

Haji Omran Mountain (IQ018)

Erbil–36.666944°N 45.05°E

IPA Criteria: **A4 and B1**

Area: **2108 ha** - Altitude: **1455-2259 m**
 Ecoregion: **Zagros Mountains Forest Steppe (PA0446)**
 Status: **Unprotected**



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Site Description: The site is located in the Zagros range, where the geology is of basic igneous rocks, radiolarian chert, siliceous and calcareous shale, and metamorphic schist and limestone of unknown age, and the soil type is serpentine. Several mountains including Mt. Sakran to the south and Mt. Halgurd to the west surround it. One key habitat type was examined, mountain forest with thorn-cushion vegetation and overall there is high level of plant diversity. The villages of Shiwa Rash, Mawatan, Zinwe and Megula are located within the delineated site. The town of Haji Omran, one of the main border crossings between Iraq and Iran, is also nearby. In addition there are vegetable farms (tomato, eggplant, sweet pepper, and okra) in the area.

Other Important Fauna: Mammal data were collected in 2010. Locals reported the presence of Brown Bear *Ursus arctos* and Grey Wolf *Canis lupus*. They also claimed that Eurasian otter *Lutra lutra* is present and that they had been hunted. A significant reptile found at the site was Diadem Snake *Spalerosophis diadema* and a significant amphibian photographed was the Lemon-yellow Tree Frog *Hyla savignyi*. This site was not visited by the fisheries expert but the Choman-Rawanduz River as well as mountain streams flows through the site are likely very important for fish.

Conservation Issues: Agriculture intensification and grazing have a high impact on this area. New settlements and road construction may have an impact on wildlife by interfering with the passage routes of some large animals and may even lead to the death of animals by vehicles. There is extensive traffic through the site due to the border crossing and oil spills have occurred into the river in the past due to tanker truck accidents. Hunting threatens some important species such as the Brown Bear and Grey Wolf. There are also several uncleared minefields near the Iran-Iraq border.

Important Plant Area Criteria

A4. Site contains national endemic, near endemic, regional endemic and/or regional range-restricted species or infraspecific taxa

Note: *historically recorded; **historically recorded and seen on recent surveys

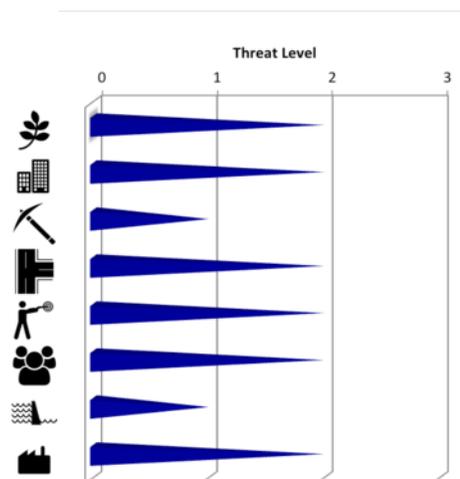
Endemics at this site include: ***Cousinia carduchorum*, *C. odontolepis*, **Echinops rectangularis*, **Erysimum boissieri*, *Ornithogalum iraqense*, **Scrophularia atroglandulosa*, and *Tulipa kurdica*.

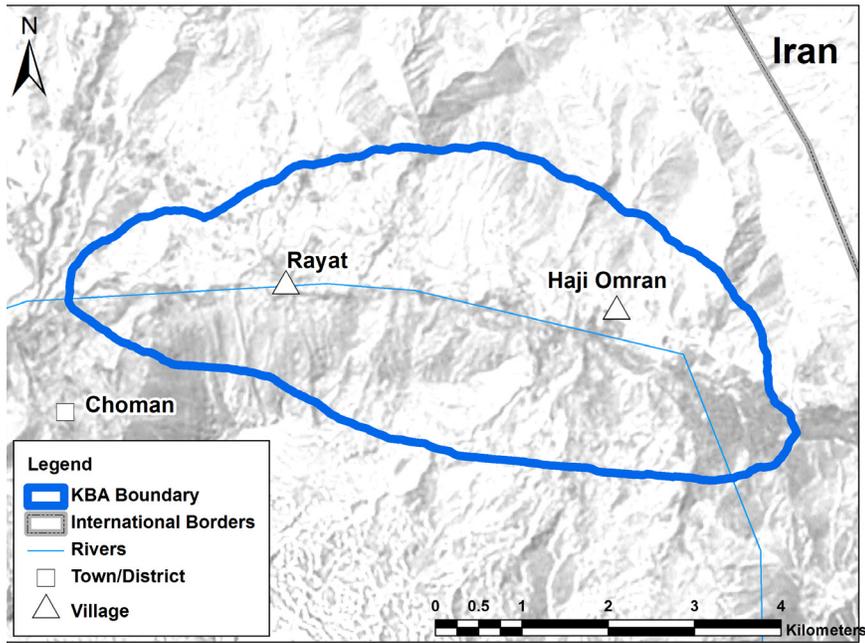
Near endemics at this site include: **Allium iranicum*, **Astracantha crenophila*, *Bellevalia kurdistanica*, **Scorzoner kurdistanica*, and **Tragopogon rechingeri*, and *Iris barnumae* is a nationally rare species

B1. Site is a particularly species-rich example of defined habitat type

Mountain Forest Vegetation- Thorn-Cushion Vegetation habitat type

Important Bird Observations: During the surveys 60 species were recorded. Three Irano-Turanian and four Mediterranean biome-restricted species were seen in the breeding season, including Eastern Cinereous Bunting *Emberiza semenowi* (Near Threatened) but these did not trigger inclusion under criterion A3.





Recommendations: Mine clearance is a clear priority for the safety of wildlife and villagers. Efforts to develop the Halgurd-Sakran Park incorporates part of this region and Park staff are a major stakeholder in the region who can work with other local stakeholders in the development of comprehensive land management planning, educational initiatives and controls on hunting and transportation and general development.