

NAMIBIA - 1NA002

1. Country: Namibia
2. Date: 24/7/95
3. Ref: 1NA002
4. Name and address of compiler: Holger Kolberg, Ministry of Environment & Tourism, Private Bag 13306 Windhoek, Namibia.
5. Name of wetlands: Sandwich Harbour
6. Date of Ramsar designation: 19 June 1995
7. Geographical coordinates: 23°23'S 14°29'E
8. General location: On the west coast, about 55 km south of Walvis Bay.
9. Area: 6500 ha
10. Wetland type: A1, A7, A10
11. Altitude: Sea level
12. Overview: The site consists of a northern freshwater wetland and southern mudflats. The site is separated from inland Namibia by the Namib dune sea.
13. Physical features: The area is bordered in the east by the Namib dune sea and in the west by the southern Atlantic ocean. The geology is of the post-karoo sequence, dated to the Quaternary. It consists mainly of littoral sands. The northern wetland is fed by a huge aquifer, the southern wetland is under tidal influence. The climate is that typical to coastal, arid zone deserts.
14. Ecological features: The northern freshwater wetlands comprise a thin sliver of emergent vegetation (mainly *PHRAGMITES AUSTRALIS*, *Typha latifolia*, *Arthrocnemum affine* and *Sporobolus virginicus*). The southern mudflats start 7km south of the northern wetlands and are virtually flat except for some raised shingle bars.
15. Land tenure/ownership of:
 - (a) site: State land
 - (b) surrounding area: State land (Namib Naukluft Park)
16. Conservation measures taken: The site lies in the Namib Naukluft Park. The area off-shore has been declared a marine protected area.
17. Conservation measures proposed but not yet implemented: A site-specific management plan is in preparation.
18. Current land use:
 - (a) site: Scientific research, tourism
 - (b) surroundings/catchment: Tourism, angling, recreation.
19. Disturbances/threats, including changes in land use and major development projects:
 - (a) at the site: The northern freshwater wetland is slowly disappearing due to natural causes. The southern mudflats are continually changing due to the dynamic nature of the area.
 - (b) in the surroundings/catchment: The aquifer feeding the freshwater wetland is thought to be connected to large aquifers associated with the Kuiseb river. Large-scale abstraction from these aquifers may negatively affect the freshwater wetland.

20. Hydrological and physical values: None.

21. Social and cultural values: There are a number of archaeological sites with in the area, some dating back at least 1000 years. In recent history Sandwich Harbour has been used for fishing industry, guano industry and sealing. Many artifacts from that era can still be seen in the area.

22. Noteworthy fauna: Recent counts have shown the area to be one of Namibia's most important coastal wetlands. Counts in February 1991 showed a total of 179 000 wading birds. Since then counts have been somewhat lower (average 60 000 birds). Eight Namibian red data bird species, including the Damara tern *Sterna balaenarum* and the Chestnut-banded plover *Charadrius pallidus*, occur.

23. Noteworthy flora: The wetlands support plants that are typical of wetlands in the area: *Phragmites australis*, *Typha latifolia*, *Arthrocnemum affine* etc. A couple of nara melons *Acanthosicyos horridus* grow at the northern end of the site.

24. Current scientific research and facilities: A small wooden hut has been erected at the northern wetland for the use of visiting scientists.

25. Current conservation education: None.

26. Current recreation and tourism: A number of tourists visit the area on a day-visit basis.

27. Management authority: Ministry of Environment & Tourism, Private Bag 13306, Windhoek, Namibia.

28. Jurisdiction: As above.

29. Bibliographical references: See attached list

30. Reasons for inclusion: 1d, 2c, 3a, 3b, 3c.