

The book is dedicated to the
memory of my parents.

Introduction

Kobuleti Region is one of economically developed regions of Georgia. Natural conditions and abundant natural resources have contributed to the Region's economic growth. At the same time, the Region is distinguished by its unique geographical location, sunny Sea, and beautiful beach. Kobuleti is the only region on Georgia's Black Sea coast where various altitudinal zones are clear at a very short distance, resulting in a variation of landscapes on the Sea coast, where humid subtropical climate prevails. The terrain rises sharply over 35 kilometers (Sino 2598 m) where alpine meadows begin.

The Region has a peculiar climate, especially on Kobuleti coast. The studies by balneologists and the practice have shown that Kobuleti pine beach is a unique natural healing savanna for vascular and heart patients. Vacationers with a heart attack anamnesis almost never need strong medicines during their stay there. The coastline has magnetic sand, and Kobuleti has many therapeutic and recreational facilities. Kobuleti resorts are known not only in Georgia, but also in neighboring countries. In recent years, more than half of the holidaymakers of Ajara recreated in Kobuleti Region.

The humid subtropical climate and unique red soils of Kobuleti Region provided favorable conditions for the development of the Caucasus' first subtropical crops. For the first time in Kobuleti Region, industrial plantations of tea and other subtropical crops were grown, new tea varieties were bred using remote hybridization methods, and some issues of tea and citrus cultivation technology were worked out. Planting materials for tea and other subtropical crops were

transported from Kobuleti Region to other regions of the country. In the Caucasus, Kobuleti Region is the birthplace of subtropical crops. The opportunity to grow tea, citrus, and other crops, as well as the hard work of the working people, changed the appearance of villages in the Region and the economy progressed, which left a lasting impression on Galaktion Tabidze, the Georgians' beloved poet. Galaktion Tabidze [34] dedicated a special poem to the Renaissance of Kobuleti Region.

Kolchi forests abound in the region, with typical impenetrable undergrowth, relics, and endemism. The valuable-timber chestnut, which can grow as high as 2,000 meters above sea level, dominates the lower forest zone. Chestnut grows as a pure forest, occasionally mixed with hornbeam, lime, and beech. Beech forests dominate the upper forest zone.

Kobuleti Region has a unique soil cover, particularly red soils. These soils are ideal for growing subtropical crops. A. Krasnov [78] pioneered the study of these soils, laying the basis for the scientific study of Georgian soils. The development of agriculture has been greatly influenced by soil and climatic conditions.

The rivers with numerous tributaries that originate from springs, all with a positive chemical composition and ecologically pure are noteworthy. Rivers are home to a diverse range of fish species, including trout and barbel. Trout farms can be organized on the rivers. Every year, during the spawning season, Black Sea salmon enter the Kintrishi and Chakvistskali Rivers. Rivers are the best resource to build micro-power plants. There are many different types of mineral waters in the Region used by the locals for treatment. Many of them can be bottled.

Precious minerals such as gold and copper, as well as magnetic sand, andesites, tuffs, gabbro-diorites, firestone, and others, have recently been discovered in the Region.

The terrain is mainly presented by hills, as well as low, medium, and high mountains. The coastline is dominated by plains making 12.5% of the total land area.

Civilization has come into conflict with nature in Kobuleti Region, and on a global scale in general. The outcomes of the intense development of subtropical crops and expanded settlements were the cutting down of forest areas, reducing the habitat and number of animals, intensifying erosion processes, and decreasing soil fertility; intensive use of mineral fertilizers and other factors have led to atmospheric pollution, increasing the frequency of acid rains and their negative impact on the vegetation cover and stability of buildings and premises. Therefore, the preservation of nature is necessary.

To give the next generation an idea of the untouched nature of Kobuleti Region, it is necessary to preserve the territories that have been less affected by human actions. Landscapes such as the Ispaani Wetlands and areas on the Kobuleti and Chakvi Ridges are examples. They necessitate the establishment of appropriate types of protected areas, with nature reserves and national parks being particularly suitable types. A national park is distinct from a nature reserve in that it is closely linked to the sustainable socioeconomic development of a specific region. There is currently only one reserve in the area, located in the upper reaches of the Kintrishi River.

Intense subtropical farming has put environmental management and the region's prospects for sustainable development on the agenda. Exodynamic processes have recently intensified, necessitating sustainable development of nature and agriculture. Due to the land

scarcity, the population makes use of the steep terrain what leads to more intense erosion, landslides, and other natural hazards.

To restore the disturbed balance of nature and combat natural hazards, a comprehensive scientific program must be developed. The program should be based on the passportization of available information, the identification of its causes, the cartography, the compilation of a special map, and the implementation of efficient combat measures to ensure the sustainable development of nature in the Region.

The given paper is the result of many years of research by the author and the synthesis of existing materials. It will be of certain help to those who are interested in the problems of nature and agriculture in Kobuleti Region.

The author would like to thank Professor M. Davitadze, Associate Professor T. Gogmachadze, Associate Professor A. Bajelidze and G. Khomeriki, the Chief Geologist of the State Department of Mining and Geology of the Autonomous Republic of Ajara for reading some chapters of the manuscript and giving professional advice, as well as the editors: Doctor of Agricultural Sciences O. Ghorjomeladze and Candidate of Geographical Sciences Z. Komakhidze, reviewing journalist O. Kontselidze for the great work done on the book, Professor N. Beruchashvili, the Head of the Chair of Cartography and Geoinformatics of Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, for making maps.