

# **Spatial structure and development prospects of tourism in the Black Sea region of Turkey**

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This article sums up the results of a research project carried out by Mr. Frank-Michael CZAPEK and the author in 1976/77, sponsored by the Stiftung Volkswagenwerk, Hannover: "Traditional and modern forms of recreation and tourism in the Black Sea region of Northern Turkey". "Black Sea region" means the whole coast from the Bulgarian to the Soviet border including the adjoining mountains. Fieldwork was mainly based on a series of 1750 interviews (with questionnaires;) among students, pupils, workers and hotel managers and on mapping.

## **1. Characterization of the Black Sea Region**

Compared with other coastal areas the Black Sea region plays a minor part in the tourism of Turkey. Only a few percent of the total accommodation capacity in classified hotels are situated in this area. Moreover, hotels are scattered along the coast with no significant concentration (G. RITTER 1977, pp. 38/39). Not even the whole number of their so-called tourist beds represents tourism and recreation; in towns like Zonguldak, Samsun, Trabzon and Rize a considerable part of the accommodation capacity is usually occupied by professional travellers.

Modern beach tourism is concentrated in a few places mostly located in the western part of the coast and international tourism is even more limited. Besides there are structural differences of tourism between the western and eastern Black Sea region. Beach resorts are predominantly situated in the west, while in the east there are two types of tourist activities:

At the coast we find mostly sightseeing tourism, places with good beach infrastructure being very rare; the mountains of the eastern Black Sea region are still important for more traditional *yağla* recreation.(1).

Domestic tourism prevails by far in the whole Black Sea region. But there is no preference among Turkish townspeople for this area. On the contrary, there seems to be a strong stereotype against the Black Sea in the population of the big cities of Turkey. This has been indicated by the results of samples among 749 college

students in Istanbul, Ankara, Erzurum and Trabzon who were asked for their opinion on the most beautiful areas of Turkey. In Istanbul and Ankara only 8% preferred the Black Sea which means only rank four after the Mediterranean, Aegean and Marmara regions. While this ratio was 17 % (rank 3) in Erzurum it did not exceed 33 % (rank 1) even in Trabzon (F.M. CZAPEK 1983, p. 85). Preference for the Marmara, Aegean and Mediterranean coasts is also shown by the vacation destinations of College students in map 1.

The main reason for this low attractivity of the Black Sea region seems to be climate. Contrary to the Mediterranean and Aegean coasts the Black Sea area is humid even in summer. Precipitation strongly increases towards the east, reaching its maximum at Rize (about 2.400 mm per year). Although there are picturesque sections especially in the eastern part of the region the frequent cloudy and rainy weather is a severe handicap for tourism. But this reason does not seem to explain the negative image of the Black Sea completely (F.M. CZAPEK 1983, p. 88 f.).(2).

## 2. Spatial Structure of Tourism in the Black Sea Region

As pointed out before there are structural differences between the western and the eastern Black Sea sub-regions. Here, western part or "western sub-region" means the coast from Thrace to Akçakoca, the eastern part or "eastern subregion" comprises the coastal and mountain area from Ünye to Hopa.

It seems to be justified to delimit also a central sub-region of the coast running from the area of Zonguldak to the coastal plains near Samsun. But there are only very few tourist places located in this section due to the difficult accessibility and the lack of a good road along the coast. The most important tourist place in the central section is **Amasra**. It shows features of tourism similar to those of the places farther west. Thus, only the western and eastern parts of the Black Sea region will be compared in regard to their tourist structure.

### 2.1. The western sub-region

F.M. CZAPEK (1983, pp. 97-128) has given a good description of the main tourist resorts in this part of the coast. Kilyos, west of the Bosphorus, and Şile, east of it, besides Karasu and Akçakoca, are the best known seaside resorts. They are situated at a short or medium distance from Istanbul and can be easily reached on good access roads even from Ankara. Therefore, weekend visitors predominate. Especially in Kilyos and Şile long vacations stays are rather rare.

The tourist infrastructure of these seaside resorts is different. **Kilyos** and **Şile** offer accomodation in modern hotels or motels as well as in private houses. Tourism in **Akçakoça** is based mainly on accomodation in private houses and in unclassified hotels, in **Karasu** on vacation houses of a rather simple type. While Şile and Kilyos are resorts for middle and even upper income groups, Akçakoça and Karasu are vi-

sited predominantly by people with lower income. The percentage of foreign guests is considerable in hotels of high standart, that is in Kilyos and Şile(3). But most of these foreigners are by no means tourists visiting Turkey. The bulk of them is living and working in Istanbul or Ankara. This is a striking difference to other coastal regions of Turkey where visitors directly coming from other countries prevail among the foreign guests.

The fine beaches at the western part of the Black Sea coast have stimulated typical beach activities. In this respect there is no remarkable difference to the seaside resorts of the adjacent Marmara region but a strong one compared with the eastern sub-region of the Black Sea.

## **2.2. The eastern sub-region**

As stated before we can distinguish two types of tourism and recreation in the eastern part of the Black Sea region, one being located at the coast, the other one in the mountains.

### **2.2.1. The eastern coast**

From Ünye to the east the mountains descending to the coast form a sequence of gently curved bights. Sea, cliffs and thickly wooded mountain slopes offer beautiful scenes. There are many short sections of beach which, towards the east, more and more consists of gravel.

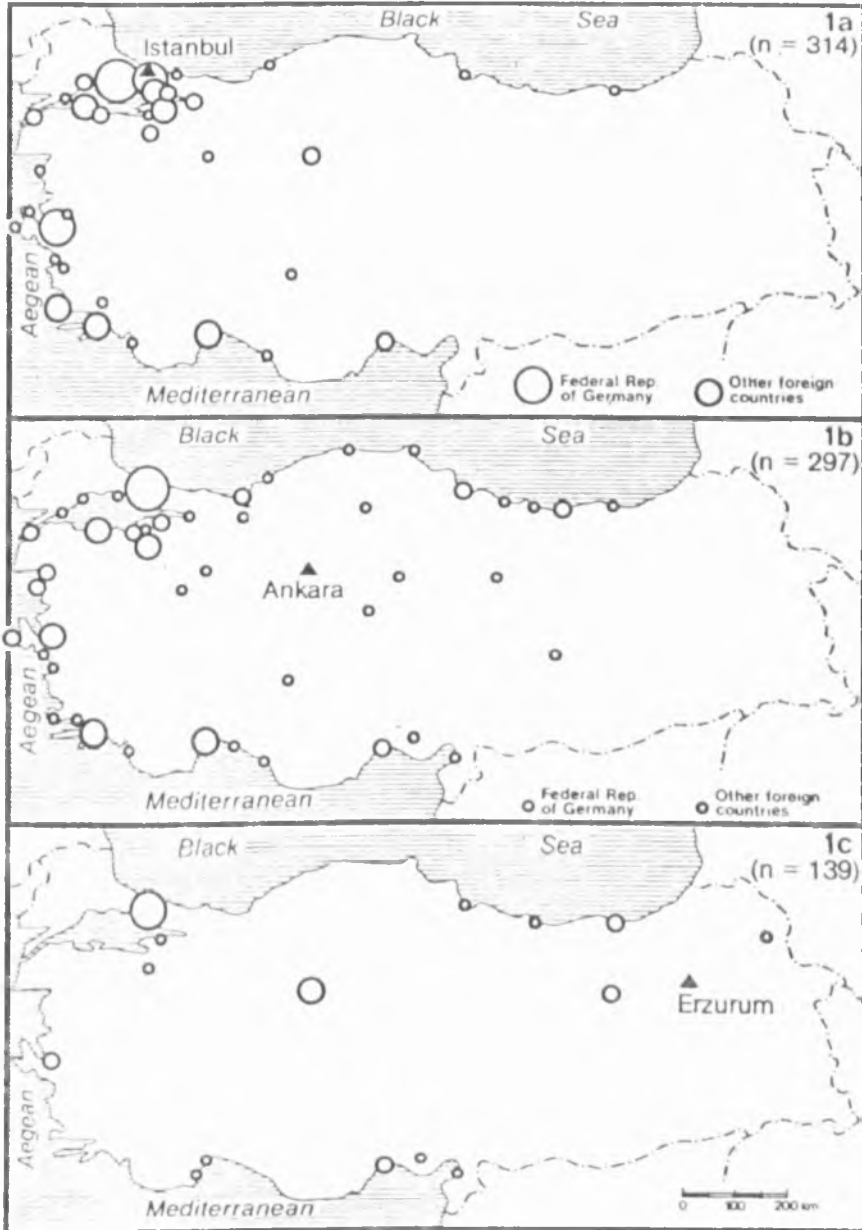
The whole eastern coast has been opened up by a good road from Sinop to Hopa offering easy access. Besides Trabzon (about 100.000 inhabitants) many middle and small towns could serve as nodal points of tourism development. Some of them have already some basic seaside infrastructure like bathing beaches (plaj), camping grounds, cabins, modest restaurants etc., but most of these facilities are in a rather neglected and sometimes even ruined state. Their existence proves former attempts to develop beach recreation, resulting in little or no success. These attempts were done by local initiatives, both municipal or private, which lacked adequate planning, investment and maintenance.

Ünye (F.M. CZAPEK 1983, pp. 139-145) is the only place where modern beach tourism has developed to a certain degree. Here a motel and a well-equipped camping ground attract considerable numbers of visitors coming mainly from nearby towns and provinces and from Ankara and Istanbul. Other good beaches are located near Ordu and somewhat east of Trabzon. But they seem mostly to be used by some local young people for swimming and playing ball games. Near Trabzon there are a few vacation settlements (kamplar) for members of public institutions. They are occupied during July and August by limited groups of guests from the provinces of North-East Turkey.

Sightseeing tourism seems to be more important in the eastern Black Sea sub-re-

Map 1:

Vacation destinations of interviewed College students in Istanbul, Ankara and Erzurum (1976)



<p>Indications per destination (including multiple answers)</p> <p>○ 2-4   ○ 5-10   ○ 11-20   ○ 21-34   ○ 35 or more</p>	<p>▲ Place of interviews n = number of interviewees</p> <p>Source F M CZAPEK 1983</p>
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gion than beach tourism although even the number of sightseeing tourists is not high. The coast between Ünye and Trabzon attracts only few visitors inspite of the picturesque landscape. **Trabzon** has attained some importance as a starting point for sightseeing tours of foreign tourist groups in eastern Turkey. They usually come by plane from Istanbul, stay one or two nights in Trabzon and leave it for Erzurum via the Zigana Pass. The considerable number of hotels in Trabzon, however, does not reflect great importance of tourism in this town as most of them are of poor standart being frequented by small traders, lorry drivers etc. As to the coast east of Trabzon it is even less visited than that west of the town.

### 2.2.2. Yayla recreation in the eastern Black Sea mountains

The eastern Black Sea mountains rise up to nearly 4.000 m above sea level in the Kaçkar Dağ south-east of Rize. Only this eastern part of the mountain range has the typical rocky high mountain landforms while farther west the mountains consist of gently rounded ridges reaching about 3.000 m as far as Ordu. It is mainly this western part which offers excellent summer pastures abounding with yayla settlements (G. SCHWEIZER 1981).

In the past a great number of villagers and even townspeople from the coast and the northern slope of the mountains migrated regularly up to the yaylas (X. de PLANHOL 1963). These very popular seasonal migrations have changed in two respects: 1. There has been a decline of yayla population and the time of stays became shorter in many cases. This is mainly due to the increase of hazel and tea cultivation along the Turkish Black Sea coast.(4) 2. In general mountain yaylas have become more and more important for recreation, being considered as health resorts with good water and fresh air. Even in the past many people went to the yaylas not only for economic but also for recreational reasons. This function has increased considerably during the last decades. This is indicated by the rising number of yayla houses being used only for recreation, not for agriculture or pasturing.

Some yaylas or mezraas, situated from 1.200 to 2.000 m above sea level, have developed even to tourist places, offering considerable "hotel" accomodation. But hotels and restaurants are mostly of poor quality, so that guests are limited to lower or medium income groups.

### Accomodation capacity for visitors in mountain yaylas of the Eastern Black Sea Region (1977)

Yayla (Province)	No of "hotels"	No. of beds
Çambaşı (Ordu)	7	140
Bektaş (Giresun)	9*	271
Kümbet (Giresun)	8	90
Sultan Murat (Trabzon)	3	60
Ayder/Ilıca (Rize)	20	more than 400

**Note:** . The only modern hotel is in Bektaş (113 beds).

Hotel guests do not only come from the nearby coastal towns but also from Istanbul and Izmir. These urban visitors are not at all strangers to the yayla environment. Even the guests from Istanbul and Izmir are natives of the eastern Black Sea region who emigrated to the big cities or their descendants(5). Thus, tourists in the yaylas of the eastern Black Sea mountains consist of different groups of the indigenous population living either in their home region or in the cities of western Turkey or even in the countries of Central Europe (E. GRÖTZBACH 1982).

The number of hotels and tourist beds is largest in **Ayder** (Iliça) in the Kaçkar mountains southeast of Rize. Here spa tourism has been stimulated by two warm mineral springs being much frequented by tourists and yayla people. Even a part of the "hotels" are owned by emigrants living in cities or towns (map 2). It is the only tourist place in the whole sub-region where the Ministry of Tourism has improved infrastructure by financing electrification and a new access road.

The tourist yaylas of the eastern Black Sea mountains are integrated neither in modern national nor international tourism. They have conserved specific forms of traditional rural recreation although a great part of their guests are living in towns and cities. Indeed, the yayla visitors have spread over the country by emigration, but their forms of recreation were not taken over by outside groups of the urban population. This may be the consequence of incomplete social integration of emigrants into the urban society which applies at least to the people from Lazistan (E. GRÖTZBACH 1982).

### **3. The Prospects of Tourism Development**

The prospects of tourism development in the Black Sea region are different according to the accessibility and infrastructure of places.

In the western part, that means in the vicinity of Istanbul, there seem to be good possibilities for the expansion of tourism. But, considering the competition with the Marmara and Aegean regions, the development prospects of Kilyos, Şile and other resorts at the Black Sea coast will be rather limited mainly due to weather conditions. Weekend visits probably will remain more important than long vacation stays.

The central part of the Black Sea region seems to be the natural seaside recreation area for Ankara, being the nearest coast from that city. But here tourism is suffering from the difficult accessibility of many places. It is not sure that improved road connections from Ankara would cause a strong increase of tourist flows from the capital. Contrary to the western part of the coast the places are too remote for weekend trips. Long staying visitors from Ankara will not be very numerous as long as the strong stereotype against the Black Sea area exists. May be that some places could be deve-

Map 2



USE OF BUILDINGS

- Residential
- Lokanta (restaurant)/tea house
- Hotel/inn with restaurant
- Hotel/inn without restaurant
- Shop/kiosk/workshop
- Public services (Dg = diesel generator, H = hamam/thermal bath, v = local administration)
- Mosque

BUILDINGS ACCORDING TO STYLE AND OWNERS RESIDENCE

- Wooden structure } local owner
- Stone structure } local owner
- Wooden structure } non-local owner
- Stone structure } non-local owner

D = Dolmuş  
(Bus)-stop

Approximate elevation in m - Contour lines are only approximate! - Draft E Grotzbach

loped as seaside resorts for low income groups from Ankara who cannot afford the longer trips to and the higher expenses in the Aegean and Mediterranean regions. Apart from these groups the population of the middle towns situated between Ankara and the central Black Sea coast, as Karabük and Kastamonu, is likely to provide the bulk of tourists to this seaside in future.

The situation is similar in the eastern part of the Black Sea region. Although this sub-region has a broader tourism potential owing to the mountain hinterland of the coast it will be difficult to develop it.

There are several handicaps to the promotion of seaside tourism at the eastern coast. The humid climate as the most important one has been mentioned before. Another obstacle are the long distances from Istanbul and Ankara which are still the main sources of domestic tourist flows in Turkey. The poor state of tourist-orientated infrastructure and the lack of historic sights diminish the attractiveness of the region for foreign tourists. Moreover, it should be noted that authorities and people of this area are not yet fully aware of the tourist potential of beaches. In many places fine beaches were destroyed by road-building, have been misused as rubbish grounds or have been built up with new houses. Some towns the impression of turning their backside to the sea (for example Araklı and even parts of Ordu).

The best chances for further development seem to exist in places having already a basic infrastructure for tourism. First of all we have to name **Ünye** with its fine beaches. It is already a resort for long staying visitors as well as for sightseeing tourists. **Ordu**, as a provincial capital, offers the same possibilities but has only some transient tourism until now. Its beautiful site at the foot of Boztepe (560 m), nearby beaches and interesting roads to the mountains - especially to **Çambaşı Yayla** - should be propagated in order to prolong the tourists' stays. Farther east the increasingly humid climate will impede the development of seaside tourism although there are sections of beautiful scenery.

The traditional yayla tourism is limited to comparatively small groups of the population. Thus, its promotion in general does not seem justified, but there are exceptions.

The main exception is **Ayder** which has been mentioned before (map 2). This place has already got governmental assistance to improve its infrastructure. Ayder could be developed as a starting place for excursions to the mountains of **Kaçkar Dağ** (3937 m). This is one of the few real high mountain areas of Turkey being already visited by Turkish and foreign mountaineers.

The mountains of the eastern Black Sea sub-region offer outstanding possibilities for skiing if we consider their high snow cover in winter. But during winter the problem of accessibility is even much more difficult than in summer. **Çambaşı**



Yayla, consisting of gentle slopes suitable for beginners and ski hikers, and Ayder with Kavron Yayla in a precipitous high alpine relief, are not accessible in winter up to now. The best existing access to the mountains during winter time is by the road over the Zigana Pass (2.025 m) south of Trabzon. But there the steep slopes offer only limited possibilities or skiing.

The opening up of the eastern Black Sea mountains for winter sports would require heavy investments to create a new infrastructure. It is questionable if the demand for skiing grounds in Turkey will be strong enough to justify such investments. Demand depends not only on economic growth in general and incomes in particular but also on the dynamics of recreational behavior: an accelerated westernization process probably would also popularize skiing and other modern winter sports. The potential of winter tourists consists mostly of young people from the big cities of Turkey. But distances from these cities to the eastern Black Sea mountains are too long, access in winter is too difficult and expenses would be too high as to enable large numbers of young tourists to visit new winter resorts in that region. Thus, the skiing potential of the eastern Black Sea mountains is likely to remain unused during the next years or even decades.

Tourism planning in the Black Sea region has to consider that this seaside area is not able to compete with other coasts of Turkey which are much more popular. It seems that the recreational functions of the area will remain more regional and even local while far-reaching tourism could be developed only at certain places which offer special attractions to domestic or foreign visitors(6). In general the prospects of tourism development in the Black Sea region cannot be judged as favourable because of the negative image resulting mainly from the handicaps of climate and remoteness.

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**Notes :**

- (1) Yayla recreation generally will not be considered as "tourism" in a narrow sense. But having developed specific modern forms it has to be included in tourism which term is used here in a broad sense.
- (2) It should be noted that tourism at the eastern Soviet Black Sea coast is flourishing even under similar climatic conditions as the example of Sochi shows!
- (3) R.J. BENDER (1977, p. 403) states that 25 % of all visitors in Kilyos are foreigners which is apparently an overestimation.
- (4) Hazelnuts are cropped in August. Thus, many yaylas are left by a great part of their population at the end of July after a stay of only a few weeks.
- (5) The eastern Black Sea region is one of the most densely populated regions of Turkey and therefore one of the main sources of emigration to the cities, especially to Istanbul (see H. LOUIS 1972 and G. RITTER 1972).
- (6) A combination of such attractions seems to be most prospective, as for example: beach activities and excursions to yaylas or general sightseeing, beach activities and yayla excursions. Potential objects of sightseeing include tea and hazel gardens, tea factories etc. which have not been involved in tourism up to now.

## Özet

### *Türkiye'nin Karadeniz Bölgesi'nde turizmin mekânsal yapısı ve gelişmesi*

Bu yazı 1976-1977 yılında Frank-Michael CZAPEK tarafından yürütülen "Kuzey Türkiye'nin Karadeniz Bölgesindeki Rekreasyon ve Turizmin Rekreasyon ve Turizmin Geleneksel ve Modern Biçimleri" konulu araştırmanın ilk sonuçlarının bir özetidir. Bu çalışmada "Karadeniz Bölgesi" olarak Bulgaristan'dan Sovyet sınırına kadar olan tüm Karadeniz kıyısı ele alınmıştır.

Diğer kıyı bölgeleriyle karşılaştırıldığında Karadeniz Bölgesinin Türkiye turizmindeki yeri çok küçüktür. Yalnızca Zonguldak, Trabzon, ve Rize gibi illerde turistleri barındırabilecek oteller bulunmaktadır. Modern turizm esas olarak kıyının batı bölümünde bir kaç yerde yoğunlaşmıştır. Uluslararası turizm ise çok sınırlıdır. Bunun dışında, tüm Karadeniz Bölgesini kapsayan ve tümüyle yerli halkın yaptığı "geleneksel yayla rekreasyonu" söz konusudur.

Karadeniz Bölgesini üç alt-bölgeye ayırabiliriz:

1) Trakya'dan Akçakoca'ya kadar **batı alt-bölgesi**; Karasu ve Akçakoca'nın yanında Kilyos, Şile bu alt-bölgenin tanınmış kıyı yerleşmeleridir. Bu yerleşmeler İstanbul ve Ankara'ya kısa yada orta uzaklıklarda yer almaları nedeniyle haftasonu tatilleri için uygun merkezler durumundadırlar. Özellikle Kilyos ve Şile'de uzun süreli kalmalar çok azdır.

2) Zonguldak'tan Salsun'a kadar **orta alt-bölge**; kıyı boyunca iyi bir yolun bulunmaması burada turist çekebilecek yerlerin çok sınırlı olmasına yol açmıştır en önemli merkez Amasra'dır.

3) Ünye'den Hopa'ya kadar **doğu alt-bölgesi**, bu alt-bölgede esas olarak iki tür turizm faaliyeti gözlenmektedir:

a- Doğu Kıyıları: Sinop'tan Hopa'ya kadar güzel bir kıyı yolu vardır. Trabzon'un yanında çok sayıda orta ve küçük yerleşmeler, turizmin gelişmesi için uygun merkezler haline dönüştürülebilir. Bu yerleşmelerden bazılarında şu anda plaj, kamp alanları, kabinler, restoranlar, vb. bir takım temel kıyı tesisleri bulunmaktadır. Fakat bunların çoğu yetersizdir ya da iyi durumda değildir. Bu alt-bölgede modern plaj turizminin geliştiği tek yer Ünye'dir. Bir motel ve iyi donatılmış bir kamping alanıyla yakın kentlere olduğu kadar Ankara ve İstanbul'a da hizmet vermektedir.

b- Doğu Karadeniz Dağları'nda yayla rekreasyonu: Çok sayıda köylü hatta kentlinin düzenli olarak kıyıdan ve dağların kuzey eteklerinden yaylalara gitmesi şeklinde görülen bu mevsimlik göç esas olarak iki şekilde değişim göstermiştir:

— Halkın yaylada kalma süresi fundık ve çay gibi ürünlerin toplanma mevsimine bağlı olarak azalmıştır.

— Genel olarak iyi su ve temiz hava gibi özellikleriyle yaylaların giderek sağlık açısından önemi artmış ve rekreasyon alanları olarak kullanılmaya başlanmıştır. Bu durumda yayla evlerinin ekonomik kullanımdan çok rekreasyonel nedenlerle kullanılmaya başlandığı söylenebilir.

Karadeniz Bölgesi'nde turizmin gelişme olasılıkları, yerlerin konum ve alt yapılarına göre değişiklikler göstermektedir:

Batı alt-bölgesinde İstanbul'a yakınlık turizmin gelişmesi için iyi olanaklar sunmaktadır. Fakat Marmara ve Ege'nin turizm alanlarıyla karşılaştırıldığında, Karadeniz kıyısındaki Kilyos, Şile ve diğer yerlerde, iklim koşullarına bağlı olarak gelişmenin çok sınırlı olacağı söylenebilir. Yine de hafta sonu tatilleri için çekici alanlar haline getirilebilirler.

Orta alt-bölge, Ege ve Akdeniz kıyılarındaki yüksek harcamalar gerektiren tesislerden yararlanamıyan orta ve düşük gelirli Ankara'dan gelecek guruplar için (Ankara'ya en yakın kıyı olması nedeniyle) turizm alanı olarak çekici hale getirilebilir. Doğu alt-bölgesi ise, çok geniş turizm potansiyeline sahiptir. Bölgede bir çok denizden yararlanılabilecek alan yol inşası, çöp dökme ya da konut yapımı ile kullanılamaz hale gelmişsece, iyi otelleri ve plajlarıyla Ünye'nin burada yer alması büyük bir şanstır. Diğer yandan, Ayder'in Kaçkar Dağı'na düzenlenebilecek dağ gezileri için bir başlangıç yeri olarak geliştirilmesi düşünülebilir. Çambaşı Yaylası'nun bir kayak merkezi haline getirilmesi de mümkündür.