IUCN Conservation Outlook Assessment 2014 **(archived)**
Finalised on 21 May 2014

Please note: this is an archived Conservation Outlook Assessment for Göreme National Park and the Rock Sites of Cappadocia. To access the most up-to-date Conservation Outlook Assessment for this site, please visit https://www.worldheritageoutlook.iucn.org.

Göreme National Park and the Rock Sites of Cappadocia

SITE INFORMATION

Country:
Turkey
Inscribed in: 1985
Criteria:
(i) (iii) (v) (vii)

Site description:

In a spectacular landscape, entirely sculpted by erosion, the Göreme valley and its surroundings contain rock-hewn sanctuaries that provide unique evidence of Byzantine art in the post-Iconoclastic period. Dwellings, troglodyte villages and underground towns – the remains of a traditional human habitat dating back to the 4th century – can also be seen there. © UNESCO

SUMMARY

2014 Conservation Outlook

Good with some concerns

The conservation outlook for Göreme National Park and the Rock Sites of Cappadocia is good with some concerns regarding excessive tourism impacts on the site. Göreme's natural beauty was comparatively well preserved at the time of its inscription, however construction activities to accommodate the ever growing number of tourists visiting the site has put pressure on its scenic value. The provision of hotels and services for these visitors tended to overwhelm the park and surrounding villages in the absence of a management plan and trained park personnel. The growing awareness among the stakeholders, both public and private, is leading to better protection of the natural beauty of the Göreme Valley and its surroundings.

Current state and trend of VALUES

Low Concern
Trend: Improving

Göreme National Park and the Rock Sites of Cappadocia receive well over half million visitors a year. The provision of hotels and services for these visitors tended to overwhelm the park and surrounding villages in the absence of a management plan and trained park personnel. These obstacles are now being overcome. The growing awareness among the stakeholders, both public and private, is leading to better protection of the natural beauty of the Göreme Valley and its surroundings.

Overall THREATS

High Threat

Threats to natural beauty of Göreme National Park and the Rock Sites of Cappadocia include the excessive construction of hotels and tourist infrastructure; uncontrolled tourism; as well as potential damage from

earthquakes and other environmental influences such as wind and water erosion.

Overall PROTECTION and MANAGEMENT

Mostly Effective

The area was established as a historical National Park in order to protect and develop the national and cultural elements of the area for scientific and aesthetic reasons and depends greatly on the maintenance by the indigenous population of their traditional agriculture and lifestyles. The main weaknesses of management are a lack of a management plan and lack of full time dedicated specialists, lack of active monitoring as well as insufficient levels of funding.

FULL ASSESSMENT

Description of values

Values

World Heritage values

► **Superlative natural features and spectacular landscape**
Criterion:(vii)

In a spectacular landscape dramatically demonstrating erosional forces, the Göreme Valley and its surroundings provide a globally renowned and accessible display of hoodoo landforms and other erosional features, which are of great beauty, and which interact with the cultural elements of the landscape (SoOUV, 2013). The valley of pinnacles at Göreme is carved from a broad 1,000m-high plateau of lava-covered tuff, a fine grained rock of consolidated volcanic ash, which has been deeply eroded into a surreal landscape of hundreds of cones and lava-capped pillars. (IUCN/WCMC Data Sheets, 10-2007, May 2011)

Other important biodiversity values

► **Conservation value**

Göreme National park lies in a Conservation International-designated Conservation Hotspot, a WWF Global 200 Freshwater Eco-region, and a WWF/IUCN Centre of Plant Diversity. (IUCN/WCMC Data Sheets, May 2011)

Assessment information

Threats

Current Threats

High Threat

In spite of prohibition of new construction activities in the area, construction of illegal buildings (construction of new sites by cutting off the rocks and specific house encroachments) has damaged natural and historical texture. At the same time, in the area of visible terraces of Göreme Valley, development of tourist service areas contrary to the natural and cultural identity has resulted in increased disturbed scenery.

► Tourism/ Recreation Areas

High Threat
Inside site

Proliferation of infrastructure associated with the requirements of mass tourism [State of Conservation (SOC),1988]
Construction of tourist hotels in safeguarded areas [State of Conservation (SOC),1992]

► Tourism/ visitors/ recreation

High Threat
Inside site
Outside site

The impacts of uncontrolled tourism are of some concern and would be mitigated if the long considered park proposal was acted upon. [IUCN Technical Evaluation, 1985]
The heavy pressure of mass tourism is also a threat. (IUCN/WCMC Data Sheets, May 2011)

Potential Threats

Low Threat

Potential threats to the site include earthquakes and other environmental influences such as wind and water erosion, all of them being minor threats.

► Earthquakes/ Tsunamis

Low Threat
Inside site
Outside site

Earthquake damage to some of the cones and pillars over the years (UNESCO, Periodic Report, Cycle 01)

► Other

Low Threat

Natural (volcanic) tuff formations open to environmental influences such as wind and water erosion (UNESCO, Periodic Report, Cycle 01)

Protection and management

Assessing Protection and Management

► Relationships with local people

Some Concern

In cooperation with UNESCO a campaign was organized in 2002 to involve the local population.
(UNESCO, Periodic Report, Cycle 01)

► Legal framework and enforcement

Mostly Effective

1976 – Göreme Valley and surroundings protected by Decree A-69 of the High Council of Monuments and Historic Sites under the Cappadocia General Conservation Plan which required the preparation of detailed development

plans.
1983 – The protection of the site further assured under the Cultural and Natural Assets Act 2863.
1986 – Established as a Historical National Park under National Parks Law 2873.
(IUCN/WCMC Data Sheets, May 2011)
2004 – New boundary for the Cultural and Tourism Conservation and Development Area determined.
Protection arrangements are sufficiently effective.
(UNESCO, Periodic Report, Cycle 01)
Recent changes in the legislation (Nature and Biodiversity Conservation Draft Law) change in the directive concerning the identification and registration of protected sites, changes in Coastal Law bylaws, EIA Bylaw change, etc.) all are regulations that would weaken the protected sites and open them up for usage. (Confidential consultation, , 2013).

► Integration into regional and national planning systems

Mostly Effective

All areas are subject to their own legislation within their own boundaries.
(UNESCO, Periodic Report, Cycle 01)

► Management system

Some Concern

The area was established as a historical National Park in order to protect and develop the national and cultural elements of the area for scientific and aesthetic reasons. The General Directorate of Cultural Heritage and Museums of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and the National Park Department of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Affairs, are jointly responsible for the site (IUCN/WCMC Data Sheets, May 2011).
The management of Göreme depends greatly on the maintenance by the indigenous population of their traditional agriculture and lifestyles. The present condition of the site is good. (IUCN/WCMC DataSheets, May 2011)
There is currently no management plan, but one will be prepared.
(UNESCO, Periodic Report, Cycle 01)
The protection of areas identified as important is assured by land-use zoning, by restrictions and regulations on building and by the preservation of

traditional values. The strictly protected Zone 1 is the core of the Park. Zone 2 forms a buffer zone around Zone 1. (IUCN/WCMC Data Sheets, May 2011)

► Management effectiveness

Some Concern

There are national, regional, and local public authorities involved in management of the site. The current management system is not sufficiently effective and better coordination between responsible bodies is needed. (UNESCO, Periodic Report, Cycle 01)
In order to ensure effective management and protection, there is a strong need to formulate new management strategies and policies, after determining and analyzing the current status and related issues in these areas. (Somuncu and Yiğit, 2010)

► Implementation of Committee decisions and recommendations

Mostly Effective

One of the recommendations of the Committee expressed in 1985 when site was inscribed was to proceed with the legal formalities for the setting up of the Göreme National Park which was implemented.
(UNESCO, Periodic Report, Cycle 01)

► Boundaries

Mostly Effective

Status of boundaries of the site adequate. Buffer zone has been defined and is adequate. (UNESCO, Periodic Report, Cycle 01)
The strictly protected Zone 1 is the core of the Park. Zone 2 forms a buffer zone around Zone 1. (IUCN/WCMC Data Sheets, May 2011)

► Sustainable finance

Some Concern

There is no core funding. Funding for conservation and protection provided by state budget, municipalities and foundations.
Funding for management is insufficient; funding for protection and conservation is adequate.

(UNESCO, Periodic Report, Cycle 01)

► Staff training and development

Some Concern

Staff are provided by the Ministry of Culture and the Governorship of Nevsehir. There is no information available on the number of staff.
(UNESCO, Periodic Report, Cycle 01)
National Park staff provided by the Ministry of Forestry and Water Affairs.

► Sustainable use

Data Deficient

.

► Education and interpretation programs

Mostly Effective

There are some education and interpretation programmes in place.
(UNESCO, Periodic Report, Cycle 01)

► Tourism and interpretation

Mostly Effective

The Park received 593,000 visitors in 1994. More recent figures are not available (IUCN/WCMC Data Sheets, May 2011). All kinds of services and facilities are provided for the visitors throughout the site.
Staff show good performance with interpretation and visitor management.
(UNESCO, Periodic Report, Cycle 01)

► Monitoring

Some Concern

No site specific monitoring programme in place.

► Research

Mostly Effective

Several universities are involved in some research activities.

Overall assessment of protection and management

Mostly Effective

The area was established as a historical National Park in order to protect and develop the national and cultural elements of the area for scientific and aesthetic reasons and depends greatly on the maintenance by the indigenous population of their traditional agriculture and lifestyles. The main weaknesses of management are a lack of a management plan and lack of full time dedicated specialists, lack of active monitoring as well as insufficient levels of funding.

► Assessment of the effectiveness of protection and management in addressing threats outside the site

Data Deficient

Data deficient.

► Best practice examples

This is one of the best known World Heritage sites and national parks in Turkey. The World Heritage status is better known than the national park, thus the communication of WH can be a best practice example.

State and trend of values

Assessing the current state and trend of values

World Heritage values

► Superlative natural features and spectacular landscape

Low Concern
Trend:Stable

The growing awareness among the stakeholders, both public and private, is leading to better protection of the natural beauty of the Göreme Valley and its surroundings (IUCN/WCMC Data Sheets, May 2011). Although the area has been extensively used and modified by man for centuries the resulting

landscape continues to be one of harmony and consideration of the intrinsic values of the natural landforms (SoOUV, 2013).

Other important biodiversity values

▶ Conservation value

Göreme National park lies in a Conservation International-designated Conservation Hotspot, a WWF Global 200 Freshwater Eco-region, and a WWF/IUCN Centre of Plant Diversity. (IUCN/WCMC Data Sheets, May 2011)

Summary of the Values

▶ Assessment of the current state and trend of World Heritage values

Low Concern

Trend: Improving

Göreme National Park and the Rock Sites of Cappadocia receive well over half million visitors a year. The provision of hotels and services for these visitors tended to overwhelm the park and surrounding villages in the absence of a management plan and trained park personnel. These obstacles are now being overcome. The growing awareness among the stakeholders, both public and private, is leading to better protection of the natural beauty of the Göreme Valley and its surroundings.

Additional information

Key conservation issues

▶ Uncontrolled tourism

Local

In spite of prohibition of new construction activities in the area, construction of illegal buildings (construction of new sites by cutting off the rocks and specific house encroachments) has damaged natural and historical texture. At the same time, in the area of visible terraces of Göreme Valley, development of

tourist service areas contrary to the natural and cultural identity has resulted in increased polluted scenery. (Somuncu and Yiğit, 2010)

► Lack of effective management strategies and policies

Local

World Heritage in Turkey is facing several problems due to poor management and current land use issues. In order to ensure effective management and protection of these World Heritage sites, there is a strong need to formulate new management strategies and policies, after determining and analyzing the current status and related issues in these areas. (Somuncu and Yiğit, 2010)

Benefits

Understanding Benefits

► Is the protected area valued for its nature conservation?

The Göreme Valley and its surroundings is an area of spectacular landscape entirely sculpted by erosion. The valley of pinnacles at Göreme is carved from a broad 1,000m-high plateau of lava-covered tuff, a fine grained rock of consolidated volcanic ash, which has been deeply eroded into a surreal landscape of hundreds of cones and lava-capped pillars. (IUCN/WCMC Data Sheets, May 2011)

► Wilderness and iconic features

Göreme is an exceptional representation of the close relationship between man and his environment in particular as regards the use of underground caves as churches for worship. (UNESCO, Periodic Report, Cycle 01)

► Sacred natural sites or landscapes

Rare and natural formations and features of exceptional beauty are found in the landscape, reflecting varying conditions of resistance as well as the works of man. (UNESCO, Periodic Report, Cycle 01)

► Outdoor recreation and tourism

Göreme National Park and the Rock Sites of Cappadocia receive well over half million visitors a year.
The heavy pressure of mass tourism is also a threat. (IUCN/WCMC Data Sheets, May 2011)

Summary of benefits

A spectacular landscape entirely sculpted by erosion with sacred landscapes in the form of subterranean dwellings and places of worship. The wilderness value is manifested in natural formations and features of exceptional beauty).

Projects

Compilation of active conservation projects

№	Organization/ individuals	Project duration	Brief description of Active Projects
1	Governorship (of Nevsehir)		Research studies are being carried out at the research centre in the governorship. The integration of the various conservation and development plans of eleven towns in the region may provide a solution within the management plan to be prepared in the near future in accordance with the revised conservation legislation. (UNESCO, Periodic Report, Cycle 01)
2	UNESCO/UNDP/ICCROM		A number of Cappadocia’s staff have received training at ICCROM in Rome. Studies have also been made locally on earth-sheltered housing, traditional water management and modern tourism. (IUCN/WCMC Data Sheets Jan 1988, updated 8-1995, 10-2007, May 2011)

№	Organization/ individuals	Project duration	Brief description of Active Projects
3	A number of Cappadocia’s staff have received training at ICCROM in Rome. Studies have also been made locally on earth-sheltered housing, traditional water management and modern tourism. (IUCN/WCMC Data Sheets Jan 1988, updated 8-1995, 10-2007, May 2011)		Management of national park and visitors.

REFERENCES

№	References
1	Culcuoglu, G., Erkan, Y. and Karakul, O. UNESCO World Heritage Turkey, UNESCO Turkey National Commission, 2013
2	IUCN/WCMC Data Sheets Jan 1988 (updated 8-1995, 10-2007, May 2011)
3	International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Advisory Body Evaluation, 1985
4	Somuncu and Yiğit, World Heritage Sites in Turkey, Ankara University, 2010
5	Somuncu, M. (editor), 2009. Türkiye’nin Dünya Miras Alanları Koruma ve Yönetimde Güncel Durum (in Turkish) (Turkey’s World Heritage Sites - Current Status of Protection and Management), UNESCO Turkey National Commission, Ankara.
6	State of Conservation (SOC), UNESCO, 1988
7	State of Conservation (SOC),UNESCO, 1992
8	UNESCO, Periodic Report, Cycle 01
9	World Heritage Centre, UNESCO (whc.unesco.org/en/list/357)