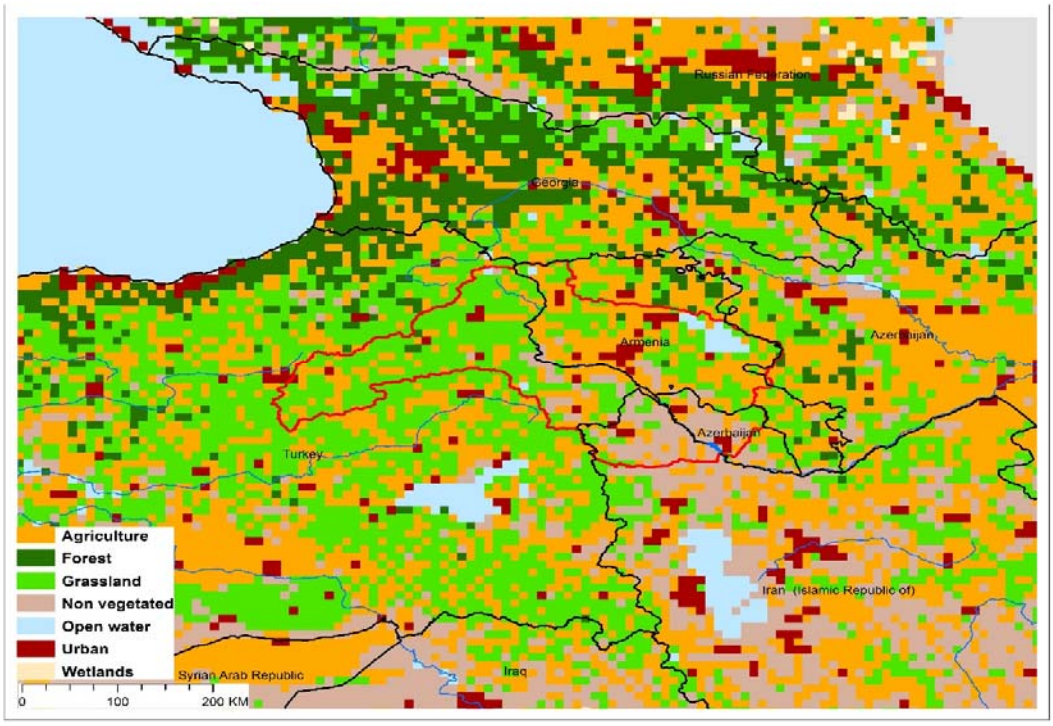


TWAP Regional Designation	Southern Asia; Northern Africa & Western Asia	**Lake Basin Population (2010)**	3,924,400
River Basin	Kura-Arkas	**Lake Basin Population Density (2010; # km^{-2})**	52.3
Riparian Countries	Azerbaijan, Islamic Republic of Iran	**Average Basin Precipitation (mm yr^{-1})**	460.6
Basin Area (km^2)	49,434	**Shoreline Length (km)**	66.7
Lake Area (km^2)	52.1	**Human Development Index (HDI)**	0.73
Lake Area:Lake Basin Ratio	0.001	**International Treaties/Agreements Identifying Lake**	Yes

Aras Su Qovsaginin Su Anbari Basin Characteristics



(a) Aras Su Qovsaginin Su Anbari basin and associated transboundary water systems



(b) Aras Su Qovsaginin Su Anbari basin land use

Aras Su Qovsaginin Su Anbari Threat Ranking

A serious lack of global-scale uniform data on the TWAP transboundary in-lake conditions required their potential threat risks be estimated on the basis of the characteristics of their drainage basins, rather than in-lake conditions. Using basin characteristics to rank transboundary lake threats precludes consideration of the unique features that can buffer their in-lake responses to basin-derived disturbances, including an integrating nature for all inputs, long water retention times, and complex, non-linear response dynamics.

The lake threat ranks were calculated with a spreadsheet-based interactive scenario analysis program, incorporating data and information about the nature and magnitude of their basin-derived stresses, and their possible impacts on the sustainability of their ecosystem services. These descriptive data for Aras Su Qovsaginin Su Anbari and the other transboundary lakes included lake and basin areas, population numbers and densities, areal extent of basin stressors on the lake, data grid size, and other components considered important from the perspective of the user of the data results. The scenario analysis program also provides a means to define the appropriate context and preconditions for interpreting the ranking results.

The Aras Su Qovsaginin Su Anbari threat ranks are expressed in terms of the Adjusted Human Water Security (Adj-HWS) threats, Reverse Biodiversity (RvBD) threats, and the Human Development Index (HDI) score, as well as combinations of these indices. However, it is emphasized that, being based on specific characteristics and assumptions regarding Aras Su Qovsaginin Su Anbari and its basin characteristics, the calculated threat scores represent only one possible set of lake threat rankings. Defining the appropriate context and preconditions for interpreting the lake rankings remains an important responsibility of those using the threat ranking results, including lake managers and decision-makers.

Table 1. Aras Su Qovsaginin Su Anbari Relative Threat Ranks, Based on Adjusted Human Water Security (Adj-HWS) and Reverse Biodiversity Threats, and Human Development Index (HDI) Score

(Estimated risks: red – highest; orange – moderately high; yellow – medium; green – moderately low; blue – low)

Adjusted Human Water Security (Adj-HWS) Threat Score	Relative Adj-HWS Threat Rank	Reverse Biodiversity (RvBD) Threat Score	Relative RvBD Threat Rank	Human Development Index (HDI) Score	Relative HDI Rank
0.89	15	0.47	45	0.73	36

It is emphasized that the Aras Su Qovsaginin Su Anbari rankings above are discussed here within the context of the management and decision-making process, rather than as strict numerical ranks. Based on its geographic, population and socioeconomic assumptions used in the scenario analysis program, the calculated Adj-HWS score for Aras Su Qovsaginin Su Anbari indicates a moderately high threat rank compared to other priority transboundary lakes.

The Reverse Biodiversity (RvBD) for Aras Su Qovsaginin Su Anbari, which is meant to describe its biodiversity sensitivity to basin-derived degradation, places the lake in a low threat rank, compared to the other transboundary lakes. Management interventions directed to improving the biodiversity status must

be viewed with caution, however, since we lack sufficient knowledge and experience to accurately predict the ultimate impacts of biodiversity manipulations and preservation efforts. Further, the RvBD scores indicate the relative sensitivity of a lake basin to human activities, and high threat scores *per se* do not necessarily justify management interventions. Such interventions may actually increase biodiversity degradation, noting that many developed countries have already fundamentally degraded their biodiversity because of economic development activities. Thus, activities undertaken to address the Adj-HWS threats may actually degrade the biodiversity status and resources, even if the health and socioeconomic conditions of the lake basin stakeholders are improved as a result of better conditions, thereby increasing stakeholder resource consumption.

The relative Human Development Index (HDI) places the Aras Su Qovsaginin Su Anbari basin in a moderately low threat rank in regard to its health, educational and economic status.

Table 2. Aras Su Qovsaginin Su Anbari Threat Ranks, Based on Multiple Ranking Criteria

(Scores for Adj-HWS, RvBD and HDI ranks are presented in Table 1; the ranks may differ in some cases because of rounding of figures; Estimated risks: red – highest; orange – moderately high; yellow – medium; green – moderately low; blue – low)

Adj-HWS Rank	HDI Rank	RvBD Rank		Sum Adj-HWS + RvBD	Relative Threat Rank		Sum Adj-HWS + HDI	Relative Threat Rank		Sum Adj-HWS + RvBD + HDI	Overall Threat Rank
15	35	45		59	33		50	26		94	34

When multiple ranking criteria are considered together in the threat rank calculations, the Adj-HWS and HDI scores place Aras Su Qovsaginin Su Anbari in the upper half of the threat ranks. The relative threat decreases when the Adj-HWS and RvBD threats are considered together. Considering all three ranking criteria together, Aras Su Qovsaginin Su Anbari exhibits an overall moderately high threat ranking.

Further, a series of parametric sensitivity analyses of the ranking results also was performed to determine the effects of changing the importance of specific criteria on the relative transboundary lake rankings. This analysis involved increasing or decreasing the weights applied to the threat ranks derived from multiple ranking criteria to reassess the relative impacts of the weight combinations on the threat ranks. For example, in determining the sensitivity of the Adjusted Human Water Security (Adj-HWS) and Biodiversity (BD) ranking criteria, the threat rank associated with the first was assumed to be of complete (100%) importance (i.e., rank weight of 1.0), while the other was assumed to be of no (0%) importance (i.e., rank weight of 0.0). The relative importance of the two ranking criteria was then successively changed, with weight combinations of 0.9 and 0.1, 0.8 and 0.2, etc., until the first ranking criteria (Adj-HWS) was assumed to be of no importance (rank weight of 0.0) and the second (BD) was of complete importance (rank weight of 1.0). In the case of Aras Su Qovsaginin Su Anbari, the 0.5 and 0.5 weight combinations for three cases of parametric analysis for Aras Su Qovsaginin Su Anbari resulted in respective threat rankings of 1st, 3rd and 1st, respectively, among the total of 8 Asian transboundary lakes in the TWAP study (see Technical Report, Section 4.3.3, pp44-50).

In essence, therefore, identifying potential management intervention needs for Aras Su Qovsaginin Su Anbari must be considered on the basis of both educated judgement and accurate representations of its situation. A fundamental question to be addressed, therefore, is how can one decide that a given

management intervention will produce the greatest benefit(s) for the greatest number of people in the Aras Su Qovsaginin Su Anbari basin? Accurate answers to such questions for Aras Su Qovsaginin Su Anbari, and other transboundary lakes, will require a case-by-case assessment approach that considers the specific lake situation and context, the anticipated improvements from specific management interventions, and its interactions with water systems to which the lake is linked.