

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:

19-09-1997

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

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Designation date

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Site Reference Number

2. Country:

Islamic Republic of Iran

3. Name of wetland: Deltas of Rud-e-Gaz and Rud-e-Hara

4. Geographical coordinates: Rud-e-Gaz 26°50'N 57°40'E ; Rud-e-Hara 26°30'N 57°00'E

5. Altitude: (average, max., min.) sea level

6. Area: 15,000 ha

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

A large area of intertidal mudflats, mangrove swamps and sandy beaches at the mouths of two rivers on the eastern shore of the Straits of Hormoz, at the entrance to the Persian Gulf. The site is important for wintering waterfowl, especially shorebirds and *Pelecanus crispus*. The entire wetland has been designated a Ramsar site, but is otherwise unprotected.

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: F E I G H

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: 1d, 2b, 3c

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

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

11. Name and address of the compiler of this form:

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Please provide additional information on each of the following categories by attaching extra pages (please limit extra pages to no more than 10):

12. Justification of the criteria selected under point 9, on previous page. (Please refer to Annex II in the *Explanatory Note and Guidelines* document).

1d: The delta's are a specific type of wetlands in the biogeographical region.

2b: According to a very diverse flora and fauna, the deltas maintain an important part of the genetic and ecological diversity of the region.

3c: The wetlands support over 1% of the regional populations of the waterbirds *Egretta gularis*, *Dromas ardeola*, *Platalea leucorodia*, *Numenius arquata* and *Sterna bengalensis*.

13. General location: (include the nearest large town and its administrative region)

Rud-e-Gaz (26°50'N; 57°40'E) and Rud-e-Hara (26°30'N; 57°00'E) are situated on the eastern shore of the Straits of Hormoz.

14. Physical features: (e.g. geology, geomorphology; origins - natural or artificial; hydrology; soil type; water quality; water depth water permanence; fluctuations in water level; tidal variations; catchment area; downstream area; climate)

The deltas of Rud-e-Gaz and Rud-e-Hara form a continuous strip of coastal wetlands extending for about 40 km from north to south along the eastern shore of the Straits of Hormoz. The wetlands comprise a complex of tidal creeks and mudflats, an estimated 900 ha of mangrove swamps, numerous sandbanks and sand bars, and several low-lying muddy islands. The rivers are dry for much of the year, flowing only after erratic rainfall in the interior (usually in winter). Arid, sandy plains with open thorn woodland stretch inland from the coast. The area is remote and very sparsely populated with only a few tiny fishing villages nearby.

15. Hydrological values: (groundwater recharge, flood control, sediment trapping, shoreline stabilisation etc.)

The mangroves and shallow inshore waters are an important breeding and nursery ground for many species of crustaceans and fishes important in the local fishery.

16. Ecological features: (main habitats and vegetation types)

Extensive stands of mangrove *Avicennia marina* occur at the mouths of the rivers, along the tidal creeks and as a broad fringe along the landward side of coastal sand bars. The mudflats are barren of vegetation except for some characteristic salt marsh plant associations. The adjacent coastal plain supports a sparse woodland of *Acacia*, *Prosopis*, *Ziziphus* and *Tamarix* with large areas of bare sandy flats.

17. Noteworthy flora: (indicating, e.g., which species/communities are unique, rare, endangered or biogeographically important, etc.)

The patch of mangrove forest at the mouth of the Rud-e-Hara is probably the finest stand of mangroves in Iran, in terms of tree size and density.

18. Noteworthy fauna: (indicating, e.g., which species are unique, rare, endangered, abundant or biogeographically important; include count data, etc.)

An extremely important wintering area for shorebirds, notably *Haematopus ostralegus* (up to 2,000), crab plover *Dromas ardeola* (up to 120), bar-tailed godwit *Limosa lapponica* (up to 11,500), curlew *Numenius arquata* (up to 5,000), redshank *Tringa totanus* (up to 2,000), Terek sandpiper *Xenus cinereus* (up to 1,000), along with smaller numbers of Dalmatian pelican *Pelecanus crispus* (up to 70), great egret *Egretta alba* (up to 60), white spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia* (up to 40) and gull-billed tern *Gelochelidon nilotica* (up to 30).

The site may also be important for breeding Ardeidae including Goliath's heron *Ardea goliath* an Indian pond heron *Ardeola grayii*, both of which have occurred at the site, but this has never been investigated. At least one pair of great stone plover *Esacus recurvirostris* is resident, and white-tailed eagle *Haliaeetus albicilla* is a regular winter visitor (maximum 6). The adjacent sandy plain and thorny woodland support

a typical Baluchi avifauna including chestnut-bellied sandgrouse *Pterocles exustus*, sind pied woodpecker *Dendrocopos assimilis* and Indian short-toed lark *Calandrella raytal*.

19. Social and cultural values: (e.g. fisheries production, forestry, religious importance, archaeological site etc.)

No information.

20. Land tenure/ownership of:

Public (Government)

21. Current land use:

Some fishing; the area is remote and very sparsely populated.

22. Factors (past, present or potential) adversely affecting the site's ecological character, including changes in land use and development projects:

none known

23. Conservation measures taken: (national category and legal status of protected areas - including any boundary changes which have been made: management practices; whether an officially approved management plan exists and whether it has been implemented)

No legal protection. The deltas of the Rud-e-Gaz and Rud-e-Hara (15,000 ha) were designated as a Ramsar site on 23 June 1975. The site has been identified as an Important Bird Area by Birdlife International.

24. Conservation measures proposed but not yet implemented: (e.g. management plan in preparation; officially proposed as a protected area etc.)

Harrington (1976) recommended that the many stands of mangroves, the tidal mudflats and a stretch of about 45 km of shoreline should be protected as a terrestrial reserve, but with offshore waters encompassed within the boundaries.

25. Current scientific research and facilities: (e.g. details of current projects; existence of field station etc.)

Aerial surveys were carried out by the Ornithology Unit of the Department of the Environment in 1973, 1974 and 1975, the landward edge of the site of the wetland has been surveyed on several occasions at other times of the year. Much of the area is, however very difficult to access.

26. Current conservation education: (e.g. visitors centre, hides, information booklet, facilities for school visits etc.)

A course in wetland conservation has been carried out for the personnel of the Environment office of Hormozgan by J. Mansoori in 1997.

27. Current recreation and tourism: (state if wetland is used for recreation/tourism; indicate type and frequency/intensity)

none known

28. Jurisdiction: (territorial e.g. state/region and functional e.g. Dept of Agriculture/Dept. of Environment etc.)

Department of the Environment

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29. Management authority: (name and address of local body directly responsible for managing the wetland)

Department of the Environment, address as mentioned above (28)

30. Bibliographical references: (scientific/technical only)

Carp, E. (1980). *A Directory of Western Palearctic Wetlands*. IUCN, Gland, Switzerland.

- Evans, M.I. (1994). *Important Bird Areas in the Middle East*. BirdLife International, Cambridge, United Kingdom.
- Harrington, F.A.Jr. (1976). Iran, surveys of the southern Iranian coastline with recommendations for additional marine reserves. In : *Promotion of the establishment of marine parks and reserves in the northern Indian Ocean including the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf. Proc. Regional Meeting, Tehran, Iran, March 1975*. IUCN Publications new series no. 35: 50-75.
- Mansoori, J. (1983). *National Report on Iran's Wetlands of International Importance as Habitat for Waterfowl*. Prepared for the Groningen Conference, Netherlands, in May 1984.
- Scott, D.A. (1995). *A Directory of Wetlands in the Middle East*. IUCN, Gland, Switzerland and IWRB, Slimbridge, United Kingdom.

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**List of bird species including counting results
Rud-e-Gaz and Rud-e-Hara Delta**

waterfowl:

- globally threatened

<i>Numenius tenuirostris</i>	2
<i>Larus leucophthalmusirostris</i>	6
<i>Platalea leucorodia</i>	10

- other birds

<i>Egretta gularis</i>	25
<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	15
<i>Dromas ardeola</i>	1,400
<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>	1,200
<i>Numenius arquata</i>	50
<i>Tringa totanus</i>	250
<i>Larus argentatus</i>	460
<i>Larus ichtyaetus</i>	125
<i>Larus ridibundus</i>	79
<i>Falco cherrug</i>	1
<i>Himantopus himantopus</i>	3
<i>Egretta gularis</i>	41
<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>	19

Source: Sadegh Sadeghi Zadegan
Mid-winter counts 1997