

Jahlar Lake (B)

Country: Pakistan

Name of wetland: Jahlar Lake

Geographical coordinates: 32° 29'N, 72° 07'E

General location: Approximately 10km southeast of Ucchali Lake and 10km southwest of Nowshera, Khushab District, Punjab Province.

Area: 950ha

Wetland type: Salt lake (inland drainage system)

Altitude: 950m

Biogeographic Province: Indus Ganges Monsoon Forest

Description of site:

A small brackish to saline lake with little marsh vegetation, in the Salt Range; similar in general character to the nearby larger Ucchali and Khabbaki Lakes. The lake is fed by run-off from the surrounding hills of the Salt Range. The depth varies from 0.2m to 6m depending on the amount of rainfall received. Ph values ranged from 9 - 10 in the years 1989 to 1992.

Climatic conditions:

Dry sub-tropical climate with hot summers and cool winters. The annual rainfall varies from 300mm to 800mm, and the relative humidity from 22% to 85%. Temperatures range from an average minimum of 0.5°C in January to an average maximum of 36°C in June.

Principal vegetation:

The aquatic vegetation includes *Carex fedia*, *Hydrilla verticillata*, *Juncus* sp., *Phragmites australis*, *Potamogeton crispus*, *P. pectinatus*, *Saccharum spontaneum*, *Typha angustata* and *Zannichellia palustris*. The natural vegetation of the region is a mixture of sub-tropical semi-evergreen forest and tropical thorn forest with species such as *Acacia modesta*, *Adhatoda vasica*, *Asparagus gracilis*, *Cocculus laeba*, *Cynodon dactylon*, *Dodonaea viscosa*, *Ehretia laenis*, *Gymnosporia royleana*, *Olea ferruginea*, *Reptonia buxifolia*, *Sageretia lorandehuana*, *Tamarix aphylla*, *Withania coagulans*, *Zizyphus mauritiana* and *Z. nummularia*.

Land tenure:

The lake and the adjoining lands are privately owned.

Conservation measures taken:

The wetland has been declared a Wildlife Sanctuary since February 1993.

Conservation measures proposed:

The lake has been proposed to be declared a Ramsar site as part of the Ucchali Complex including Ucchali and Jahlar lakes.

Land use:

Domestic use, watering, livestock grazing in the adjoining pastures and hills, firewood collection from the forests on the hills; hunting waterfowl in the past.

Disturbances and threats: Hunting activities caused some disturbance to waterfowl populations. A metalled road has been constructed around two sides of the lake which has effectively stopped the run-off water from entering into the lake. Even though drainage pipes have been put under the road but these do not effectively drain all the run-off water which is mostly dammed up behind the road. The water level and the extent of lake, however, depends mainly on the rainfall received during the monsoons which greatly varies from year to year.

Economic and social value:

Local villagers are dependent on the wetland for water for domestic use. The marshes provide valuable grazing land for livestock.

Fauna:

Information on the lake is available only after 1987. The lake is probably a regular wintering area for the endangered white-headed duck *Oxyura leucocephala*, 68 were present in January 1987 and 132 in January 1988. Other waterfowl present on the lake included small numbers of *Tachybaptus ruficollis*, *Podiceps nigricollis*, up to 601 *Aythya ferina* in January 1990 and up to 112 *Fulica atra* in January 1988. Mammals known to occur in the area include *Canis aureus*, *Vulpes vulpes*, *Felis libyca* and *Lepus nigricollis*.

Special floral values: None known

Research and facilities:

The Pakistan Forest Institute and Punjab Wildlife Research Department carried out mid-winter waterfowl census in January 1987 and January 1988, respectively. Punjab Wildlife Research Centre, Faisalabad, since 1988 are conducting regular fortnightly waterfowl surveys during the winters from October to March to monitor populations with special emphasis on the white-headed duck. Ecology of the wetland has been studied by M.Sc. students of Zoology Department, Government College, Lahore. A project to study the Ecology of Ucchali Complex lakes (Ucchali, Khabbaki and Jahlar) is currently underway at Punjab Wildlife Research Centre, Faisalabad which is funded jointly by the Punjab Wildlife Department and WWF-Pakistan. A Management Plan has been written for the lakes based on the findings of the project.