

Short-break Visit to Istanbul yields Persian Squirrel

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1. Introduction

A. The Persian (Caucasian) Squirrel *Sciurus anomalus* is distributed as follows; see:-

<http://maps.iucnredlist.org/map.html?id=20000>

B. Note that it has a small presence in:-

- i. European Turkey
- ii. Some Greek islands in the Aegean
- iii. Some Turkish islands in the Aegean

C. If you find yourself in Istanbul – maybe on a visit to see the sights and experience the culture – it's fairly easy to see this species at the edge of this amazing city.

D. *Our visit took place in **March 2012**.*

2. Location

A. Below are x2 maps courtesy of Google:-

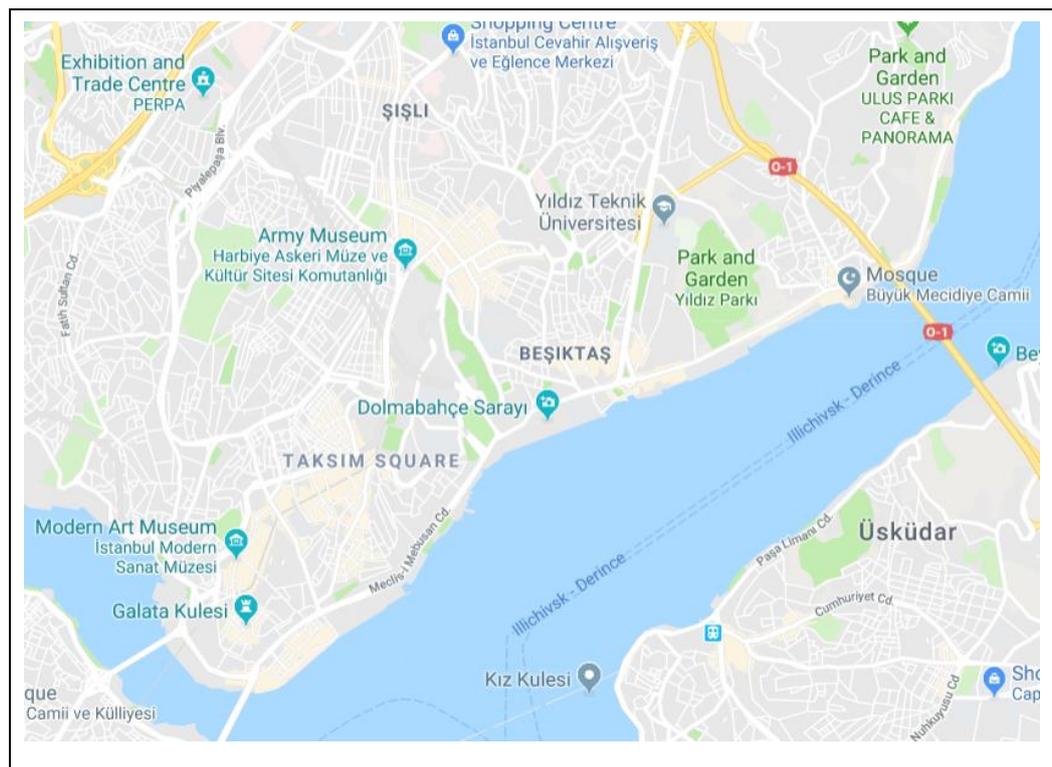


Fig 1. General Map – Central, North Central and North East Bosphorus Area

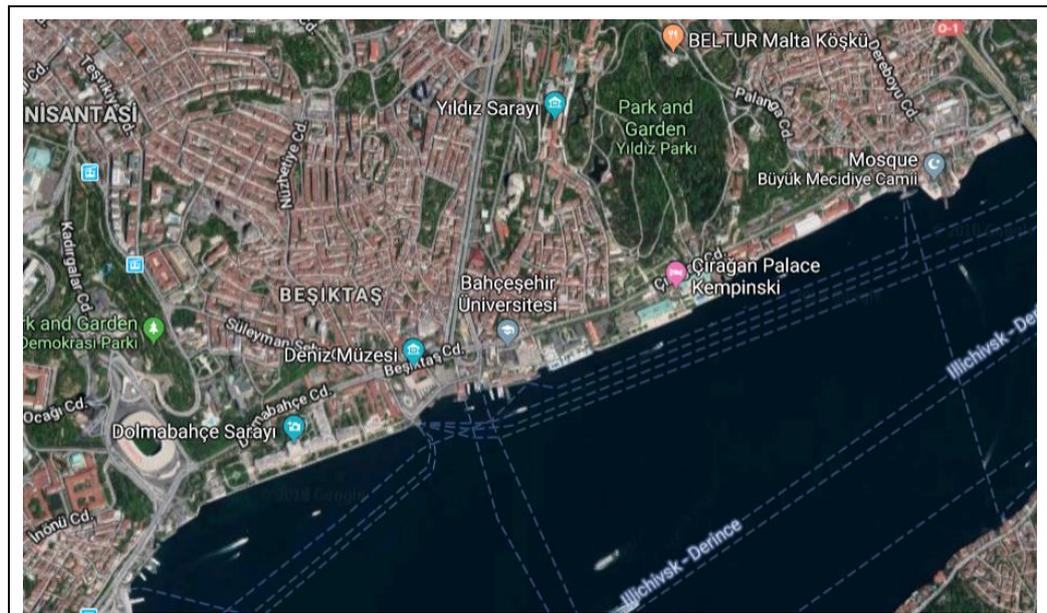


Fig 2. Aerial Map – Besiktas and East Bosphorus Area

- B. There's a park area to the east / north-east of the Besiktas football stadium on the banks of the Bosphorus. In both Fig 1 and Fig 2 above it's called 'Park and Garden Yıldız Parki'. That's where the squirrel can be found.
- C. Within Fig 2; the football stadium can be seen bottom left and the park clearly in the top-right-centre area of the map.
- D. It's quite possible the squirrel also occurs in the smaller park above the football stadium (or indeed in other parks); but I did not investigate this.

3. How to Get There

- A. It's very easy to get a bus from one of the main tourist areas (eg just north of the small bridges at the bottom-left of the map in Fig 1) to the road that goes past the park area.
- B. You will need to buy bus tickets/tokens in a shop or kiosk beforehand. You can also get a small, free, fold-up map of the city that includes the target area.
- C. Everyone is very helpful and the route – to one of the Bosphorus bridges – is well known

4. Other Matters

- A. Within the park area is a police station. However, there were no issues going in. *Noting events in Turkey over the last couple of years – this may have changed?*
- B. I left our hotel in the tourist area at about 06:45 and got to the park and back by 08:30 to join them for a late breakfast having seen the squirrel. I saw the squirrel within about 10 mins of entering the park.
- C. There were some large dogs resting and roaming in the park; they did not trouble me (although I gave them a wide berth). However, they were quite fearsome so take care.

Good luck

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