



New Red Sea Ramsar sites in Sudan

14 April 2009

Sudan



Sudan adds two Red Sea coastal Ramsar sites

The Ramsar Secretariat is pleased to report that, effective World Wetlands Day, 2 February 2009, the Higher Council for Environment and Natural Resources of Sudan has designated two new Wetlands of International Importance, both biodiversity-rich coastal areas in Red Sea State. Dongonab Bay-Marsa Waiai (280,000 hectares, 20°33'N 037°13'E) features an array of coral reefs, mangroves, off-shore islands, soft-bottom mud flats, sand beaches and hard bottom rocky shores in addition to salt-marshes, sabkha and khor basins. Suakin-Gulf of Agig (1,125,000 hectares, 18°34'N 038°05'E) encompasses, not only the sand flats, lagoons, sand shores and Tokar Delta along the coastline, but also the

marine expanse of the



Suakin Archipelago and its coral reefs.

Sudan now has four Ramsar sites covering an area of 8,189,600 hectares. WWF International's Freshwater Programme and the Swiss Federal Office for Environment were very helpful in the preparations for these two important site designations. Ramsar's Cynthia Kibata has prepared brief site summaries for the Annotated Ramsar List, which can be seen [here](#).

Dongonab Bay-Marsa Waiai. 02/02/09; Red Sea State; 280,000 ha; 20°33'N 037°13'E. National Marine Park. An expanse of coastline including coral reefs, mangroves, off-shore islands, soft-bottom mud flats, sand beaches and hard bottom rocky shores in addition to salt-marshes, sabkha and khor basins. As a result the site is rich in biological diversity and provides support to various threatened species and provides permanent habitats, breeding grounds and areas of refuge for various fish and shrimp. The Bottlenose Dolphin and various shark species have also been recorded within the site. The main land uses within the site are animal breeding, mainly of camels, goats and sheep; fisheries; oyster culture; and tourist activities such as scuba diving. Potential threats arise from major land use changes: a proposed shrimp and fish farming industry project along the southern stretch of coastline, livestock fodder production and ice plants, and overgrazing by nomads and camel herders, as well as declining rainfall. The site comprises a National Marine Park of the same name as well as the Senganeb Atoll NMP, and Marine Protected Area status is in the works for the Mukkawar Island area. Ramsar Site No. 1859 Most recent RIS information: 2009.

Suakin-Gulf of Agig. 02/02/09; Red Sea State; 1,125,000 ha; 18°34'N 038°05'E. The site boundary follows the Suakin Archipelago, a proposed Marine Protected Area that occupies the southeastern quarter of the site. It is comprised of diverse forms of wetlands such as sand flats, coral reefs, lagoons, sand shores amongst others, a diversity which allows for a rich range of fauna and flora to thrive at the site - marine turtles such as the Hawksbill Turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*) and Green Turtle (*Chelonia mydas*); seabirds; commercial bony fish and shrimp species. Sightings of the Sea Cow (*Dugong dugon*) and Bottlenose Dolphin (*Turciops truncates*) have also been noted. Various socio-economic activities take place within and around the site, but the most common practice is nomadism with camels, which are of great social and economic value. The Tokar Delta is the sole area with significant potential for

cultivation in the whole coastal zone, with cotton, sorghum, millet and vegetables. The proposed shrimp and fish farming industry project, as well as efforts to widen the entrance and ship channels and reconstruct the port of Suakin, pose major threats to the character of the site. Ramsar site no. 1860. Most recent RIS information: 2009.

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