

12. LAKE DIGENI and GERGERI RESERVOIR

LOCATION: The village of Gergeri is the head of Municipality and lies 39 km southwest of Heraklion. You can reach to Gergeri via Heraklion-Agia Varvara-Gergeri country road.

DESCRIPTION: Rouvas Municipality stands at the foothill of mountain Psiloriti. Economic activity is based mainly in agriculture and to all these activities that are related with this sector. Cattle's breeding is well developed because of the highland and mountainous terrain of the region. Rouva's forest, which is a part of Zaros forest, presents the ability of developing special forms of tourism. This is one of the greatest kermes oak forests of Greece while in this area we can see a lot of endemic species of flora and fauna. This area is included in the zone of Natura 2000 and is considered as a special community interest area. The area of the Municipality overlooks plain Messara, has a significant value and represents the gate for the southwest Crete. The settlement of Gergeri is declared as a traditional village and in the wider region there are many Byzantine churches with interesting frescos that are being dated from 15th century as Panagia Kera or Hanutia and church Metamorphosis that is partially constructed with marble pieces of an ancient temple.

AVI FAUNA: This area attracts a lot of migratory birds as well as raptors. It is also ideal for the watching of the great raptors that resort in mountain Idi (Psiloritis). Among these species we can see: Bearded vulture, Griffon vulture, Golden Eagle, Peregrine, Kestrel, Falcon, Hen Harrier, Grey Heron, Night Heron, Moorhern. Among those that nest: Black eared Wheater, Linnet, Black Kite.

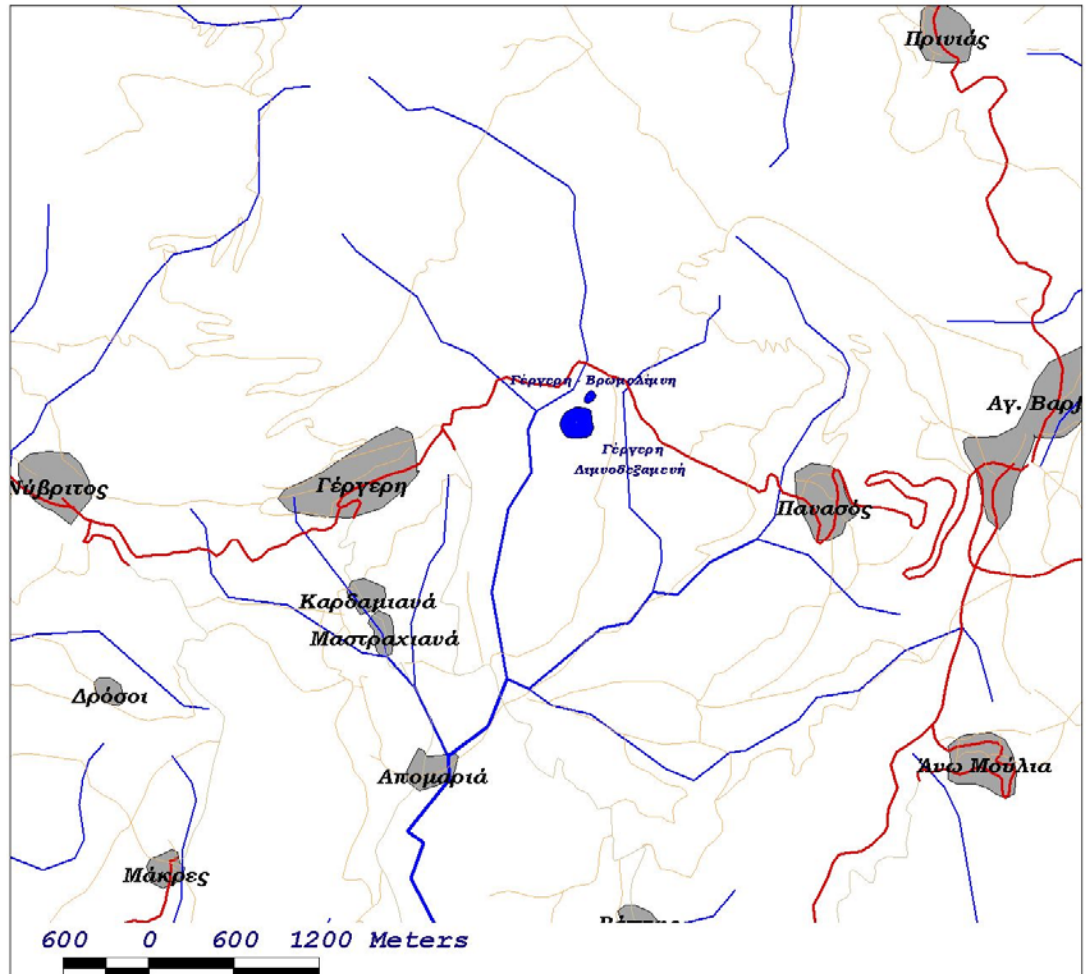
REST FAUNA: Cretan marsh frog (*Rana cretensis*), Common tree frog (*Hyla arborea*), Green toad (*Bufo viridis*), Striped-necked terrapin (*Mauremys rivulata*), Turkish Gecko (*Hemidactylus turcicus*), Balkan Green Lizard (*Lacerta trilineata*), Occelated Skink (*Chalcides ocellatus*), Balkan Whip Snake (*Coluber gemonensis*), Leopard Snake (*Elaphe situla*), Dice Snake (*Natrix tessellata*), Cat Snake (*Telescopus fallax*), Budger (*Meles meles*), Budger (*Mustela nivalis*), Beech Marten (*Martes foina*), Eastern Hedgehog (*Erinaceus concolor*), Lesser white toothed Shrew (*Crocidura suaveolens*), Pygmy white toothed Shrew (*Suncus etruscus*), Brown hare (*Lepus europaeus*), Wood Mouse (*Apodemus sylvaticus*), House Mouse (*Mus musculus*), Black Rat (*Rattus rattus*).

FLORA: The Lake of Gergheri has not developed up to date any kind of wetland vegetation except for some human related species that come across in the slopes. In

the neighbor area of Vromolimni that is used as an overflow the vegetation consists mainly of Phrygana, (among them grow a lot of orchids and endemic species) and a few rooted plants as wild almond and olive trees.

TIME: Spring and autumn is appropriate for bird watching although there are chances during the whole year.

Map 12. Lake Digeni and Gergeri Reservoir





Gergheri reservoir



Digeni to Mnima Lake