

Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands

Categories approved by Recommendation 4.7 of the Conference of the Contracting Parties.

NOTE: It is important that you read the accompanying *Explanatory Note and Guidelines* document before completing this form.

1. Date this sheet was completed/updated:

15 May 1998

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01 11 98

Designation date

2 IR 019

Site Reference Number

2. Country: Islamic Republic of Iran

3. Name of wetland: Govater Bay and Hur-e-Bahu

4. Geographical coordinates: 25° 10' N 61° 30' E

5. Altitude: (average and/or max. & min.) Sea Level to 50m

6. Area: (in hectares) 75000ha

7. Overview: (general summary, in two or three sentences, of the wetland's principal characteristics)

The riverine and estuarine Wetlands of the Lower Sarbaz River, including permanent fresh water pools and marshes, mangrove swamps and inter-tidal mudflats, and also the sandy beach of the adjacent Gulf at the Oman Coast in extreme southeast of Iran. The site is important for *Crocodylus palustris* and wintering water fowl, notably *Pelecanus Crispus*, Shorebirds, gulls and terns.

"Gulf of Oman coast" (Ought)

8. Wetland Type (please circle the applicable codes for wetland types as listed in Annex I of the *Explanatory Note and Guidelines* document.)

marine-coastal: (A) · B · C · D · E · (F) · (G) · H · (I) · J · K

inland: L · M · N · O · P · Q · R · Sp · Ss · (Tp) · Ts
· U · Va · Vt · W · Xf · Xp · Y · Zg · Zk

man-made: 1 · 2 · 3 · 4 · 5 · 6 · 7 · 8 · 9

Please now rank these wetland types by listing them from the most to the least dominant: A, F, G, I, Tp

9. Ramsar Criteria: (please circle the applicable criteria, see point 12, next page.)

(1a) · 1b · 1c · 1d | (2a) · (2b) · 2c · 2d | 3a · 3b · (3c) | 4a · 4b

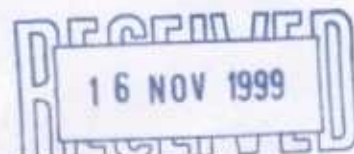
Please specify the most significant criterion applicable to the site: 1a, 2a, 2b, 3c

10. Map of site included? Please tick **yes** -or- **no**

(refer to the *Explanatory Note and Guidelines* document for information regarding desirable map scales)

Name and address of the compiler of this form:

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12- Justification of the Criteria:

The wetlands of lower Sarbaz River and Khor Govater Contain excellent examples of Semi-permanent riverine wetlands and stuarine mudflat/ mangrove ecosystems characteristic of Southern Persian Baluchestan and adjacent to the Baluchestan Province of Pakistan. The Wetlands Support a diverse fauna and flora which is primarily indo- Malayan in affinity, and thus play an important role in maintaining the genetic and ecological diversity of the region. The lower Sarbaz River Supports a Substantial population of *Crocodylus Palustris*, while Khor Govater Supports a wintering population of *Pelecauns Cripus* (both globally threatened species). Another threatened species, *Aquila heliaca*, occurs in winter. Khor Govater regularly Supports over $\frac{1}{2}$ of the regional populations of *Phalacrocorax Carbo*, *Larus hemprichii*, *Larus genei*, *Sterna Caspia* and *S.bergii* during the migration Seasons and in winter. The Dasht River in South-Western Pakistan is near the border and is reported to have marsh Crocodiles.

The fact that Iran has established a Ramsar Site for its numerous values among them marsh Crocodile, as opposed to the animal being simply a protected Species, would create a greater national and international concern for the Crocodile.

13- General Location:

In extreme Southeast Persian Baluchestan near the Pakistan border, 85 Km east of Chabahar, Sistan and Baluchestan Parovince.

14- Physical Features:

The Site Comprises the lower course of the Sarbaz River, its estuary in Khor Govater (Govater Bay), and a 61 km Stretch of the Oman Coast in the extreme Southeast Corner of Persian Baluchestan up to the Pakistan border. Erratic winter rains in the interior of Baluchestan Produce some surface flow in the river in most years, and there are occasional torrential floods, but for much of the year, Surface water in the river bed is confined to a series of deep, Stagnant pools. There are extensive inter-tidal mudflats in the estuarine portion of the river and about 200 ha of mangrove forest. The coast-line consists of long Sandy beaches backed by sand dune areas as well as stretches of high sea-cliffs.

A tiny rocky islet offshore provides a roost for large numbers of sea birds but is unsuitable as breeding habitat because it is awash during storms.

The region is generally extremely hot throughout the year, and has very low winter rainfall. However, the climate in summer is influenced by the south west monsoon, and although heavy

rainfall is unusual, the humidity remains high throughout the summer.

15- Hydrological Values:

No information

16- Ecological Features:

Permanent pools in the bed of the Sarbaz River Support rich submerged aquatic vegetation and a narrow fringe of emergent vegetation. including some phragmites sp. and Typha sp.

Mangrove areas in the estuarine Zone are mono-specific stands of *Avicennia marina* with some very large trees. A high water table in the main valley supports open parklike woodland of *Acacia*, *prosopis*, *Ziziphus*, *Tamarix* and date palms, with stands of oleander and fan-palms along the river bed. Away from the river the vegetation is extremely sparse, and much of the area is almost devoid of vegetation except after the very infrequent rains.

17- Noteworthy flora:

The large stand of *Avicennia marina* at the mouth of the Sarbaz River contains some of the largest mangrove trees in Iran. The riparian *Tamarix* vegetation type of the Sarbaz River is notable.

18- Note worthy fauna:

The tidal mudflats, mangroves, sandy beaches and inshore waters at the mouth of the Sarbaz River are an important wintering area for *Phalacrocorax carbo* (up to 3500) , *Pelecanus crispus* (maximum of 25 in the 1970s but up to 112 in recent years), *Platalea leucorodia* (up to 49), a variety shorebirds (notably *Haematopus ostralegus*, *Calidris alba*, *Limosa lapponica*, *Numenius arquata* and *Tringa totanus*) and gulls, The latter have included up to 2000 *Larus ridibundus*, 1000 *L. genei* and 1000 *L. cachinnans*. Scarce winter visitors have included single *Ciconia nigra* and *pluvialis fulva*. Large numbers of terns occur on passage, including up to 2000 *Sterna bergii*,. Breeding birds in this area include *Ardeola grayii* (up to 15 pairs), *Halcyon smyrnensis* (Common) and *Acrocephalus stentoreus* (Common). Up to 14 *Pandion haliaetus* have been recorded in winter, and the species is thought to breed in the area. Other wintering raptors have included *Haliaeetus albicilla*, *Accipiter badius* (up to 4), *Neophron percnopterus* (up to 2/), *Aquila heliaca*, *Falco cherrug* and *F. peregrinus*. *Chlamydotis undulata* is a regular winter visitor to the mudflats of the nearby Dashtyari in flocks of up to 11 birds. The avifauna of the lower Sarbaz Valley is typical of the lowlands of Baluchistan, and has much stronger affinities with the Indo-malayan fauna than with the palearctic.

Characteristic Species include *Butastur teesa*, *Aquila rapax*, *Gyps bengalensis*, *Francolinus Pondicerianus*, *Turdix Sylvatica*, *Pterocles exustus*, *Athene brama*, *Caprimulgus maharattensis*, *Dendrocopos assimilis*, *Calandrella raytal*, *Lanius vittatus*, *Saxicola caprata*, *Lonchura mala arica*, *Passer Pyrrhonotus* and *Acridotheres tristis*. At least 204 species of birds have been recorded in the Bahu kalat protected Area. The Sarbaz River is noted for its thriving population of Marsh Crocodile or Muggar (*Crocodylus Palustris*), the western most population of this south Asian species. Other fauna in the protected Area include Desert Monitor (*Varanus griseus*), Common Indian Mongoose (*Herpestes edwardsi*), Palm Squirrel (*Funambulus Pennanti*), Golden Jackal (*Canis aureus*), Monitor Lizard, Striped Hyena (*Hyaena hyaena*), Caracal (*Lynx Caracal*), Leopard (*Felis Pardus*), Wild Boar (*Sus Scrofa*), Chinkara Gazelle (*Gazella dorcas bennetti*), Persian Ibex (*Capra hircus aegagrus*) and wild sheep (*Ovis ammon*). The rare Baluchistan race of the Himalayan Black Bear (*Selenarctos thibetanus*) is believed to occur in the reserve. Govater Bay with many sand beaches is likely a major sea turtle nesting ground.

19- Social , Cultural Values:

No information

20- Land tenure:

Rivers and Bay is Governmental

Site:

Farmlands is private

Rangelands: public

Surrounding area:

Farmlands : Private

21- Current land use:

Fishing along the coast, and some grazing by domestic livestock in river side vegetation. There is a small fishing village on Govater Bay near the mouth of the Sarbaz River and Several tin villages with small areas of cultivation along the river banks, but the area is remote and most of it is very sparsely populated.

22- Possible changes in land use:

None Known

23- Conservation measures taken:

The Wetlands

are included within a protected Area of 382.430 ha (The Bahu Kalat Protected Area) established in 1971. The boundaries have remained unchanged since then, but the reserve has been re-named the (Gando) Protected Area. The entire reserve has been identified as an "Important Bird Area" by Birdlife International (Evans, 1994).

24- Conservation measures proposed:

None

25- Current Scientific research and facilities:

Mid-winter Waterfowl censuses have been carried out by the Ornithology Unit, Department of the Environment, in most years since 1970 (with aerial surveys in 1973 , 1974 and 1975), and avifaunal surveys have been undertaken on several occasions at other times of the year. the Department of investigations on the Marsh Crocodile population and mammalian fauna. Accommodation facilities are available at Game Guard Stations in the Protected Area. Recently a Crocodile research station established at the protected Area near the Garmbit village.

26- Current conservation education:

None

27- Current recreation and tourism:

None

28- Jurisdiction:

Department of the Environment

29- Management Outhority:

Department of the Environment

30- Bibliographical references:

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