

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:

1. October. 1999

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY.

29 | 12 | 99

Designation date

2 | IR | 020

Site Reference Number

2. Country:

Islamic Republic of Iran

3. Name of wetland: Sheedvar Island

4. Geographical coordinates: 26° 48'N, 53° 24'E

Total: 870 ha. ~~890~~ ?

5. Altitude: (average and/or max. & min.) Sea level to 8m

6. Area: a) Island: 97ha. b) Surrounding area: 783ha.

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

Sheedvar is a small sandy and rocky offshore island surrounded by excellent coral reefs in the north central Persian Gulf, extremely important for breeding marine turtles (Chelonidae) and some species of waterbirds. The island supports the largest known breeding colony of terns in Iran. The entire island (97 ha) was designated a protected Area in July 1971, and upgraded to Wildlife Refuge in 1972. The island is uninhabited.

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: C.D.E

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, 2c, 3a, 3c

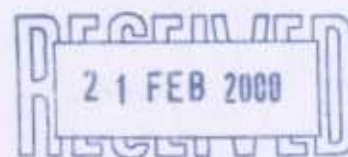
1, 2, 5, 6

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:

Sadegh sadeghi- Zadeegan
Wildlife and Aquatic Affairs Bureau
Department of the Environment
P.O.Box 5181, Tehran 15875
Islamic Republic of Iran



12- Justification of the criteria :

1a : Sheedvar Island is a good representative example of a low-lying offshore island with fringing coral reefs, characteristic of the Persian Gulf.

2a : The island supports an extremely important breeding colony of terns (*Sterna* spp) and other waterfowl, and is also important for nesting sea turtles, including *Eretmochelys imbricata* and *Chelonia mydas* (threatened species).

2c : Sheedvar Island is of special value as the habitat of sea-birds, waterfowl and sea turtles specially in breeding season.

3a : The island regularly holds well in excess of 20,000 waterfowl and sea-birds in breeding season.

3c : The island regularly supports over 1% of the individuals in a populations of *Sterna repressa*, *S. anaethetus* and probably *S. bengalensis*.

13- General location :

Sheedvar Island is located in the province of Hormozgan, about 2 Km off the eastern tip of Lavan Island and about 9 Km off the mainland coast, in the central Persian Gulf.

14- Physical features :

Sheedvar Island is a small rocky island surrounded by excellent coral reefs in the north-central Persian Gulf.

The island is roughly oblong in shape, relatively flat and low-lying, with a maximum elevation of about 8m. It is composed of a coral conglomerate which is almost completely hidden, above high water mark, by an overlay of sand dunes and sandy soils. Along the southern, western and north western shores, the rock is exposed as low cliffs which nowhere exceed about two metres in height. In the southeast corner, the rocks have become fragmented to form a jumbled heap of boulders just above high water mark. The remainder of the shoreline consists of a narrow sandy beach which widens at the northeast corner to form sand promontory. There are two main areas of sand dunes stretching across the northern and southern parts of the island. There are no springs or surface water on the island. Rainfall is very low, and the island is subjected to extremely high temperatures during the summer month, with temperatures frequently exceeding 45°C.

15- Hydrological values : No information

16- Ecological features :

The sand dunes are sparsely vegetated with a typical sand-dune plant community. The flat area across the centre of the island is densely clad with arid steppic vegetation dominated by *Atriplex* Sp. which in places forms an impenetrable shrub layer up to 60 cm in height.

17- Noteworthy flora :

The most vegetation of the central parts of the island is including of *Seuda vermiculata* and *Atriplex* Sp. other species are:

Aeluropus lagopoides, *Cistanche* Sp., *Cyperus rotundus*, *Erodium* Sp., *Ephedra litoralis*, *Heliotrochium bacciferum*, *Lycium shawii*, *Plantago afra*, *Salvadora persica* (only shrub in the Island: Local name = Mesvak), *Senecio* Sp., *Verbascum orientalis*.

18- Noteworthy fauna :

The island supports the largest known breeding colony of terns in Iran. The site holds an extremely important breeding colony of terns including about 20,000-30,000 pairs of *Sterna bergii* and 5,000-15,000 pairs of *S. bergii*, along with much smaller numbers of *S. bergii* (only 3-6 breeding pairs, but up to 100 adults) and *S. bergii* (only 11-18 breeding pairs, but up to 1,000 adults). The site also holds the only known breeding colony of *Phalacrocorax nigrogularis* in Iran, with about 50-100 pairs breeding in an area of boulders at the southeastern corner of the island. There is a small colony of *Egretta gularis* (8-12 pairs) as well as 3-4 breeding pairs of *Butorides striatus*. The discovery of Striated Heron on Sheedvar in June 1972 constituted the first record of this species in Iran. Only two species of passerines are resident on the island: *Galerida cristata* and *Prinia gracilis*. *Pandion haliaetus* has been recorded in June 1972, and may breed nearby. *Charadrius mongolus*, *Arenaria interpres*, *Calidris alba* and *Larus hemprichii* has been recorded only in July 1977.

Charadrius alexandrinus has been recorded in 1972, 1977 and 1981. The island is a very important nesting site for sea turtles, mainly Hawksbill (*Eretmochelys*

imbricata), with smaller numbers of Green Turtles (*Chelonia mydas*) and possibly one other species. A small poisonous snake (*Viperidae*) is abundant and has given rise to the island's alternative name "Maru" (Snake Island). A small lizard, *Scincus conirostris*, is also present. A list of counted birds is annexed in the end of the Information Sheet.

19- Social and cultural values :

The island is uninhabited, although the presence of a ruined stone building at the southeast corner of the island is evidence of some occupation in the past.

20- Land tenure / ownership of :

- a) Site : Governmental
- b) Surrounding area : Governmental

21- Current land use :

- a) Site : Nature protection
- b) Surrounding area : Nature protection

22- Adverse factors affecting the ecological character of the site :

a) at the site : Egg-collecting for human consumption was a major problem in the 1970s. Egg collecting increased in intensity enormously over the next few years, and by 1976, and continued to date but with a lower intensity. There has been no changes in the ecological character of the site since its establishment as a Wildlife Refuge in 1972.

b) around the site : There is a threat of oil pollution from the oil terminal on Lavan Island and from the oil tankers in the nearby shipping lanes.

23- Conservation measures taken :

The entire island (97 ha) was designated a Protected Region in July 1971 and later upgraded to Wildlife Refuge in 1972. The island has been identified as an "Important Bird Area" by Birdlife International (Evens, 1994), and also including in the "A Directory of Wetland in the Middle East" (Scott, 1995).

24- Conservation measures proposed but not yet implemented :

Various recommendations were made through the field surveys have been carried out in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s, by the Department of the Environment's experts. These included the erection of appropriate notices on the island and the stationing of D.O.E personnel on the island for the duration of the breeding season.

25- Current scientific research and facilities :

Avifaunal surveys were carried out by the Ornithology Unit, Department of the Environment, during the breeding season in 1972, 1976, 1977, 1981, 1982, 1990 and 1997. And 1190 sea-birds were ringed in 1976, 1977, 1980, 1981, 1982 and 1997. The Department of the Environment also investigate the breeding sea turtles in the early 1970s and also during 1990s. Accommodation facilities are available at the large oil instalation on the neighbouring island of Lavan.

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26- Current conservation education :

A poster about the sheedvar's biodiversity and a booklet about the environment of Hormozgan Province including a section in related to the Sheedvar Island prepared by the Hormozgan Provincial Office in cooperation with the Shahid Beheshti University.

27- Current recreation and tourism : None

28- Jurisdiction :

Department of the Environment

PO Box 5181, Tehran 15875

Islamic Republic of Iran.

29- Management authority :

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

30- Bibliographical references :

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

- Department of the Environment, (1996). Living Resources of Hormozgan Province, D.O.E. Hormozgan General Office & Shahid Beheshti University, Tehran, I.R. Iran.

- Evans, M.I. (1994). Important Bird Areas in the Middle East. BirdLife International, Cambridge, United Kingdom.

- Sadeghi-Zadegan, S. (1997). Report on the Field Trip to the Sheedvar Island : (29 June - 2 July 1997). Internal Report, Department of the Environment, Tehran, I.R.Iran.

- Scott, D.A. (1995). A Directory of Wetlands in the Middle East. IUCN, Gland, Switzerland and IWRB, Slimbridge, U.K.

- Scott, D.A. and Smart, M. (1992). Wetlands of the Sistan Basin, South Caspian and Fars, Islamic Republic of Iran. Ramsar Convention Bureau, Gland, Switzerland.