

Biodiversity conservation

Why are conservation actions needed?

- The project will result in the loss of natural vegetation, including “critical habitat” for *Potentilla porphyrantha*, a rare alpine plant, and Brown Bear (*Ursus arctos*). There will be disturbance to other wildlife including birds and reptiles listed in Armenia’s Red Book.
- Although the project will aim to minimise impacts to the extent possible, and a restoration programme will be implemented post-mining, Lydian recognises that some long-lasting effects on biodiversity are likely to remain.

What is Lydian’s approach to conservation?

- The priorities are firstly to prevent impacts, secondly to minimise them where they are unavoidable, and thirdly to restore vegetation and habitats to original condition following impact. Where these actions are not sufficient to ensure no net loss of biodiversity in the long term, Lydian will implement additional conservation actions.
- All conservation actions will be designed in consultation with appropriate Armenian and international specialists and, where necessary, will be backed up by detailed scientific research programmes. Local stakeholders will be engaged in the decision process.

Planned conservation actions

- An area of natural vegetation on Amulsar Mountain will be preserved. This “set-aside” located at Arshak will not be mined and will ensure that a viable population of *Potentilla porphyrantha* remains, and habitat for Brown Bears and alpine birds.
- Lydian will establish an “offset” outside the project area to compensate for its impacts on natural vegetation. Lydian plans to set up the offset as part of the new Jermuk National Park, and is working with government and NGOs to investigate options.
- Research is underway to determine the best approach to protecting *Potentilla porphyrantha*. Lydian is working with experts from Cambridge University on the translocation of plants to botanical gardens in Yerevan and elsewhere, and aims to enhance the population at Amulsar post-mining. Offsetting will be considered if necessary to ensure “critical habitat” gain.
- A baseline study is underway to investigate how Brown Bear resides in and/or uses the project area, in order to determine whether any specific conservation measures are needed to ensure its long-term survival. If necessary, conservation actions will be implemented as part of the offset planned for natural vegetation.

