

REGIONAL PROFILE: COLCHIC AND HYRCANIC TEMPERATE RAINFORESTS OF THE WESTERN EURASIAN CAUCASUS

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Located in the eastern (E, SE, NE) portion of the Black Sea catchment basin (see figure 9-1), the climate of the Colchic region is moderately warm ($24\text{--}25^{\circ}\text{C}$) with cool ($4\text{--}6^{\circ}\text{C}$) winters and abundant annual precipitation (typically 1,800–2,200 millimeters and up to 4,500 millimeters on Mount Mtirala). The Hyrcanic region covers the eastern slopes of the Talysh Mountains and northern slopes of the Elburz Mountains at the southern coastal area of the Caspian Sea. The regional climate is also warm ($24\text{--}26^{\circ}\text{C}$) with colder ($-2\text{--}6^{\circ}\text{C}$) winters and less precipitation ($\sim 1,500$ millimeters to 2,000 millimeters annually). Collectively, the two regions extend from 35 to 44°N latitude and are part of a much larger region known as the Caucasus, an area dominated by the Caucasus Mountains that mark the boundary between Europe and Asia. Here, a thin band of rich rainforest is surrounded by expansive deserts, mountains, and inland seas.

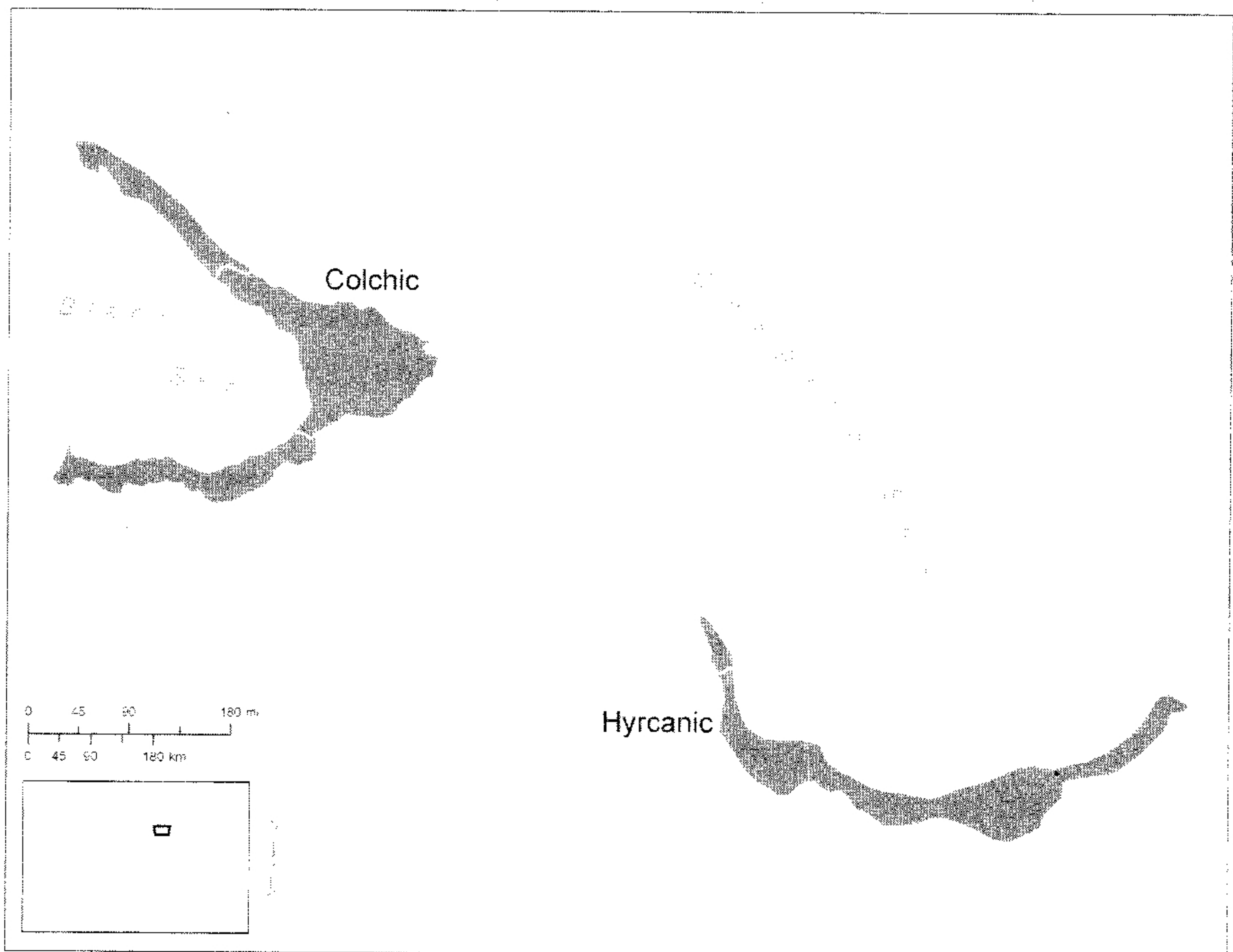


Figure 9-1. Colchic and Hyrcanic temperate rainforests of the Western Eurasian Caucasus.