

# Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands (RIS) – 2009-2014 version

Available for download from [http://www.ramsar.org/ris/key\\_ris\\_index.htm](http://www.ramsar.org/ris/key_ris_index.htm).

*Categories approved by Recommendation 4.7 (1990), as amended by Resolution VIII.13 of the 8<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Contracting Parties (2002) and Resolutions IX.1 Annex B, IX.6, IX.21 and IX.22 of the 9<sup>th</sup> Conference of the Contracting Parties (2005).*

## Notes for compilers:

1. The RIS should be completed in accordance with the attached *Explanatory Notes and Guidelines for completing the Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands*. Compilers are strongly advised to read this guidance before filling in the RIS.
2. Further information and guidance in support of Ramsar site designations are provided in the *Strategic Framework and guidelines for the future development of the List of Wetlands of International Importance* (Ramsar Wise Use Handbook 14, 3rd edition). A 4th edition of the Handbook is in preparation and will be available in 2009.
3. Once completed, the RIS (and accompanying map(s)) should be submitted to the Ramsar Secretariat. Compilers should provide an electronic (MS Word) copy of the RIS and, where possible, digital copies of all maps.

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## 1. Name and address of the compiler of this form:

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Designation date

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Site Reference Number

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## 2. Date this sheet was completed/updated:

1<sup>st</sup> September, 2013

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## 3. Country:

United Arab Emirates, (UAE)

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## 4. Name of the Ramsar site:

The precise name of the designated site in one of the three official languages (English, French or Spanish) of the Convention. Alternative names, including in local language(s), should be given in parentheses after the precise name.

Sir Bu Nair Island Protected Area

محمية جزيرة صير بو نعيم الطبيعية

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## 5. Designation of new Ramsar site or update of existing site:

This RIS is for (tick one box only):

- a) Designation of a new Ramsar site  or  
b) Updated information on an existing Ramsar site

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## 6. For RIS updates only, changes to the site since its designation or earlier update:

**a) Site boundary and area**

**The Ramsar site boundary and site area are unchanged:**

or

**If the site boundary has changed:**

- i) the boundary has been delineated more accurately ; or
- ii) the boundary has been extended ; or
- iii) the boundary has been restricted\*\*

and/or

**If the site area has changed:**

- i) the area has been measured more accurately ; or
- ii) the area has been extended ; or
- iii) the area has been reduced\*\*

**\*\* Important note:** If the boundary and/or area of the designated site is being restricted/reduced, the Contracting Party should have followed the procedures established by the Conference of the Parties in the Annex to COP9 Resolution IX.6 and provided a report in line with paragraph 28 of that Annex, prior to the submission of an updated RIS.

**b) Describe briefly any major changes to the ecological character of the Ramsar site, including in the application of the Criteria, since the previous RIS for the site:**

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**7. Map of site:**

Refer to Annex III of the *Explanatory Note and Guidelines*, for detailed guidance on provision of suitable maps, including digital maps.

**a) A map of the site, with clearly delineated boundaries, is included as:**

- i) a **hard copy** (required for inclusion of site in the Ramsar List): ;
- ii) an **electronic format** (e.g. a JPEG or Arc View image);
- iii) a **GIS file providing geo-referenced site boundary vectors and attribute tables** .

**b) Describe briefly the type of boundary delineation applied:**

e.g. the boundary is the same as an existing protected area (nature reserve, national park, etc.), or follows a catchment boundary, or follows a geopolitical boundary such as a local government jurisdiction, follows physical boundaries such as roads, follows the shoreline of a waterbody, etc.

Sir Bu Nair Island is located south of the Gulf, with a total area of 13.2 square kilometers. The Gulf waters surrounding the island for a distance of 1,500 meters are also protected. North of the island lies the coast of Iran, east and south of the island lies the coast of the United Arab Emirates, and west of the island lies the coasts of the United Arab Emirates and Qatar.

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**8. Geographical coordinates** (latitude/longitude, in degrees and minutes):

Provide the coordinates of the approximate centre of the site and/or the limits of the site. If the site is composed of more than one separate area, provide coordinates for each of these areas.

25°13'55"N, 54°13'09"E

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### 9. General location:

Include in which part of the country and which large administrative region(s) the site lies and the location of the nearest large town.

Sir Bu Nair is located in the south of the Gulf. It is 110 kilometres west of Sharjah and 65 kilometres from the north coast of Abu Dhabi. Although the site is closer to Abu Dhabi, the island belongs to Sharjah who must approve any visits through its Environment and Protected Areas Authority.

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### 10. Elevation: (in metres: average and/or maximum & minimum)

Maximum elevation of land is 66 m above sea level

### 11. Area: (in hectares)

Total 4964 hectares

(1333 hectares terrestrial and 3631 hectares marine)

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### 12. General overview of the site:

Provide a short paragraph giving a summary description of the principal ecological characteristics and importance of the wetland.

Sir Bu Nair is known to be of high ecological significance for both marine and terrestrial ecosystems. This small, rocky offshore island, surrounded by extensive and healthy coral reefs, is a salt dome, formed by the upward movement of buoyant and less evaporitic material (salt) into denser, overlaying rock as a result of regional tectonic activity. As a result, subsoil of the island is rich in minerals such as iron oxide and sulfur, which has been heavily exploited in the past.

A total of 40 species of coral were identified within the site; six of which were discovered in 2010 (*Psammocora obtuseangulata*, *Favites spinosa*, *Favites cf acuticollis*, *Favia cf matthaii*, *Pavona discussata*, *Turbunaria mesenterina*) and three in 2011, namely *Goniopora somaliensis*, *Acropora muricata* and one that has not been identified yet. *G. somaliensis* is the first species belonging to the genus *Goniopora* recorded from the southern Gulf. A total number of 76 fish species were also recorded during the field surveys conducted during 2010-2011. The Redcoat squirrelfish (*Sargocentron rubrum*), previously unrecorded in the Gulf, was found here as well. This large number of species with some uncommon species indicates a high level of biodiversity compared to the other locations in the southeastern Gulf. Sir Bu Nair's marine life is just one of its natural treasures. Colonies of birds, such as the Sooty gull (*Larus hemprichii*) and the Bridled tern (*Onychoprion anaethetus*) nest and live on the island alongside gazelles (*Gazella gazelle cora*) and hedgehogs (*Hemiechinus aethiopicus*)

The sandy beaches of the island are an important nesting site for the critically endangered Hawksbill turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*).

Historically, several sea-birds of conservation importance have been recorded nesting at Sir Bu Nair, including the Lesser crested tern (*Sterna bengalensis*), Great crested tern (*Sterna bergii*), Red-billed tropicbird (*Phaethon aethereus*) and Socotra cormorant (*Phalacrocorax nigrogularis*), but none of these birds have been recorded in recent years and none were found breeding during 2010 or 2011. Socotra cormorant was last recorded breeding in 1987.

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### 13. Ramsar Criteria:

Tick the box under each Criterion applied to the designation of the Ramsar site. See Annex II of the *Explanatory Notes and Guidelines* for the Criteria and guidelines for their application (adopted by Resolution VII.11). All Criteria which apply should be ticked.

1 • 2 • 3 • 4 • 5 • 6 • 7 8 • 9

#### 14. Justification for the application of each Criterion listed in 13 above:

Provide justification for each Criterion in turn, clearly identifying to which Criterion the justification applies (see Annex II for guidance on acceptable forms of justification).

#### Criteria 2

Sir Bu Nair is the most important nesting site for the endangered Hawksbills turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*) in the Western Indo-Pacific- Arabian Gulf bioecoregion, as well as in the UAE. A total number of 324 Hawksbill turtle nests were recorded on the island in 2010 and 376 in 2011. In addition, two Green turtle (*Chelonia mydas*) nests were recorded in 2010, providing the first contemporary evidence of Green turtle nesting in the region.

Of the 40 coral species found within the site, 7 have been identified as vulnerable species under the IUCN red list.

Coral Species	IUCN	CITES
<i>Acropora pharaonis</i>	VU	II
<i>Anomastrea irregularis</i>	VU	II
<i>Favites spinosa</i>	VU	II
<i>Pavona decussata</i>	VU	II
<i>Turbinaria mesenterina</i>	VU	II
<i>Turbinaria peltata</i>	VU	II
<i>Turbinaria reniformis</i>	VU	II

Reptiles	IUCN	CITES	CMS
Green Turtle ( <i>Chelonia mydas</i> )	EN	I	I/II
Hawksbill Turtle ( <i>Eretmochelys imbricata</i> )	CR	I	I/II
Lepten's Spiny Tail Lizard ( <i>Uromastyx aegyptia</i> )	VU	II	

#### Criteria 3

The island represents one of the sites in the Western Indo-Pacific- Arabian Gulf ecoregion with a high diversity of endemic coral, reef fish and bird species (*Onychoprion anaethetus*, *Larus hemprichii*, *Pandion haliaetus*). A total of 40 species of coral and 76 species of reef fishes have been recorded at Sir Bu Nair. Given that only a small number of surveys and fishing events have been conducted, this is an area of high biodiversity value compared with other locations in the southeastern Gulf. Also, species not previously recorded elsewhere in the Gulf have been found at the site. A list of the recorded fish families at Sir Bu Nair is given in Appendix 1. A list of the coral species recorded at the site is provided in Appendix 2.

#### Criteria 4

The island is an important nesting site for the endangered Hawksbill turtles (324 nests were recorded from Sir Bu Nair beaches during 2010 and 376 during 2011) and is an important breeding site for Sooty Gulls with 1037 nests in 2010 and 1088 in 2011. Most pairs of Sooty Gull were observed to have successfully raised two or three chicks in both 2010 and 2011. The majority of birds were observed nesting in rock crevices in near vertical cliffs.

### Criteria 6

In 2010, 1037 nests of Sooty Gulls (*Larus hemprichii*) were counted on the island and another 1088 nest were recorded in 2011. The current 1% population estimate of the Sooty Gull population in the region is 2100 individuals (WPE 2012, <http://wpe.wetlands.org/view/1030>).

**15. Biogeography** (required when Criteria 1 and/or 3 and /or certain applications of Criterion 2 are applied to the designation):

Name the relevant biogeographic region that includes the Ramsar site, and identify the biogeographic regionalisation system that has been applied.

**a) biogeographic region:**

Western Indo-Pacific- Arabian Gulf

**b) biogeographic regionalisation scheme** (include reference citation):

Spalding, Mark D., Helen E. Fox, Gerald R. Allen, Nick Davidson et al. "Marine Ecoregions of the World: A Bioregionalization of Coastal and Shelf Areas". Bioscience Vol. 57 No. 7, July/August 2007, pp. 573–583.:<http://www.nature.org/tncscience/files/spalding.pdf>

### 16. Physical features of the site:

Describe, as appropriate, the geology, geomorphology; origins - natural or artificial; hydrology; soil type; water quality; water depth, water permanence; fluctuations in water level; tidal variations; downstream area; general climate, etc.

The island has a central, mountainous area featuring many ravines, rocky ridges, valleys and rocky outcrops. There are flatish stony areas to the north and east and the central valleys have flat valley floors. In geological terms, this small, rocky offshore island is a salt dome; a circular or elongated 'plug' commonly less than 2 km in diameter but often extending several kilometers below the earth surface. Salt domes are formed by the upward movement of buoyant and less evaporitic material (salt) into denser, overlying rock as a result of regional tectonic activity. As with other salt domes, Sir Bu Nair boasts significant mineral wealth. Mining and mineral extraction began in the latter half of the 1900s and continued until the 1980. The subsoil of the island is rich in minerals such as iron oxide and sulfur, which has been heavily exploited in the past, and was previously used in the paving of streets in Britain, and underscores the fact that there are some mines on the island.

**Station: Sir Bu Nair**

**Data Period: 2006 - 2011**

### General Climate

Month	Temperature (°C)			Pressure (hpa)			Relative Humidity (%)			Rainfall (mm)	Wind Speed (Km/h)		Soil (°c)		
	Max	Mean	Min	Max.	Mean	Min.	Max.	Mean	Min.	Total Rain	Mean	Max.	Max.	Mean	Min
Jan	25.4	19.5	12.2	1022.4	1018.8	1015.3	94	64	34	4.6	16	57	26.2	19.7	14.6

<b>Feb</b>	29.2	20.6	14.0	1021.1	1015.9	1011.7	100	69	27	7.3	16	56	27.9	21.4	15.4
<b>Mar</b>	31.2	22.5	16.5	1014.9	1012.5	1010.0	100	68	12	0.2	15	57	32.3	24.1	19.1
<b>Apr</b>	36.5	26.0	18.5	1010.9	1008.8	1006.6	100	66	11	0.0	16	58	36.1	28.8	22.6
<b>May</b>	40.0	30.2	22.9	1006.8	1004.4	1002.2	100	63	8	0.0	15	49	40.9	34.0	28.0
<b>Jun</b>	40.8	32.0	26.0	1001.6	998.2	995.3	100	69	10	0.0	14	50	42.6	36.3	31.0
<b>Jul</b>	41.9	33.1	27.6	997.8	996.2	994.4	100	69	21	0.0	14	50	43.1	37.7	33.1
<b>Aug</b>	41.1	33.8	27.4	1000.2	998.2	996.6	96	69	25	0.0	12	42	43.1	38.8	34.7
<b>Sep</b>	39.7	32.5	26.8	1006.2	1003.8	1001.2	96	66	22	0.0	12	46	42.3	36.5	31.7
<b>Oct</b>	37.8	30.2	25.2	1013.7	1011.7	1009.9	93	61	10	0.0	11	33	38.7	33.5	28.7
<b>Nov</b>	32.8	26.4	17.8	1017.2	1014.8	1013.0	99	60	31	8.3	13	70	34.6	28.1	20.1
<b>Dec</b>	27.8	21.9	15.6	1020.3	1017.9	1016.1	96	61	33	15.6	14	53	28.6	22.1	16.1

### 17. Physical features of the catchment area:

Describe the surface area, general geology and geomorphological features, general soil types, and climate (including climate type).  
Not applicable. Sir Bu Nair is an island with no freshwater and no catchment areas.

### 18. Hydrological values:

Describe the functions and values of the wetland in groundwater recharge, flood control, sediment trapping, shoreline stabilization, etc.

Extensive and healthy coral reefs around the island provide important ecosystem services such as:

- Provisioning (subsistence and commercial fisheries attained from healthy reefs)
- Regulating (protection of beaches and coastlines from storm surges and waves)
- Cultural (tourism and recreation)
- Supporting (nursery habitats)
- Carbon fixation

### 19. Wetland Types

#### a) presence:

Circle or underline the applicable codes for the wetland types of the Ramsar "Classification System for Wetland Type" present in the Ramsar site. Descriptions of each wetland type code are provided in Annex I of the *Explanatory Notes & Guidelines*.

Marine/coastal: A • B • C • D • E • F • G • H • I • J • K • Zk(a)

Inland: L • M • N • O • P • Q • R • Sp • Ss • Tp • Ts • U • Va •  
Vt • W • Xf • Xp • Y • Zg • Zk(b)

Human-made: 1 • 2 • 3 • 4 • 5 • 6 • 7 • 8 • 9 • Zk(c)

**b) dominance:**

List the wetland types identified in a) above in order of their dominance (by area) in the Ramsar site, starting with the wetland type with the largest area.

A-C-E-B

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**20. General ecological features:**

Provide further description, as appropriate, of the main habitats, vegetation types, plant and animal communities present in the Ramsar site, and the ecosystem services of the site and the benefits derived from them.

Sir Bu Nair is one of the most important marine protected areas in the ecoregion for its contents of significant environmental elements, such as its salt dome geological formations, natural flora and marine birds. Sea turtles use the island for breeding due to its sandy beaches.

The island's marine and wild ecosystem, picturesque nature, sandy beaches around the perimeter and unique geological formations, makes it exceptional and gives it a unique natural beauty.

A total of 40 species of coral were identified in the island and a total of 76 reef fishes species were recorded during the surveys in the northern and western reef areas of the island. The *Gobiodon citrinus* fish has also been recorded which is usually absent from the Gulf and is uncommon in the Oman Gulf.

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**21. Noteworthy flora:**

Provide additional information on particular species and why they are noteworthy (expanding as necessary on information provided in 14, Justification for the application of the Criteria) indicating, e.g., which species/communities are unique, rare, endangered or biogeographically important, etc. *Do not include here taxonomic lists of species present – these may be supplied as supplementary information to the RIS.*

No noteworthy flora at the site.

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**22. Noteworthy fauna:**

Provide additional information on particular species and why they are noteworthy (expanding as necessary on information provided in 14, Justification for the application of the Criteria) indicating, e.g., which species/communities are unique, rare, endangered or biogeographically important, etc., including count data. *Do not include here taxonomic lists of species present – these may be supplied as supplementary information to the RIS.*

Four fish species not commonly encountered in the Dubai or Abu Dhabi coral reef areas were recorded at Sir Bu Nair in 2010 and 2011. These were *Zebrasoma xanthurum*, *Chaetodon melapterus*, *Leptojulius cyanopleura* and *Gobiodon citrinus*. *Gobiodon citrinus* is especially noteworthy since this species is absent from the south-eastern Gulf including Dubai and Abu Dhabi waters and rare at Musandam. It is commensal on table corals (*Acropora* sp.) which it used for protection, shelter and feeding and is commonly recorded at 5m and 10m depth sites around the island. Table corals are often the dominant coral group in shallow Gulf waters but below 10 m depth the overall percentage cover is relatively low.

Several fish species were recorded off-transect, such as the Squirrelfish (*Sargocentron rubrum*), Yellowtip halfbeak (*Hemiramphus marginatus*), common in inshore surface waters around Sir Bu Nair, Yellow-fin seabream (*Acanthapagrus latus*), Streaked spinefoot (*Siganus javus*), Moon fish (*Monodactylus argenteus*), Large-scale terapon (*Terapon theraps*), King soldier bream (*Argyrops spinifer*) and Finless sole (*Pardachirus marmoratus*).

Sir Bu Nair is one of the most important Hawksbill (*Eretmochelys imbricata*) nesting sites within the entire ecoregion. A total of 324 nests were recorded on the beaches during 2010 and 376 during 2011. The majority of nests were laid in the period April to May with peak numbers recorded in

May. Two Green turtle (*Chelonia mydas*) nests were also recorded in May 2010 at the south of the island. The identity of the green turtles was confirmed from hatchlings and these identifications were confirmed by Nick Pilcher the Co-Chairman of the International Union for Conservation of Nature, Sea Turtle Specialist Working Group. The two nests represent the first confirmed recent Green Turtle nesting in the UAE and southeastern Gulf. No Green turtles were recorded in 2011.

Globally a typical emergence rate for Hawksbill hatchlings ranges from 68 - 75%. For Sir Bu Nair, the average emergence rate was determined for 2010, from nest inventories conducted after hatching, at 73.23% and 75.07% in 2011. These figures do not include any small eggs in the calculations as these are non-viable eggs containing no yolk. The total number of hatchlings for 2010 and 2011 was estimated at 22,401 and 22,142 respectively.

#### Coral communities:

During 2010 and 2011 coral survey work was conducted at nine locations around Sir Bu Nair; each location included four sites monitored at various depths from 5 m to 20m. Over the two-year period, thirty-two sites were monitored in total. Two sites were also monitored at 2.5 m at the east and northeast of the island.

The surveys revealed a very high percentage coral cover at 5 and 10 m depths, > 40% up to 58%, dominated by *Acropora* spp. table corals. The percentage cover of corals was also high at 15 m depth where coral cover ranged from 22-44% with the coral community dominated by faviid brain corals and siderastrids. The corals were in excellent health and no crown of thorns starfish were observed.

A total of 40 species of coral were identified. The majority of coral species found have previously been recorded from the region following extensive coral survey work conducted by Riegl et al. during the late 1990s and early 2000s within Abu Dhabi and Jebel Ali, Dubai. Nevertheless nine coral species were newly recorded from southeastern Gulf including:-

- *Acropora muricata*
- *Favites spinosa*
- *Favites cf acuticollis*
- *Favia cf matthaii*
- *Goniopora somaliensis*
- *Pavona descussata*
- *Psammocora stellata*
- *Turbunaria mesenterina*
- cf *Platygyra* sp.

Six of the newly recorded corals were documented but three newly recorded corals were found in 2011, namely *Goniopora somaliensis* and *Acropora muricata*. *G. somaliensis* is the first species belonging to the genus *Gonipora* recorded from the southern Arabian Gulf. *Acropora muricata* has been previously recorded from the Gulf by Wallace (1999) but not from the southeastern Gulf region.

Two of the nine newly recorded corals are provisionally identified i.e. *Favites cf acuticollis* and *Favia cf matthaii*. A *Platygyra* sp. coral species was not identified but is likely to be a newly recorded species for the region.

The southern Arabian Gulf region was badly impacted by coral bleaching events in 1996, 1998 and 2002, which resulted in the percentage coral cover in many areas being reduced to ca. 1% or lower. Clearly the high percentage cover and biodiversity found in this study indicates that Sir Bu Nair was largely unaffected by these El Nino-related mortality events. The presence of high



numbers of Citron gobies *Gobiodon citrinus*, which are commensal with *Acropora* spp., also indicates the long-term stability of *Acropora* corals at Sir Bu Nair.

Reef fish monitoring:

A cumulative total 76 reef species of fish were recorded during 2010 and 2011 surveys conducted at Sir Bu Nair. Including fish recorded off-transect and caught during the annual fishing competitions, held in May each year, which is associated with the Sir Bu Nair to Dubai Dhow Race, a total of 94 species have been recorded at Sir Bu Nair by the Emirates Marine Environmental Group. The large number of species indicates a high level of biodiversity compared with other locations in the southeastern Gulf. Uncommon species recorded include *Zebrasoma xanthurum*, *Chaetodon melapterus*, *Gobiodon citrinus* and *Leptojulius cyanopleura*, which are not commonly encountered in southeastern Arabian Gulf including Dubai and Abu Dhabi coral reef areas.

The Citron goby, *Gobiodon citrinus*, which is a species absent from elsewhere in the southeastern Gulf region and is rare in the Gulf of Oman, was found to commonly occur amongst *Acropora* corals in all shallow areas to 10 m depth all around Sir Bu Nair. Included in the fish species recorded off-transect was a new fish record for UAE Gulf waters; the squirrelfish (*Sargocentron rubrum*), which was observed and photographed at Sir Bu Nair, 20 August 2008. Small reef fishes, especially damselfishes, gobies, wrasses and cardinalfishes were well represented at Sir Bu Nair coral areas. High numbers of jacks, damselfishes, parrotfish, butterflyfishes and groupers are indicative of a healthy well balanced reef system. A list of fish species newly recorded at the site can be found in Appendix 1.

Nesting seabirds:

A large colony of Sooty gulls was recorded nesting at the central eastern part of Sir Bu Nair, occupying a maximum area in May 2010 ca. 46.4 ha. Most pairs of Sooty gulls were observed to have successfully raised two or three chicks during the period April to August in both years. Predation on Sooty gulls eggs and chicks was not considered to be a problem but large numbers of nesting bridled tern adults were predated on by cats. However, given the size of the bridled tern colony, which was qualitatively estimated to exceed 10,000 nesting pairs in 2011, the majority of pairs were able to raise chicks successfully. The Bridled tern colony nesting to the west and northwest of the Sooty gull colony was mapped using GPS on 29 May 2011 and found to occupy a single area totaling 45.3 ha. A tightly packed Socotra cormorant roost of several hundred birds was also mapped at a hilltop, cliff-edge location within the Bridled tern colony between the middle and northeast mast towers.

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**23. Social and cultural values:**

**a)** Describe if the site has any general social and/or cultural values e.g., fisheries production, forestry, religious importance, archaeological sites, social relations with the wetland, etc. Distinguish between historical/archaeological/religious significance and current socio-economic values:

Sir Bu Nair was previously known as Sir Al Qawasim, and has a great heritage and historical importance as it was known in the past when it was a fishermen's meeting point. Pottery was discovered which goes back to the Iron Age to about 3,500 years ago, while others back to 1500 (Surveys carried out by Sharjah Archeology Management – relics are displayed in Sharjah Archeology Museum) .

In the late 1800s and early 1900s, it was an important base for pearl divers, who would camp out on the island as they dived and fished for pearls. The single well on the island was believed to have healing powers, and would be protected fiercely by the pearl divers.

One of the spots on the island, known as Abu Fenjan, or Abu Fenyan, is named after an Arabic coffee cup that was dropped by a pearl diver in that spot.

One of the theories behind the name of the island, Sir Bu Nair, goes back to an old legend about a pearl diver who lost his mind and started wailing like a donkey. Nair refers to the sound made by donkeys, a similar sound some say can be heard on the island during the mix of certain winds.

It was declared as a nature reserve in 2000 by the Ruler of Sharjah, Dr Sheikh Sultan bin Mohammed al Qassimi .

**b)** Is the site considered of international importance for holding, in addition to relevant ecological values, examples of significant cultural values, whether material or non-material, linked to its origin, conservation and/or ecological functioning?

If Yes, tick the box  and describe this importance under one or more of the following categories:

- i) sites which provide a model of wetland wise use, demonstrating the application of traditional knowledge and methods of management and use that maintain the ecological character of the wetland:
- ii) sites which have exceptional cultural traditions or records of former civilizations that have influenced the ecological character of the wetland:
- iii) sites where the ecological character of the wetland depends on the interaction with local communities or indigenous peoples:
- iv) sites where relevant non-material values such as sacred sites are present and their existence is strongly linked with the maintenance of the ecological character of the wetland:

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**24. Land tenure/ownership:**

a) within the Ramsar site:

Site ownership is to Sharjah government

b) in the surrounding area:

The surrounding area is to UAE Government.

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**25. Current land (including water) use:**

a) within the Ramsar site:

Studies and Research, heritage festivals ( only two days a year), nature reserve, tracking turtles and military post.

b) in the surroundings/catchment:

Open sea, fishing and shipping.

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

a) within the Ramsar site:

There will be eco-tourism projects in a very limited area, generally the potential negative impact will be minimized to the nature reserve. Other threats are from invasive species (cats), noise and military exercises.

b) in the surrounding area:

Shipping, algal blooms, oil spills, and overfishing have occasionally occurred.

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**27. Conservation measures taken:**

a) List national and/or international category and legal status of protected areas, including boundary relationships with the Ramsar site:

In particular, if the site is partly or wholly a World Heritage Site and/or a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, please give the names of the site under these designations

This site has the status of a legally protected National Protected Area under the Amiri decree No. 25 which was issued by the Ruler of Sharjah Emirate in 2000. Since that time, no visits have been allowed for the public, but only for the purposes of environmental studies and surveys.

Sir Bu Nair was included in the UNESCO's tentative list for World Heritage Sites due to its environmental and cultural importance.

b) If appropriate, list the IUCN (1994) protected areas category/ies which apply to the site (tick the box or boxes as appropriate):

Ia  ; Ib  ; II  ; III  ; IV  ; V  ; VI

c) Does an officially approved management plan exist; and is it being implemented?

Yes, a management plan exists.

d) Describe any other current management practices:

This protected area is fully protected due to its importance for breeding rare species of birds and turtles that have been mentioned previously.

Environment and Protected Areas Authority (EPAA) prohibits the following in the wetland in order to preserve biological diversity:

1. Hunting, transporting, killing or harming wild creatures or undertaking activities leading to their eradication.
2. Damaging or destroying geological or geographical formation or areas considered natural habitat to animal and plant species as a result of increase or growth of such species.
3. Introducing foreign species into the reserve.
4. Polluting the soil, water or air of the reserve.
5. Cutting trees or eroding soil.
6. Amusements, recreation and sport functions which can kill or harm or have negative impact on natural life.
7. All that can disturb the natural balance of such reserves.
8. Military exercises.

9. Construction of buildings or installations and agricultural activities, industrial or commercial in nature reserve.

Currently there are six permanent rangers at the site and this number will increase as management measures are progressively ongoing.

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**28. Conservation measures proposed but not yet implemented:**

e.g. management plan in preparation; official proposal as a legally protected area, etc.

The implementation of the management plan is ongoing and measures set in the plan are put in place step by step. Regular monitoring is envisaged for the area including fauna regular surveys.

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**29. Current scientific research and facilities:**

e.g., details of current research projects, including biodiversity monitoring; existence of a field research station, etc.

- Currently, there are many scientific studies and surveys, including a study for the establishment of facilities in the island to promote eco-tourism in certain seasons.
- Hawksbill turtle satellite tagging Project
- Sea turtle monitoring and translocation of threatened nests; Coastal bird monitoring and Coral reef monitoring project
- Environmental education project
- Through the monitoring program of wildlife in Sir Bu Nair Island, the Environment and Protected Areas Authority has been tracking Hawksbill turtles on the island via satellite, in cooperation with the Emirates Wildlife Society-World Wildlife Fund (EWS-WWF) , where the satellite tags were successfully fixed to the carapace of the turtles and can be followed at the link: [www.gulfturtles.com](http://www.gulfturtles.com).

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**30. Current communications, education and public awareness (CEPA) activities related to or benefiting the site:**

e.g. visitors' centre, observation hides and nature trails, information booklets, facilities for school visits, etc.

There are many events that aims to raise awareness and take advantage of students and researchers from the diversity, for example, field visits to many of the institutions concerned with the environment and visit the university students to undertake research (about 70 research students)

Since 2000, The Environment and Protected Areas Authority started to organize the environmental heritage festival of Sir Bu Nair, which sheds light on the historical and environmental importance of the island as well as to raise awareness of the need to support the Authority's efforts in conservation the biodiversity in the island (about 1000 visitors for the festival for two days only).

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**31. Current recreation and tourism:**

State if the wetland is used for recreation/tourism; indicate type(s) and their frequency/intensity.

Currently the island is visited by large numbers of visitors and media only during the two day Environmental Heritage Festival and Dhow sailing festival that take place between April and

May each year. However new tourism developments are planned to be completed by January 2017, opening up the island for commercial tourism.

As indicated on Shurooq's website, a government owned investment and development company of the Emirate of Sharjah, 'Sir Bu Nuair Island is one of Shurooq's largest initiatives at the cost of half a billion Emirati Dirhams. The aim of this project is to turn the island into a unique destination; one that offers a mix of high-end luxury and comfort, one that fosters a genuine sense of community, and one that captures the region's vibrancy and cultural heritage in its architecture and offerings. Set to be completed in 2017, the island will host a luxury five-star hotel & resort, hotel apartments and villas, a camping village, retail shops, a souk, dedicated family areas, an amphitheatre, a museum, a mosque, an education centre, a harbour and an airport.' More details can be found here <http://shurooq.gov.ae/en/project/our-developments/sir-bu-nuair-island.html>

This development project will be in a limited area of the protected island and EIAs are being carried out to ensure minimum impact and disturbance.

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### 32. Jurisdiction:

Include territorial, e.g. state/region, and functional/sectoral, e.g. Dept of Agriculture/Dept. of Environment, etc.

Environment and Protected Areas Authority, Government of Sharjah

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### 33. Management authority:

Provide the name and address of the local office(s) of the agency(ies) or organisation(s) directly responsible for managing the wetland. Wherever possible provide also the title and/or name of the person or persons in this office with responsibility for the wetland.

Environment and Protected Areas Authority, Government of Sharjah

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### 34. Bibliographical references:

Scientific/technical references only. If biogeographic regionalisation scheme applied (see 15 above), list full reference citation for the scheme.

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Wallace, C., 1999. Staghorn Corals of The World, A revision of the genus Acropora. Collingwood, Victoria, Australia: CSIRO Publishing. *pp.* 438.

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## Appendix 1

### *Recorded fish families at the site*

Pomacentridae  
Gobiidae  
Labridae  
Carangidae  
Apogonidae  
Scaridae  
Serranidae  
Chaetodontidae  
Lethrinidae  
Lutjanidae  
Pseudochromidae  
Biennidae  
Haemulidae  
Nemipteridae  
Siganidae  
Acanthuridae  
Caesionidae  
Dasyatidae  
Ephippidae  
Gerridae  
Mullidae  
Myliobatidae  
Ostraciidae  
Pomacanthidae  
Scomberidae  
Soleidae  
Sparidae  
Sphyraenidae  
Tripterygiidae

## Appendix 2 : Coral species recorded at Sir Bu Nair Island

Coral Species/ Depth	5 m	10m	15m	20m	Total
<i>Acanthastrea echinata</i>	x	x	x	x	X
<i>Acropora downingi</i>	x	x	x		X
<i>Acropora muricata</i>	x	x			X
<i>Acropora cf. khayranensis</i>	x	x			X
<i>Acropora pharaonis</i>	x	x	x		X
<i>Acropora arabensis</i>	x	x			X
<i>Acropora cf. valenciensi</i>		x			X
<i>Anomastrea irregularis</i>			x	x	X
<i>Coscinarea monile</i>	x	x	x	x	X
<i>Cyphastrea microphthalma</i>	x	x	x	x	X
<i>Cyphastrea serailia</i>	x	x	x	x	X
<i>Favia cf matthal</i>	x	x	x		X
<i>Favia fava</i>	x	x	x	x	X
<i>Favia pallida</i>	x	x	x	x	X
<i>Favia rotumana</i>	x	x	x	x	X
<i>Favites cf acuticollis</i>		x	x	x	X
<i>Favites pentagona</i>	x	x	x	x	X
<i>Favites spinosa</i>		x	x		X
<i>Goniopora somaliensis</i>			x	x	X
<i>Leptastrea cf. pruinosa</i>				x	X
<i>Leptastrea purpurea</i>		x	x	x	X
<i>Leptastrea transversa</i>			x	x	X
<i>Pavona decussata</i>	x	x	x		X
<i>Platygra daedalea</i>	x	x	x		X
<i>Platygra lamellina</i>	x	x	x		X
<i>Platygra sinensis</i>	x	x	x		X
<i>Platygra crosslandi</i>	x	x	x		X



<i>Platygra sp.</i>		x	x		x
<i>Plesiastrea versipora</i>				x	x
<i>Ploycanthus mariogondoni</i>		x	x	x	x
<i>Porites harrisoni</i>	x	x	x		x
<i>Porites lobata/ lutea</i>	x	x	x		x
<i>Porites solida</i>		x	x	x	x
<i>Psammocora stellata</i>	x	x	x	x	x
<i>Pseudosiderastrea tayami</i>	x	x	x	x	x
<i>Siderastrea savignyana</i>		x	x	x	x
<i>Stylophora pistallata</i>	x	x	x		x
<i>Turbinaria mesenterina</i>			x	x	x
<i>Turbinaria peltata</i>		x	x	x	x
<i>Turbinaria reniformis</i>			x	x	x
<b>Total species</b>	24	33	34	23	40