

## NAMIBIA - 1NA003

1. Country: Namibia
2. Date: 24/7/95
3. Ref: 1NA003
4. Name and address of compiler:  
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Ministry of Environment & Tourism  
Private Bag 13306  
Windhoek  
Namibia
5. Name of wetlands: Orange River Mouth (=Gariiep River Mouth)
6. Date of Ramsar designation: 19 June 1995
7. Geographical coordinates: 28°40'S 16°30'E
8. General location: Forms the southwestern corner of Namibia's border, about 5 km SW of Oranjemund.
9. Area: 1800 ha, including the South African site.
10. Wetland type: A6, A10
11. Altitude: Sea level
12. Overview: The site consists of the river and its associated floodplains to the west of the Harry Oppenheimer bridge, about 10 km from the mouth.
13. Physical features: The underlying geology is of the Gariiep complex, covered by alluvium, sand and gravel of Quaternary origin. The Orange River Mouth is the endpoint of the Orange River catchment that covers about one million square kilometres. The water is virtually fresh right down to the mouth. The Orange River Mouth falls within the winter rainfall area of southern Africa, receiving between 11 and 88mm of rain per annum.
14. Ecological features: The Orange River forms a linear oasis through the arid Karoo and southern Namib and is thus an important habitat. The main habitats within the site are the river channels, the vegetated islands *Arthrocnenum/Phragmites/Scirpus* and the sand bars close to the mouth.
15. Land tenure/ownership of:  
(a) site: State land, under concession to Consolidated Diamond Mines (now Namdeb)  
(b) surrounding area: As above.
16. Conservation measures taken: Access to the area has been severely restricted by the diamond mining companies. This has served to protect the area quite well. A cross-border, site specific management plan is in preparation.
17. Conservation measures proposed but not yet implemented: There are plans to proclaim the entire area as a park once the diamond mining concession runs out.
18. Current land use:  
(a) site: Recreation (restricted)  
(b) surroundings/catchment: Diamond mining
19. Disturbances/threats, including changes in land use and major development projects:

(a) at the site: The saltmarsh on the South African side has been severely degraded due to several factors such as reduced river flow, flood prevention dykes etc.

(b) in the surroundings/catchment: Mining for alluvial diamonds on the river terraces, irrigation farming, heavy water abstraction in South Africa.

20. Hydrological and physical values: The site traps large amounts of sediment during floods.

21. Social and cultural values: no information available

22. Noteworthy fauna: Counts of wetlands birds indicate that during the summer this wetland is the sixth richest wetland in southern Africa in terms of the overall number of birds supported. The abundance of three species, Cape cormorant *Phalacrocorax capensis*, Damara tern *Sterna balaenarum* and Hartlaub's gull *Larus hartlaubii*, exceeds 1% of their global population.

23. Noteworthy flora: The Orange River is the only perennial river in the region and thus supports a great variety of plants not found anywhere else.

24. Current scientific research and facilities: Wetland bird counts are done twice a year.

25. Current conservation education: None.

26. Current recreation and tourism: The site is used by the residents of the two towns for angling, boating, windsurfing, picnics etc.

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: 1c, 1d, 2a, 3a, 3c