Ramsar Information Sheet

Published on 28 June 2019

United Arab Emirates

Wasit Nature Reserve

Designation date	9 May 2019
Site number	2386
Coordinates	25°21'57"N 55°27'51"E
Area	86,00 ha

Color codes

Fields back-shaded in light blue relate to data and information required only for RIS updates.

Note that some fields concerning aspects of Part 3, the Ecological Character Description of the RIS (tinted in purple), are not expected to be completed as part of a standard RIS, but are included for completeness so as to provide the requested consistency between the RIS and the format of a 'full' Ecological Character Description, as adopted in Resolution X.15 (2008). If a Contracting Party does have information available that is relevant to these fields (for example from a national format Ecological Character Description) it may, if it wishes to, include information in these additional fields.

1 - Summary

Summary

Located some 15 km from the coast and the city of Sharjah, this reserve is a complex of natural inland lake and wetland habitats with total area of 86 hectares. It is a unique lake which represents a part of the remaining endangered coastal habitats (Hellyer & Aspinall, 2005). The lake and wetland habitats support a rich diversity of wetland species. According to the archaeological surveys done by Hellyer and Aspinall the reserve was formerly a tidal lagoon which provide important evidence of the evolution of the coastline of Sharjah over past two thousands year (2005). The lake within the protected area is the last remaining lake of a large network of the former Ramtha inland lakes and lagoons that existed before the cities of Ajman and Sharjah expanded to their current extent. This network encompasses of wetland, mudflats, one large lake, several small lakes, a sand dune area, dense reed beds and woody thickets, supporting more than 20 species of plants. To date 144 species of bird have been observed in the reserve (eBird, 2018), and more than 76 migratory species have been observed. The most abundant resident wader species in the reserve are the Black winged stilts (Himantopus himantopus) and Kentish plovers (Charadrius alexandrines), both breed in the reserve. Other breeding wetland birds include Red-wattled lapwings (Vanellus indicus) and White tailed lapwings (Vanellus leucrus). The site supports several near threatened species like Curlew Sandpiper (Calidris ferruginea), Bar-tailed Godwit (Limosa lapponica), Black-tailed Godwit (Limosa limosa), Eurasian Curlew (Numenius arquata) and a vulnerable species Socotra Cormorant (Phalacrocorax nigrogularis). Notable migrant wader visitors are Pacific golden plovers (Pluvialis fluva), Greater flamingo (Phoenicopterus roseus) and common ringed plovers (Charadrius hiaticula). The reserve, owned by the government of Sharjah Emirate, was declared as a National Protected Area in 2004. A visitor centre was established in November 2015 for the purpose of education, public awareness and eco-tourism.

2 - Data & location

2.1 - Formal data

2.1.1 - Name and address of the compiler of this RIS

Compiler 1

Name	Fatima Ahmed Hassan, Brendan Whittington-Jones, John Frederick Pereira
Institution/agency	Environment and Protected Areas Authority
Postal address	Sharjah – UAE PO Box 2926, Sharjah, UAE Mobile: (+971) 502123813
E-mail	fatima.ahmed@epaa.shj.ae
Phone	+97165311501
Fax	+97165311419

Compiler 2

Name	Emad Mohammed Al Zughayer
Institution/agency	Environment and Protected Areas Authority
Postal address	Sharjah – UAE PO Box 2926, Sharjah, UAE
E-mail	epaa@epaashj.ae
Phone	+97165311501
Fax	+97165311419

2.1.2 - Period of collection of data and information used to compile the RIS

From year	2015
To year	2018

2.1.3 - Name of the Ramsar Site

Official name (in English, French or Spanish)	Wasit Nature Reserve
Unofficial name (optional)	محمية واسط الطبيعية

2.2 - Site location

2.2.1 - Defining the Site boundaries

b) Digital map/image
<1 file(s) uploaded>

Former maps	0

Boundaries description

The boundaries of the site are the same as the existing boundary for Wasit Nature Reserve, a proclaimed protected area in the Emirate of Sharjah within the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Wasit Nature Reserve is situated in a residential suburb of Sharjah, approximately 15 km from the city of Sharjah. The boundary of Wasit Nature Reserve is fully fenced.
There is a large power station, and large traffic intersection on the northern boundary of the reserve. The western and southern borders of the reserve border on the residential suburb of Wasit. The North-eastern boundary of Wasit Nature Reserve is on the border with the Emirate of Ajman.

2.2.2 - General location

a) In which large administrative region does the site lie?	Sharjah City
b) What is the nearest town or population centre?	Ajman City

2.2.3 - For wetlands on national boundaries only

a) Does the wetland extend onto the territory of one or more other countries? Yes ○ No ◉

b) Is the site adjacent to another designated Ramsar Site on the territory of another Contracting Party? Yes ○ No ◉

2.2.4 - Area of the Site

Official area, in hectares (ha): 86

Area, in hectares (ha) as calculated from GIS boundaries: 85.911

2.2.5 - Biogeography

Biogeographic regions

Regionalisation scheme(s)	Biogeographic region
WWF Terrestrial Ecoregions	the Southwestern Asia (Palearctic PA 1303)

Other biogeographic regionalisation scheme

The site lies within two terrestrial ecoregions of the world among the WWF's Global 200 Ecoregions, the Southwestern Asia (Palearctic PA 1303) and the Arabian Peninsula (AT1306). The Southwestern Asia ecoregion contains most of Saudi Arabia, extending into Oman, United Arab Emirates, Yemen, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan and Syria. Located on the Arabian Peninsula, the Arabian Desert and East Sahero-Arabian Xeric Shrublands.

3 - Why is the Site important?

3.1 - Ramsar Criteria and their justification

<no data available>

☑ Criterion 2 : Rare species and threatened ecological communities

☑ Criterion 3 : Biological diversity

Justification

Wasit Nature Reserve supports more than 20 species of plants and to date there have been 144 species of birds observed in the reserve, with more than 76 migratory species have been observed. The most abundant resident wader species in the reserve are Black winged stilts (Himantopus himantopus) and Kentish plovers (Charadrius alexandrines). Both breed in the reserve. Other breeding wetland birds include Redwattled lapwings (Vanellus indicus) and White tailed lap wings (Vanellus leucrus). Notable migrant wader visitors are Pacific golden plovers (Pluvialis fluva) and Greater flamingo (Phoenicopterus roseus) and common ringed plovers (Charadrius hiaticula). In habitats surrounding the lake notable breeding and visiting birds are; Graceful prinia (Prinia gracilis), reed warblers (Acrocephalus sps), Southern red bishops (Euplectes orix), several species of weaver and Blue throats (Luscinia svecica). Bee eaters (Merops spp), Crested larks (Galerida cristata), Durian and Turkestan shrikes (Lanius isabellinus) are common in other terrestrial habitats. Western Marsh harriers (Circus aeruginosus) breed in the reserve, they are joined by several visiting migrant raptors during the spring and summer periods. Several species of snakes and small mammals are known to live in the reserve; namely, Afro-Asian sand snake (Psammophis schokari schokari), arabian horned vipers (Cerastes gasperettii), Saw scaled vipers (Echis carinatus sochureki) and Ethiopian hedgehogs (Paraechinus aethiopicus) a near threatened species in the UAE.

☑ Criterion 4 : Support during critical life cycle stage or in adverse conditions

3.2 - Plant species whose presence relates to the international importance of the site

<no data available>

3.3 - Animal species whose presence relates to the international importance of the site

Phylum	Scientific name	Common name	Species qualifies under criterion				Species contributes under criterion				Pop. Size	Period of pop. Est.	% occurrence 1)	IUCN Red List	CITES Appendix I	CMS Appendix I	Other Status	Justification
			2	4	6	9	3	5	7	8								
Birds																		
CHORDATA / AVES	*Accipiter badius*	Shikra	☐	☐	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐				LC	☐	☐		
CHORDATA / AVES	*Acridotheres tristis*	Common Myna	☐	☐	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐	9	2014-2017		LC	☐	☐		
CHORDATA / AVES	*Acrocephalus scirpaceus*	Eurasian Reed Warbler	☐	☑	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐	1			LC	☐	☐		The site is important for Eurasian Reed Warbler (Acrocephalus scirpaceus) breeding

Phylum	Scientific name	Common name	Species qualifies under criterion				Species contributes under criterion				Pop. Size	Period of pop. Est.	% occurrence 1)	IUCN Red List	CITES Appendix I	CMS Appendix I	Other Status	Justification
			2	4	6	9	3	5	7	8								
CHORDATA / AVES	*Acrocephalus stentoreus*	Clamorous Reed Warbler	☐	☐	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐				LC	☐	☐		
CHORDATA / AVES	*Actitis hypoleucos*	Common Sandpiper	☐	☐	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐	2	2014-2017		LC	☐	☐		
CHORDATA / AVES	*Anas carolinensis*	Green-winged teal	☐	☐	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐	15	2014-2017		LC	☐	☐		
CHORDATA / AVES	*Anas clypeata*	Northern Shoveler	☐	☐	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐	2	2014-2017		LC	☐	☐		
CHORDATA / AVES	*Anas platyrhynchos*	Mallard	☐	☐	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐	3	2014-2017		LC	☐	☐		
CHORDATA / AVES	*Anas querquedula*	Garganey	☐	☐	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐				LC	☐	☐		
CHORDATA / AVES	*Ardea alba*	Great Egret	☐	☐	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐				LC	☐	☐		
CHORDATA / AVES	*Ardea purpurea*	Purple Heron	☐	☐	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐				LC	☐	☐		
CHORDATA / AVES	*Calidris alpina*	Dunlin	☐	☐	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐	2	2014-2017		LC	☐	☐		
CHORDATA / AVES	*Calidris ferruginea*	Curlew Sandpiper	☐	☐	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐				NT	☐	☐		
CHORDATA / AVES	*Calidris minuta*	Little Stint	☐	☐	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐	12	2014-2017		LC	☐	☐		
CHORDATA / AVES	*Charadrius alexandrinus*	Kentish Plover; Snowy Plover	☐	☑	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐	77			LC	☐	☐		The site is important for Kentish Plover (Charadrius alexandrinus) breeding.
CHORDATA / AVES	*Charadrius dubius*	Little Ringed Plover	☐	☐	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐	2	2014-2017		LC	☐	☐		
CHORDATA / AVES	*Charadrius hiaticula*	Common Ringed Plover	☐	☑	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐	23	2014-2017		LC	☐	☐		The site is important for Common Ringed Plover (Charadrius hiaticula) breeding.
CHORDATA / AVES	*Charadrius leschenaultii*	Greater Sand Plover; Greater Sand-Plover	☐	☐	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐				LC	☐	☐		
CHORDATA / AVES	*Charadrius mongolus*	Lesser Sand Plover; Lesser Sand-Plover	☐	☐	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐	12	2014-2017		LC	☐	☐		
CHORDATA / AVES	*Cinnyris asiaticus*	Purple Sunbird	☐	☐	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐	5	2014-2017		LC	☐	☐		
CHORDATA / AVES	*Circus aeruginosus*	Western Marsh Harrier	☐	☑	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐				LC	☐	☐		The site is important for western marsh harrier (Circus aeruginosus) breeding.
CHORDATA / AVES	*Columba livia*	Common Pigeon	☐	☐	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐				LC	☐	☐		

Phylum	Scientific name	Common name	Species qualifies under criterion				Species contributes under criterion				Pop. Size	Period of pop. Est.	% occurrence 1)	IUCN Red List	CITES Appendix I	CMS Appendix I	Other Status	Justification
			2	4	6	9	3	5	7	8								
CHORDATA / AVES	*Coracias garrulus*	European Roller	☐	☐	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐				LC	☐	☑		
CHORDATA / AVES	*Egretta gularis*	Western Reef Heron; Western Reef-Heron	☐	☑	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐	2	2014-2017		LC	☐	☐		The site is important for Western reef herons (Egretta gularis) breeding
CHORDATA / AVES	*Francolinus pondicerianus*	Gray Francolin; Grey Francolin	☐	☑	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐	19	2014-2017		LC	☐	☐		The site is important for Grey francolin (Francolinus pondicerianus) breeding.
CHORDATA / AVES	*Gallinago gallinago*	Common Snipe	☐	☐	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐	9	2014-2017		LC	☐	☐		
CHORDATA / AVES	*Gallinula chloropus*	Common Moorhen	☐	☐	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐	3	2014-2017		LC	☐	☐		
CHORDATA / AVES	*Gelochelidon nilotica*	Gull-billed Tern	☐	☐	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐	7	2014-2017		LC	☐	☐		
CHORDATA / AVES	*Himantopus himantopus*	Black-winged Stilt	☐	☑	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐	144	2014-2017		LC	☐	☐		The site is important for Black- winged stilts (Himantopus himantopus) foraging and breeding.
CHORDATA / AVES	*Limosa lapponica*	Bar-tailed Godwit	☐	☐	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐				NT	☐	☐		
CHORDATA / AVES	*Limosa limosa*	Black-tailed Godwit	☐	☐	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐				NT	☐	☐		
CHORDATA / AVES	*Lonchura punctulata*	Nutmeg Mannikin; Scaly-breasted Munia	☐	☐	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐	2	2014-2017		LC	☐	☐		
CHORDATA / AVES	*Merops apiaster*	European Bee-eater	☐	☐	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐	2	2014-2017		LC	☐	☐		
CHORDATA / AVES	*Merops orientalis*	Green Bee-eater	☐	☑	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐	8	2014-2017		LC	☐	☐		The site is important for Green Bee-eater (Merops orientalis) breeding
CHORDATA / AVES	*Muscicapa striata*	Spotted Flycatcher	☐	☐	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐				LC	☐	☐		
CHORDATA / AVES	*Numenius arquata*	Eurasian Curlew	☐	☐	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐				NT	☐	☐		
CHORDATA / AVES	*Oenanthe deserti*	Desert Wheatear	☐	☐	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐				LC	☐	☐		
CHORDATA / AVES	*Pernis ptilorhynchus*		☐	☐	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐				LC	☐	☐		
CHORDATA / AVES	*Phalacrocorax nigrogularis*	Socotra Cormorant	☑	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐				VU	☐	☐		
CHORDATA / AVES	*Phalaropus lobatus*	Red-necked Phalarope	☐	☐	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐				LC	☐	☐		
CHORDATA / AVES	*Philomachus pugnax*	Ruff	☐	☐	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐				LC	☐	☐		

Phylum	Scientific name	Common name	Species qualifies under criterion				Species contributes under criterion				Pop. Size	Period of pop. Est.	% occurrence 1)	IUCN Red List	CITES Appendix I	CMS Appendix I	Other Status	Justification
			2	4	6	9	3	5	7	8								
CHORDATA / AVES	*Phoenicopterus roseus*	Greater Flamingo	☐	☐	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐	6	2014-2017		LC	☐	☐		
CHORDATA / AVES	*Phoenicurus phoenicurus*	Common Redstart	☐	☐	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐				LC	☐	☐		
CHORDATA / AVES	*Phylloscopus collybita*	Common Chiffchaff	☐	☐	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐				LC	☐	☐		
CHORDATA / AVES	*Platalea leucorodia*	Eurasian Spoonbill	☐	☐	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐				LC	☐	☐		
CHORDATA / AVES	*Plegadis falcinellus*	Glossy Ibis	☐	☐	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐				LC	☐	☐		
CHORDATA / AVES	*Pluvialis apricaria*	European Golden Plover; European Golden-Plover	☐	☐	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐	54	2014-2017		LC	☐	☐		
CHORDATA / AVES	*Pluvialis fulva*	Pacific Golden Plover	☐	☐	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐	33	2014-2017		LC	☐	☐		
CHORDATA / AVES	*Pluvialis squatarola*	Grey Plover; Black-bellied Plover	☐	☐	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐	11	2014-2017		LC	☐	☐		
CHORDATA / AVES	*Pycnonotus cafer*	Red-vented Bulbul	☐	☐	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐	3	2014-2017		LC	☐	☐		
CHORDATA / AVES	*Pycnonotus leucotis*	White-eared Bulbul	☐	☐	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐	30	2014-2017		LC	☐	☐		
CHORDATA / AVES	*Recurvirostra avosetta*	Pied Avocet	☐	☐	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐				LC	☐	☐		
CHORDATA / AVES	*Saxicola rubetra*	Whinchat	☐	☐	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐				LC	☐	☐		
CHORDATA / AVES	*Sterna hirundo*	Common Tern	☐	☐	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐				LC	☐	☐		
CHORDATA / AVES	*Sternula albifrons*	Little Tern	☐	☐	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐	8	2014-2017		LC	☐	☐		
CHORDATA / AVES	*Streptopelia decaocto*	Eurasian Collared Dove; Eurasian Collared-Dove	☐	☐	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐	39	2014-2017		LC	☐	☐		
CHORDATA / AVES	*Sylvia mystacea*	Menetries's Warbler	☐	☐	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐				LC	☐	☐		
CHORDATA / AVES	*Tachybaptus ruficollis*	Little Grebe	☐	☐	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐				LC	☐	☐		
CHORDATA / AVES	*Thalasseus bergii*	Great Crested Tern; Greater Crested Tern	☐	☐	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐				LC	☐	☐		
CHORDATA / AVES	*Thalasseus sandvicensis*	Sandwich Tern	☐	☐	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐				LC	☐	☐		
CHORDATA / AVES	*Tringa erythropus*	Spotted Redshank	☐	☐	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐				LC	☐	☐		

Phylum	Scientific name	Common name	Species qualifies under criterion				Species contributes under criterion				Pop. Size	Period of pop. Est.	% occurrence 1)	IUCN Red List	CITES Appendix I	CMS Appendix I	Other Status	Justification
			2	4	6	9	3	5	7	8								
CHORDATA / AVES	*Tringa nebularia*	Common Greenshank	☐	☐	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐	2	2014-2017		LC	☐	☐		
CHORDATA / AVES	*Tringa ochropus*	Green Sandpiper	☐	☐	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐				LC	☐	☐		
CHORDATA / AVES	*Tringa totanus*	Common Redshank	☐	☐	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐	3	2014-2017		LC	☐	☐		
CHORDATA / AVES	*Upupa epops*	Common Hoopoe; Eurasian Hoopoe	☐	☐	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐	2	2014-2017		LC	☐	☐		
CHORDATA / AVES	*Vanellus indicus*	Red-wattled Lapwing	☐	☑	☐	☐	☑	☐	☐	☐	17	2014-2017		LC	☐	☐		The site is important for Red-wattled Lapwing (Vanellus indicus) breeding.

1) Percentage of the total biogeographic population at the site

3.4 - Ecological communities whose presence relates to the international importance of the site

<no data available>

4 - What is the Site like? (Ecological character description)

4.1 - Ecological character

As a small wetland and urban conservation area, the site acts as an island of habitats within the limits of Sharjah City. Wasit Nature reserve is an important habitat for a high diversity of wetland species and migrant visitors to the Arabian Peninsula. With 111 recorded bird species in the Area the past ten year from 2008 till 2018 (ebird, 2018), which makes the reserve an important area for bird conservation. Small terrestrial habitats are an important refuge for small mammals and reptiles from the surrounding suburban infrastructure. The landscaping, planting, vegetation management and natural maturation of the location has led to the formation of a complex matrix of small habitats. These include low dunes vegetated with halophytic succulents and scrubland, dense stands of mixed-species woodlands. The water's edge is in part sparsely vegetated, densely vegetated with halophytic species or fringed by dense stands of reed beds (Phragmites australis). In addition to the water table levels of the surrounding landscape, the primary water inflow is fresh water from inland, underground drainage. Water levels at the wetland fluctuate seasonally and are lowest at the end of the summer months, corresponding with an increase in salinity concentrations. Increased salinity can adversely impact the populations of the only resident fish species, Arabian toothcarp (Aphanius dispar dispar) although their resilience and tolerances for change have enabled their persistence.

4.2 - What wetland type(s) are in the site?

Inland wetlands

Wetland types (code and name)	Local name	Ranking of extent (1: greatest - 4: least)	Area (ha) of wetland type	Justification of Criterion 1
Saline, brackish or alkaline water > Lakes >> Q: Permanent saline/ brackish/ alkaline lakes		1		
Saline, brackish or alkaline water > Marshes & pools >> Sp: Permanent saline/ brackish/ alkaline marshes/ pools		2		
Saline, brackish or alkaline water > Marshes & pools >> Ss: Seasonal/ intermittent saline/ brackish/ alkaline marshes/ pools		3		Representative

Human-made wetlands

Wetland types (code and name)	Local name	Ranking of extent (1: greatest - 4: least)	Area (ha) of wetland type	Justification of Criterion 1
2: Ponds		4		

4.3 - Biological components

4.3.1 - Plant species

Other noteworthy plant species

Scientific name	Common name	Position in range / endemism / other
Phragmites australis	The Phragmites australis are important for small passerines and act as a natural filtration system, keeping the water in	

4.3.2 - Animal species

Other noteworthy animal species

Phylum	Scientific name	Common name	Pop. size	Period of pop. est.	%occurrence	Position in range /endemism/other
CHORDATA/ACTINOPTERYGII	*Aphanius dispar dispar*					
CHORDATA/REPTILIA	*Cerastes gasperettii*					
CHORDATA/AVES	*Euplectes orix*	Southern Red Bishop				
CHORDATA/AVES	*Galerida cristata*	Crested Lark				
CHORDATA/AVES	*Lanius isabellinus*	Isabelline Shrike				
CHORDATA/AVES	*Luscinia svecica*	Bluethroat				
CHORDATA/MAMMALIA	*Paraechinus aethiopicus*	Desert Hedgehog				
CHORDATA/AVES	*Prinia gracilis*	Graceful Prinia				
CHORDATA/REPTILIA	*Psammophis schokari*					
CHORDATA/AVES	*Vanellus leucurus*	White-tailed Lapwing				

4.4 - Physical components

4.4.1 - Climate

Climatic region	Subregion
B: Dry climate	BWh: Subtropical desert (Low-latitude desert)

The climate of Wasit Nature Reserve is the same as the city of Sharjah. The area experiences hot and humid weather during the summer from June to August, hot spring and autumn periods from August to October and March to May. The annual mean maximum daily temperature for the site is 34.9 °C and the annual mean minimum daily temperature for the site is 22.4 °C. The mean monthly maximum temperature difference between the coldest winter month (January) and the hottest summer month (July) is 19.4 °C. Mean annual relative humidity is 52.4 % with the highest humidity recorded in January after rainfall. Precipitation varies from 22.7 mm per month to 0 mm per month with most rain falling from November through to March.

4.4.2 - Geomorphic setting

a) Minimum elevation above sea level (in metres): 5

a) Maximum elevation above sea level (in metres): 20

- Entire river basin ☐
- Upper part of river basin ☐
- Middle part of river basin ☐
- Lower part of river basin ☐
- More than one river basin ☐
- Not in river basin ☑
- Coastal ☑

Please name the river basin or basins. If the site lies in a sub-basin, please also name the larger river basin. For a coastal/marine site, please name the sea or ocean.

The Arabian Gulf

4.4.3 - Soil

- Mineral ☐
- Organic ☐
- No available information ☑

Are soil types subject to change as a result of changing hydrological conditions (e.g., increased salinity or acidification)? Yes ◉ No ○

Please provide further information on the soil (optional)

The site is comprised of fine grained sand and inter-bedded sandstone layers. In the eastern and western portions of the site the sands are underlain by clay.

4.4.4 - Water regime

Water permanence

Presence?	
Usually seasonal, ephemeral or intermittent water present	No change

Source of water that maintains character of the site

Presence?	Predominant water source	
Water inputs from groundwater	☑	No change
Water inputs from rainfall	☐	No change

Water destination

Presence?	
Feeds groundwater	No change

Stability of water regime

Presence?	
Water levels fluctuating (including tidal)	No change

Please add any comments on the water regime and its determinants (if relevant). Use this box to explain sites with complex hydrology.

The hydrogeology of the site was determined on an investigation of the site conducted in 2006 (Barsch et all, 2006).Using borehole investigations throughout the area the study determined that groundwater plays a vital role in maintaining water in the lake. Groundwater flow in the Reserve and surrounding areas has been determined based on information from the onsite groundwater monitoring from 10 observation wells and on a general understanding of regional groundwater flow (Barsch et all, 2006) Ground water flows from East to West at approximately 0.5 m below the surface. The source of this water originates from a large aquifer with its source below the Hajar Mountains which collects additional water from seepage on dune sheets.

The water in the lake fluctuates seasonally. It is usually at its fullest after the winter rains (March) and at its lowest at the end of summer (September/October). The water in the lakes is brackish with normal salinity levels below 30 ppt. During extremely hot and dry periods when the water level in the lake decreases salinity has reached 100 ppt.
A negligible volume of water enters the lake from irrigation systems. This water is treated sewerage water from the city of Sharjah. Otherwise there is no direct anthropogenic water contribution to the lake.

4.4.5 - Sediment regime

- Significant erosion of sediments occurs on the site ☐
- Significant accretion or deposition of sediments occurs on the site ☐
- Significant transportation of sediments occurs on or through the site ☐
- Sediment regime is highly variable, either seasonally or inter-annually ☐
- Sediment regime unknown ☑

4.4.6 - Water pH

- Acid (pH<5.5) ☐
- Circumneutral (pH: 5.5-7.4) ☑
- Alkaline (pH>7.4) ☑
- Unknown ☐

4.4.7 - Water salinity

- Fresh (<0.5 g/l) ☐
- Mixohaline (brackish)/Mixosaline (0.5-30 g/l) ☑
- Euhaline/Eusaline (30-40 g/l) ☐
- Hyperhaline/Hypersaline (>40 g/l) ☑
- Unknown ☐

Please provide further information on salinity (optional):

The water in the lakes is brackish with normal salinity levels below 30 ppt. During extremely hot and dry periods when the water level in the lake decreases salinity has reached 100 ppt.

4.4.8 - Dissolved or suspended nutrients in water

- Eutrophic ☑
- Mesotrophic ☑
- Oligotrophic ☑
- Dystrophic ☐
- Unknown ☐

Please provide further information on dissolved or suspended nutrients (optional):

Total phosphorus: Wasit wetland habitats fell within the range of phosphorous concentrations associated with eutrophic conditions.

Nutrient enrichment with respect to nitrogen is at a relatively low level at Wasit wetland reserve as a whole, with total nitrogen concentration for most sites falling within the range expected systems for oligotrophic systems and only few sites being classified as mesotrophic.

4.4.9 - Features of the surrounding area which may affect the Site

Please describe whether, and if so how, the landscape and ecological characteristics in the area surrounding the Ramsar Site differ from the site itself: i) broadly similar ○ ii) significantly different ◉

- Surrounding area has greater urbanisation or development ☑
- Surrounding area has higher human population density ☑
- Surrounding area has more intensive agricultural use ☐
- Surrounding area has significantly different land cover or habitat types ☐

Please describe other ways in which the surrounding area is different:

The physical features of the area surrounding Wasit Nature reserve area similar to what has been described above. The site is surrounded by urban and industrial development with completely transformed landscapes.

4.5 - Ecosystem services

4.5.1 - Ecosystem services/benefits

Regulating Services

Ecosystem service	Examples	Importance/Extent/Significance
Maintenance of hydrological regimes	Groundwater recharge and discharge	Medium
Erosion protection	Soil, sediment and nutrient retention	Medium
Pollution control and detoxification	Water purification/waste treatment or dilution	Medium
Climate regulation	Regulation of greenhouse gases, temperature, precipitation and other climactic processes	Medium
Climate regulation	Local climate regulation/buffering of change	Medium
Biological control of pests and disease	Support of predators of agricultural pests (e.g., birds feeding on locusts)	Medium
Hazard reduction	Flood control, flood storage	Low

Cultural Services

Ecosystem service	Examples	Importance/Extent/Significance
Recreation and tourism	Nature observation and nature-based tourism	Medium
Scientific and educational	Major scientific study site	Medium
Scientific and educational	Important knowledge systems, importance for research (scientific reference area or site)	Medium
Scientific and educational	Educational activities and opportunities	High

Supporting Services

Ecosystem service	Examples	Importance/Extent/Significance
Biodiversity	Supports a variety of all life forms including plants, animals and microorganizms, the genes they contain, and the ecosystems of which they form a part	Medium

Have studies or assessments been made of the economic valuation of ecosystem services provided by this Ramsar Site? Yes ○ No ○ Unknown ◉

4.5.2 - Social and cultural values

i) the site provides 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) the site has exceptional cultural traditions or records of former civilizations that have influenced the ecological character of the wetland ☐

iii) the ecological character of the wetland depends on its interaction with local communities or indigenous peoples ☐

iv) 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 ☐

<no data available>

4.6 - Ecological processes

<no data available>

5 - How is the Site managed? (Conservation and management)

5.1 - Land tenure and responsibilities (Managers)

5.1.1 - Land tenure/ownership

Public ownership

Category	Within the Ramsar Site	In the surrounding area
Local authority, municipality, (sub)district, etc.	☑	☑

Provide further information on the land tenure / ownership regime (optional):

a) Within the Ramsar site:

The land is owned by the Government of Sharjah.

b) in the surrounding area:

Land surrounding Wasit Nature Reserve is owned by several different entities. The Road way on the Northern Boundary of the site is owned by the Government of Sharjah. The surrounding urban housing is privately owned by individuals and adjacent roadways are owned by the Government of Sharjah.

5.1.2 - Management authority

Please list the local office / offices of any agency or organization responsible for managing the site: Environment & Protected Areas Authority, Government of Sharjah

Provide the name and title of the person or people with responsibility for the wetland: Hana Saif Al Suwaidi –Chairperson

Postal address: P.O. Box Sharjah 2926
Phone: 0097165311501
Fax: 0097165311419

E-mail address: hana@epaa.shj.ae

5.2 - Ecological character threats and responses (Management)

5.2.1 - Factors (actual or likely) adversely affecting the Site's ecological character

Human settlements (non agricultural)

Factors adversely affecting site	Actual threat	Potential threat	Within the site	In the surrounding area
Housing and urban areas	Medium impact	Medium impact	☐	☑

Transportation and service corridors

Factors adversely affecting site	Actual threat	Potential threat	Within the site	In the surrounding area
Aircraft flight paths	Medium impact	Medium impact	☑	☑

Invasive and other problematic species and genes

Factors adversely affecting site	Actual threat	Potential threat	Within the site	In the surrounding area
Invasive non-native/ alien species	Medium impact	Medium impact	☑	☐

Pollution

Factors adversely affecting site	Actual threat	Potential threat	Within the site	In the surrounding area
Excess heat, sound, light	Medium impact	Medium impact	☑	☑

5.2.2 - Legal conservation status

National legal designations

Designation type	Name of area	Online information url	Overlap with Ramsar Site
Protected Area			whole

5.2.3 - IUCN protected areas categories (2008)

Ia Strict Nature Reserve ☐

Ib Wilderness Area: protected area managed mainly for wilderness protection ☐

II National Park: protected area managed mainly for ecosystem protection and recreation ☐

III Natural Monument: protected area managed mainly for conservation of specific natural features ☐

IV Habitat/Species Management Area: protected area managed mainly for conservation through management intervention ☐

V Protected Landscape/Seascape: protected area managed mainly for landscape/seascape conservation and recreation ☑

VI Managed Resource Protected Area: protected area managed mainly for the sustainable use of natural ecosystems ☐

5.2.4 - Key conservation measures

Legal protection

Measures	Status
Legal protection	Implemented

Species

Measures	Status
Threatened/rare species management programmes	Implemented

Human Activities

Measures	Status
Communication, education, and participation and awareness activities	Implemented

5.2.5 - Management planning

Is there a site-specific management plan for the site? Yes

Has a management effectiveness assessment been undertaken for the site? Yes ○ No ◉

If the site is a formal transboundary site as indicated in section Data and location > Site location, are there shared management planning processes with another Contracting Party? Yes ○ No ◉

5.2.6 - Planning for restoration

Is there a site-specific restoration plan? No, the site has already been restored

5.2.7 - Monitoring implemented or proposed

Monitoring	Status
Birds	Implemented

6 - Additional material

6.1 - Additional reports and documents

6.1.1 - Bibliographical references

Aspinall, S. 1998. A directory of wetlands of the Middle East. United Arab Emirates. 50 pp.
eBird: An online database of bird distribution and abundance [web application]. eBird, Ithaca, New York. Available: http://www.ebird.org. (Accessed: Date [e.g., February 2, 2012]).
GEOSS 2005. Hydrogeological assessment Al Wasit Reserve. Sharjah UAE. Geoss report number G2005/07-03, prepared by J. Conrad for Gary Bartsch International
GEOSS 2006. Specialist report: Hydrogeological assessment of the extended Wasit nature reserve, Sharjah, UAE. Geoss report number G2006/08-01, prepared by J. Conrad for Bary Bartsch International
Hellyer, P. Aspinall, S. 2005. The Al Wasit Nature Reserve (Ramtha) Environmental Baseline Study. 03 pp.
Llewellyn-Smith, R. 2001. Gulf of Oman desert and semi desert (AT 1306). Terrestrial Ecoregion of the World. World Wildlife Fund & National Geographic. http://www.worldwildlife.org/wildworld/profiles/terrestrial/at/at1306.fll.html.
Sullivan, B.L., C.L. Wood, M.J. Iliff, R.E. Bonney, D. Fink, and S. Kelling. 2009. eBird: a citizen-based bird observation network in the biological sciences. Biological Conservation 142: 2282-2292.eBird. 2012.
Wetlands International. 2013. "Waterbird Population Estimates". Retrieved from wpe.wetlands.org on Thursday 18 Apr 2013.

6.1.2 - Additional reports and documents

i. taxonomic lists of plant and animal species occurring in the site (see section 4.3)
<1 file(s) uploaded>

ii. a detailed Ecological Character Description (ECD) (in a national format)
<no file available>

iii. a description of the site in a national or regional wetland inventory
<no file available>

iv. relevant Article 3.2 reports
<no file available>

v. site management plan
<1 file(s) uploaded>

vi. other published literature
<no file available>

6.1.3 - Photograph(s) of the Site

Please provide at least one photograph of the site:

Wasit Sabkha Panorama (
John Pereira, 03-04-2013)

6.1.4 - Designation letter and related data

Designation letter
<1 file(s) uploaded>

Date of Designation: 2019-05-09