

## Teeb Seasonal Wetlands (IQ068)

Missan - 32.16667°N 47.38333°E

IBA Criteria: **A1 and A4iii**

IPA Criteria: **B1**

Area: **14827 ha**- Altitude: **9-25m**

Ecoregion: **Tigris-Euphrates Alluvial Salt Marsh (PA0906)**

Status: **Unprotected, but proposed as a protected area**



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**Site Description:** This site is a seasonal wetland, with patches of water that remain throughout the year in scattered depressions. The area is sedimentary with clay soil types and the habitats are desert shrub and helophytic marsh vegetation with about 60% of the area unvegetated. Historically, the area received water from the Iranian uplands mainly through the Dwairij River, and from other small drainages from highlands in Iraq and Iran, and deep pools stretched over many kilometers. However, the general lack of rain recently and the closure of the site's primary water source due to an embankment dam built on

the Dwairij River by Iran have resulted in drought conditions at this site.

The wetlands that do remain provide very good habitat for large numbers of geese and ducks, especially in the western, more remote areas of the site. A main road crosses the site and traces of water were noticeable on both sides of the road during the surveys. A few new, small oil wells and oil exploration developments were observed during the summer 2010 visit.

Important Bird Area Criteria		Observations made in 2009-2010.	
<b>A1. Globally threatened species</b>		<b>Breeding</b>	<b>Wintering/ Passage</b>
Lesser White-fronted Goose <i>Anser erythropus</i> (winter visitor)			70 (counts 2010)
Macqueen's Bustard <i>Chlamydotis macqueenii</i> (Winter visitor)			Reported frequently by locals and hunters. Considerable numbers hunted by falconers
<b>A4iii. Holding congregations of 20,000 waterbirds or 10,000 pairs of seabirds of one or more species</b>			
		<b>Breeding</b>	<b>Wintering/ Passage</b>
<i>Congregatory Waterbirds</i>			> 30,000 wildfowl species.
<b>Important Plant Area Criteria</b>			
<b>A4. Sites contains national endemic, near endemic, regional endemic and/or regional range-restricted species or infraspecific taxa</b>			
<i>Eremurus rechingeri</i> , an endemic listed in the Flora of Iraq (Townsend & Guest, Vol 8, P. 65) had a known distribution at Jabal Al Muwilih near Wadi Teeb (Tib), which has a similar habitat.			
<b>B1. The site is a particularly species-rich example of a defined habitat type</b>			
Desert- Desert shrublands habitat type			

**Additional Important Bird Observations:** During the surveys a total of 26 bird species were recorded. Eastern Imperial Eagle *Aquila heliaca* and Greater Spotted Eagle *A. clanga* (both Vulnerable) were also seen frequently. Hunters report "large numbers" of Spotted Sandgrouse *Pterocles senegallus*. Nine

Sahara-Sindian Desert biome-restricted species were observed but these did not trigger inclusion under criterion A3.

**Other Important Fauna:** According to the frequent reports of locals and hunters, mammals include Honey Badger *Mellivora*

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*capensis* and Grey Wolf *Canis lupus*, as well as wild cats and foxes (species unknown). Goitered Gazelle *Gazella subgutturosa* (sub-species unknown) used to occur in the eastern hilly parts of this area and a few were reported killed close to the border. Some reptiles were seen but not identified.

**Conservation Issues:** The Bazirgan, Abu Gharab and Fakka oilfields are nearby and oil development seems to be extending into the site. This and changes in the water management by Iran are some of the highest concerns at this site. Other issues include agricultural and livestock grazing. There is also extensive movement of water trucks by locals collecting water from springs and there is some new road development particularly

for the the oilfields and oil export pipelines as well as along the main road between Amara city and the picnic area in Teeb Oasis (part of IQ067) to the north. Hunting of birds occurs fall through spring and the movement of bedouin, vehicle traffic (especially for the oil industry), and people picnicking causes significant disturbance within the site.

**Recommendations:** Surveys were limited here and more work is recommended to understand breeding, migrating and wintering bird populations. A conservation or restoration plan is needed especially for the two Vulnerable species at the site: Lesser White-fronted Goose and Macqueen's Bustard as well as for Gazelle. Water management issues here will require negotiations with Iran to resolve but in 2013, this site (along with Teeb Oasis and Zubaidaat (IQ067)) was proposed by the National Protected Area Committee for official protection and water resources, along with oil development, will be two of the key issues for the committee to address.

