**General overview of the site**

 **Sawa Lake is located in south-western Iraq, in its north-western part of Muthanna or Samawa Governorate, at the border with Diwaniyah or Qadissiya Governorate. The area is bounded mainly by desert areas with few urban settlements except for the presence of the capital city of Muthanna Governorate, Samawa, located about 25 km north-east of the lake, and representing the biggest city in the lake surroundings.**

**The average elevation reported from NIMA[[1]](#footnote-1) (US National Imagery and Mapping Agency) maps inside the lake is 16 meters above sea level (average water level of the lake above sea level.); the minimum elevation in the surrounding area is 14 and the maximum is 26 meters above sea level. The area of the site is about 491.2 ha. The length of the lake is approximately 4.75 km and the width in the widest area is 1.75 km.**

**Sawa Lake is located in the South-Western direction from Al-Samawa city (about 25 km from the city), the capital of Muthanna Governorate to the south of Al-Atshan tributary of the Euphrates River, and to the west of Al-Mamlaha-Shinnafiya desert motorway.**

 **This lake has no inlet or outlet and is fed by groundwater that originates from the higher western desert areas. The only plant cover reported is scattered low desert shrub. Most of the lake surroundings consist of desert and semi-desert ecosystems with scattered desert shrubs, while the lake itself forms a small portion of the site. The lake water has quite high salinity values making it a brackish lake.**

1. http://egsc.usgs.gov/nimamaps/ [↑](#footnote-ref-1)