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## Analysis of the potential for ecotourism in Gölhisar district

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### Abstract

Gölhisar is a town and district of Burdur Province in the Mediterranean region of Turkey. In this study, ecotourism activities which have positive contribution to prosperity of local people has been examined to find out whether or not on opportunity for Gölhisar district. The exploration of natural and cultural heritages of Gölhisar district realized is not in only geographic perspective but also ecotourism concept and scope using field Works and Global Positioning system (GPS) technology. In the result of these studies, it is found out that Gölhisar district have plenty of potential for ecotourism activities and various ecotourism activities which are able to be applied to Gölhisar district indicated.

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### 1. Introduction

Gölhisar County, covering the subject of the research, is located in Antalya district of Mediterranean Region. The overall surface area of the county, located within Burdur city, is 573,8 km<sup>2</sup>. Gölhisar city Centrum is situated at a distance of 107 km southwest away from Burdur city center on which it is depended administratively (Fig. 1). Gölhisar County territory is surrounded with Acıpayam County, depended upon Denizli city, from the north; from the east with Çameli county of Denizli city; from southwest with Fethiye county of Muğla city; Antalya from the south, and Çavdır County from the east.

Gölhisar plain, building up one of the depressions in northwest-southeast direction in Southwest Anatolia, is surrounded with Akdağ from the west, Koçuş Mountain from the south and Erkmene Mountain from the northeast. With plain-base being approximately 950 m above sea level, average height of the mountains surrounding the plain is between 1800-2000 m.

Gölhisar city center makes up the largest settlement of the research area. 2008 population of the city center reached to 13255 people and shows a distinction to be a city settlement geographically. With this population quantity, it follows Bucak (35843) within county centers depended on Burdur city. Within two of the rural settlements depended upon the county in the same year, there are municipality governances. Total population of the county is 20901 and % 63.4 of this population live in the city while % 36.6 of them dwell in rural settlements.

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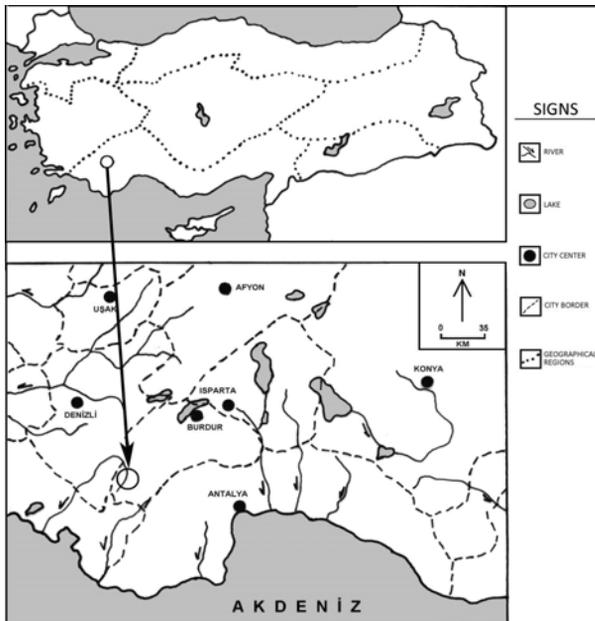


Fig.1. Location map of the research area

In the area where cropping activities gain importance, non-agricultural activities have not developed much. In the county center, however, small workplaces, %90 of which employ less than 10 workers, usually small-scale and practicing restoration works are encountered. Large parts of the workplaces are businesses operating on food and service sectors. As modern industrial facilities in the county center, there are Gölsüt Milk procession facility, Kutlu Göl Agricultural products, two textile workplaces and two facilities producing prepacked concrete. As the land is fertile, more developed agriculture and stockbreeding constitute one of the major sources of income in the region. Agricultural activities, mainly sugar beet, cereals and vegetable farming have gained importance in Gölhisar plain and its periphery. Modern barn stockbreeding is developing on one hand, and stocking cow for milk gains importance on the other. In

the city where retail trade dominates in terms of trade activities, though being minor, there are also workplaces of wholesale trades. Although having a potential to be counted as rich in terms of natural and human touristic values, it hasn't developed adequately yet.

## 2. Ecotourism concept and its content

As parallel with the swift economical, political and technological developments felt throughout the world in recent years, important changes in tourism activities, depending on usage of sources for longer period such as sustainable tourism and ecotourism, have been observed.

Ecotourism concept showing a development in 1990s as an alternative to mass tourism is defined as the most proper tourism activity which can be developed in natural and cultural fields including rural and cultural tourism elements. Ecotourism is seen as an important means of providing sustainable development against the negative effects of uncontrolled developing mass tourism on environment and society. Ecotourism constitutes a sub-division of sustainable tourism. Though sometimes used equivalent to sustainable tourism, ecotourism is one of the types of sustainable tourism [1]. According to the definition of International Nature Protection Union, ecotourism is environmental-conscious journey and a visit to unspoiled natural surroundings, supporting protection by understanding the nature and cultural sources, having low visitor effect and providing socio-economical income for the public [2]. Ecotourism focuses on the use of vernacular architecture and local sources usually by small groups in small facilities run by families. If exercised fit for the purpose, ecotourism is a means of protecting vulnerable ecosystems and which can create source for socio-economic development of the population residing within and around these areas. If poor conditions of the people living in towns in mountainous and sylvan areas which have ecotourism potential are taken into consideration, ecotourism can be understood as a factor which can decrease the instability between social classes.

Ecotourism, exercised for the purpose of exploring throughout the world, has frequently come to the fore in our country as well, yet only thought to be as upland tourism. Though, ecotourism, which has to be taken as a whole, is an activity which comprises many activities in vast scope including social and cultural activities. Ministry of Tourism defines ecotourism under such subtitles as upland tourism, ornithology (bird watching) tourism, water sports (canoe-rafting), farm tourism, botanic (herborization) tourism, bike tours, camping-caravan tourism, cave tourism, mountain tourism and nature walk.

The diversity of natural beauty enjoyed by our country makes up the biggest attraction for the tourists coming to our country. Therefore, natural surrounding is an attractive power continuously directing mankind. Our country possesses both natural assets such as its mountains, forests, plateaus, shores, lakes, rivers and a richness for the respect of its flora and fauna which are far more beautiful to be compared owned by other countries and this

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