



Ramsar Sites Information Service

Annotated List of Wetlands of International Importance

4 Ramsar Site(s) covering 415,532 ha

Lake Qarun Protected Area

Site number: 2040 | Country: Egypt | Administrative region: Fayoum

Area: 134,042 ha | Coordinates: 29°34'09"N 30°36'16"E | Designation dates: 04-06-2012

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Lake Qarun Protected Area. 04/06/12; Fayoum; 134,042 ha; 29°34'22"N 030°35'23"E. Protected Area, Nature Reserve. A permanent saline inland lake (one of the oldest lakes in Egypt, with Neolithic settlements along the ancient shoreline) with a small island, considered to be one of the most attractive sites for nesting birds in Egypt, and surrounding arid land. About 88 species of birds have been spotted there (in 2010, the waterbird population was estimated to be over 26,000 individuals), as well as more than 12 species of fish. The site supports threatened species like the endangered slender horned gazelle *Gazella leptoceros* and vulnerable *Gazella dorcas* and offers shelter to mammals like the Egyptian hyena, red fox, beaver, kudu and gnu as well as several species of reptiles. The southern shore of the lake is heavily used for traditional agriculture and more recently for fish farms, and fishermen are active using rowing boats and nets. A commercial plant for extracting lake salts has the added benefit of helping to reduce the lake's salinity. Ecotourism activities include desert safaris, boat trips, bicycling and walking through the countryside, horse and donkey rides, guided tours to the famous fossil areas and antiquities, camping in the desert, and working with local craftsmen. The site is threatened by water pollution from domestic and industrial waste disposal practices, in addition to agrochemical contamination and lack of sustainable wastewater management. Ramsar Site no. 2040. Most recent RIS information 2012.

Wadi El Rayan Protected Area

Site number: 2041 | Country: Egypt | Administrative region: Fayoum

Area: 175,790 ha | Coordinates: 29°11'58"N 30°19'20"E | Designation dates: 04-06-2012

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Wadi El Rayan Protected Area. 04/06/12; Fayoum; 175,790 ha; 29°12'N 030°18'E. World Heritage site, Nature Reserve. Comprises two main lakes, at different elevations, connected by a swampy channel, one of the most important habitats for certain bird species of national, regional and international importance. The area holds reasonable numbers of wintering birds such as the near-threatened Ferruginous Duck (*Aythya nyroca*) and Pallid Harrier *Circus macrourus* as well as several threatened species of mammals, including the slender horned gazelle, *Gazella leptoceros*. The lakes and springs play a critical role in the life cycles of a remarkable diversity of species, including 29 fish species, 164 bird species, 24 mammal species, 14 reptile species and 38 plant species. Fishing and agriculture are the major sources of livelihood for the 12,000 resident population, and the annual fish catch has been increasing markedly. Potential threats to the site include agricultural and wastewater drainage as well as illegal hunting. Wadi al-Hitan ("Whale Valley"), within the Ramsar Site, was designated as a World Heritage site in 2005 because of "invaluable fossil remains of the earliest, and now extinct, suborder of whales, Archaeoceti. These fossils represent one of the major stories of evolution: the emergence of the whale as an ocean-going mammal from a previous life as a land-based animal" (WH List). Ramsar Site no. 2041. Most recent RIS information 2012.

Lake Burullus

Site number: 408 | Country: Egypt | Administrative region: Kafer El Sheikh

Area: 46,200 ha | Coordinates: 31°30'N 30°49'59"E | Designation dates: 09-09-1988

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Lake Burullus. 09/09/88; Kafer El Sheikh; 46,200 ha; 31°30'N 030°50'E. Added to the Montreux Record, 4 July 1990. A shallow, saline lagoon containing numerous islands and islets connected with the sea by a narrow channel. The area provides important wintering, staging and breeding habitat for birds. The site is subject to a strong salinity gradient and suffers from the inflow of large amounts of water contaminated with fertilizers and pesticides causing nutrient-enrichment. Subject of a Ramsar Advisory Mission in 1991. Ramsar site no. 408. Most recent RIS information: 1992.

Lake Bardawil

Site number: 407 | Country: Egypt | Administrative region: North Sinai

Area: 59,500 ha | Coordinates: 31°04'59"N 33°05'E | Designation dates: 09-09-1988

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Lake Bardawil. 09/09/88; 59,500 ha; 31°05'N 033°05'E. Added to the Montreux Record, 4 July 1990. Protected Area. Two interconnected hypersaline lagoons consisting of islands and peninsulas. The site provides important spawning area for fish, supports commercially important fish populations, and is an important wintering and staging area for about 500,000 birds. Considerable ecological changes have occurred due to the extension of salt extraction and the constant formation of sand bars (siltation), which close the channels connecting the lagoons with the sea. Subject of a Ramsar Advisory Mission in 1991. Ramsar site no. 407. Most recent RIS information: 1994.