

Information Sheet On Ramsar Wetlands

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

1. Date this sheet was completed/ updated : 01. 10. 1997

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2. Country: Syrian Arab Republic

3. Name of wetland: Sabkhat al-Jabbul Nature Reserve

4. Geographical Coordinates: 36° 04' N, 37° 30' E.

5. Altitude: 307 m. above sea level

6. Area: 10.000 ha

7. Over View:

A large, permanent saline lake in semi-arid steppe, important for staging and wintering of migratory waterfowl, notably *Phonicopterus ruber*.

8. Wet land type:

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

Wetland types listed from the most to the least dominant: Q

9. Ramsar Criteria:

(1a) . 1b . 1c . 1d . 2a . 2b . 2c . 2d . (3a) . 3b . (3c) . 4a . 4b

the most significant criterion applicable to this site: 3c

10. Map of site included? Yes or No

11. Name and address of compiler of this form:

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12. Justification of the criteria selected under point 9, on previous page:

- 1a- It is a particularly good representative example of a natural or near-natural wetland, characteristic of the appropriate biogeographical region.
- 3a- It is regularly supports 20,000 waterfowl.
- 3c- It is regularly supports > 1% of individuals in a population of *Phoenicpterus ruber*.

13. General location: Halap (Aleppo) governorate, 30 km east-southeast of Aleppo.

14. Physical features: Sabkhat al- Jabbul is a large, shallow salt lake in an enclosed catchment of about 37,500 ha. year to year. Avenge area of open water is about 239 Km². The lake currently measures up to 20 km in length and 5 km in width, and at high water levels contains two large islands. A levee on the east side of the lake prevented flooding of the extensive salt flats in the eastern part of the basin. The climate characterized by a rainy winter and dry hot summer separated by 2 short transitional seasons. Annual average rainfall varies extremely from year to year; for example, in 1986 it was 317 mm while in 1990 it was 168 mm. Similarly, because this inland lake is near to the arid region there are a great daily fluctuations in temperatures especially in summer; However, the annual average temperature 17.7 ± 0.6 °C. Generally, The wind is northerly in winter, westerly or south-westerly in summer.

15. Hydrological values:

This lake plays a basic role in a pool for water surpluses in the catchment in which the lake is found.

16. Ecological features :

Jabbul permanent salt Lake was fed entirely by local run-off in winter and spring, and its extent was highly variable from year to year. In wet years, the maximum area of open water was about 3,000 ha, and the lake apparently seldom dried out completely. However In 1988, surplus water into the lake on a substantial scale from large new irrigation projects on the nearby steppic plains have resulted in higher and more stable water levels and lower salinity than in the past. In the 1970s, the muddy and sandy shores of the lake supported little or no marginal vegetation, but there are now extensive *Phragmites* reed-beds along parts of he southern and south-eastern shoresand perhaps elsewhere. The surrounding steppe is dominated by species such as *Aleuropus littoralis*, *A. Lagopoides*, *Atriplex leucoclada*, *A. halimus*, *Anabasis setifera*, *Calligonum comosum*, *Salsola vermiculata*, *Stipa barbata* and *Popaver rhoeas*, with scattered *Haloxylon* and *Artemisia shrubs*. It is worthy to mention that the large size and openness of the lake give some natural protection.

17. Noteworthy flora:

No documented information are available, but, hallophyts are found.

18. Noteworthy fauna:

a) **Birds:** Sabkhat al-Jabbul is an important staging and wintering area for migratory waterfowl, and also supports some breeding waterbirds. Large numbers of wintering waterfowl were recorded in the 1970s, with "tens of thousands" present in some years, but the numbers of waterfowl varied widely according to water level. In recent years, the lake appears to have been supporting even larger numbers of waterfowl, presumably because of the higher and more stable water level. The lake is particularly important for Greater Flamingos *Phoenicopterus ruber*; between 500 and 1,000 are regularly present at most times of the year, and some 6,000-8,000 were recorded in January 1975. Other wintering species include *Casmerodius albus* (15), *Platalea leucorodia* (50), *Ciconia ciconia* (30), *C. nigra*, *Cygnus olor*, *Anser albifrons* (2,030 in December 1972), *A. anser* (600), *Tadorna ferruginea* (300), *T. tadorna* (500), *Anas crecca* (thousands), *A. platyrhynchos* (600), *A. acuta* (1,000), *Fulica atra* (10,000), *Grus grus* (155 in December 1972), *Edromias morinellus* (72), *Vanellus vanellus* (380); *Calidris minuta* (many hundreds) and *Ceryle rudis* (200). *Branta ruficollis* has been recorded by hunters, and is presumably a rare winter visitor to the area. Waterfowl recorded on spring migration (in April) have included up to 100 *Podiceps nigricollis*, 70 *Platalea leucorodia*, 400 *Tadorna ferruginea*, 200 *Himantopus himantopus*, 3,000 *Calidris minuta*, thousands of *philomachus pugnax* and 100 *Larus genei*. *Marmaronetta angustirostris* and *Oxyura leucocephala* have occurred on passage in April, although only in very small numbers.

Confirmed or probable breeding species include *Himantopus himantopus*, *Recurvirostra avosetta*, *Cursorius cursor*, *Charadrius alexandrius*, *C. leschenaultii columbinus*, *Gelochelidon nolitica*, *Sterna caspia* and *S. albifrons*. According to local people *Phoenicopterus ruber* sometimes breeds; at least 700 were present in April 1993. *Glareola nordmanni* was formerly a summer visitor to the area, but has not been recorded in recent decades.

b) **Mammals:** Mammals said to occur in the surrounding area include: the wolf *Canis lupus*, red fox *Vulpes vulpes arabica*, Hyaena *Hyaena syriaca*, Goitred Gazelle *Gazella subgutturosa*, Cape Hare *Lepus capensis syriacus*, Crested porcupine *Hystrix indica* and Lesser Mole Rat *Spalax leucodon*.

19. Social and cultural values:

It has been a source for salt production for a long time. It has a good possibilities for environmental education.

20. Land tenure/ownership of:

a) Site: State owned.

b) Surrounding/ Catchment: State and private ownership.

21. Current land use:

a) Site: Salt production, hunting.

b) Surrounding/ Catchment: Agriculture, livestock grazing. Human population is low.

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

a) At the Site: Intensive Salt production on a large scale, as well as , the long-term impact of the changes to the lake's hydrology on its value for waterfowl and other wildlife is unclear. Uncontrolled hunting is the most potential threat.

b) In the Surrounding/ Catchment: Intensification of agricultural activities, over grazing. Humman population expansion. Drought is the most potential threat.

23. Conservation measures taken:

None. There are general laws that ban hunting.

24. Conservation measures proposed but not yet implemented:

None. Sabkhat al-Jabbul was listed as a wetland of international importance by Carp (1980), and has been identified as an Important Bird Area by BirdLife International (Evans, 1994).

25. Current scientific research and facilities:

Mid-winter waterfowl counts were undertaken by biologists from the Faculty of Agriculture, University of Aleppo, in January 1993 and January 1994.

26. Current conservation education:

It is used as a research station by the University of Aleppo for practical training of university students.

27. Current recreation and tourism:

Not used for recreation.

28. Jurisdiction :

Territorial jurisdiction: Halab (Aleppo) Governorate

Functional jurisdiction: Ministry of Irrigation, Ministry of Agricultuer and Agrarian Reform.

29. Management authority:

No Information

30. Bibliographical references:

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