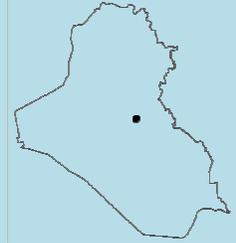


Jadriyah and Umm Al-Khanazeer Island (BG1), (IBA15)



Surveyed in summer 2009, winter and summer 2010, and spring 2011

Admin Area: Baghdad

Coordinates: N 16° 31' 44.5", E 22° 36' 34"

Area: 472 ha

Altitude: 64m

KBA Criteria: V

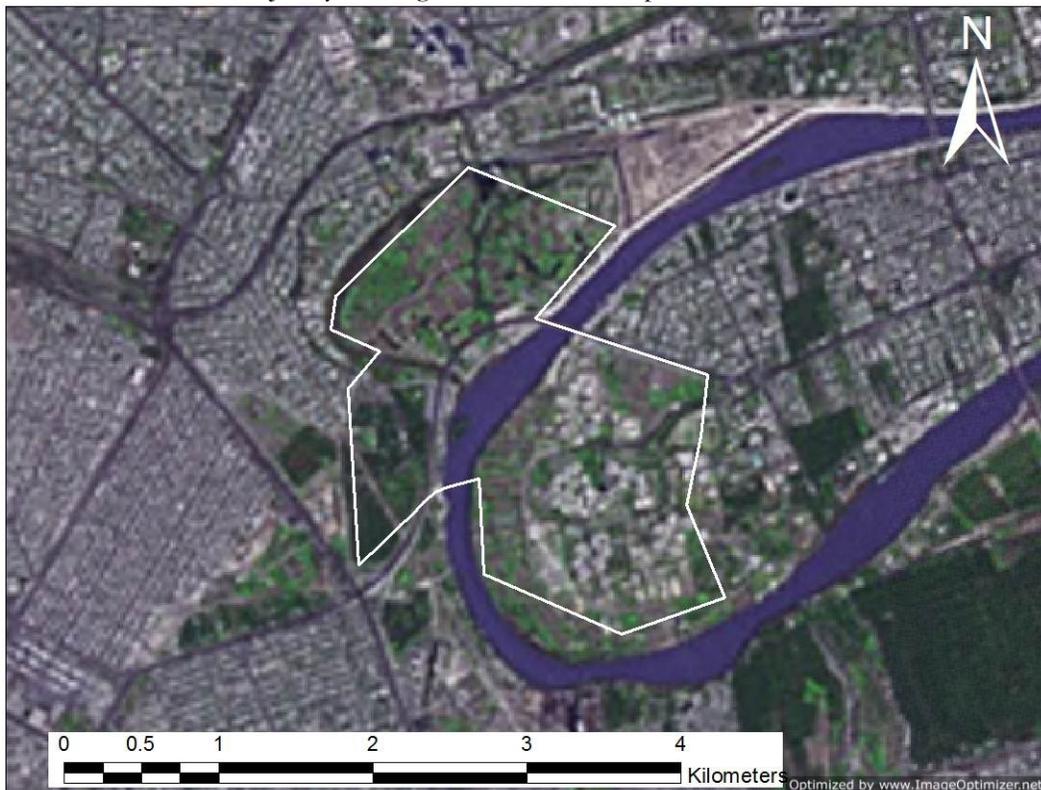
IBA Criteria: A2

IPA Criteria: Not Assessed

Status: Unprotected

Ecoregion: Arabian Desert and East Sahero-Arabian Xeric Shrublands (PA1303)

Directional information: The site is made up of two areas along the Tigris River in Baghdad southeast of the city center. "Jadriyah" is located on an oxbow of the Tigris River on the Rasafa side (eastern bank) of the Tigris River. Umm Al-Khanazeer Island is actually connected to the Karkh side (western bank) of the Tigris. The main access is to Jadriyah through the University of Baghdad. A small portion of Umm Al-Khanazeer Island can be accessed from the Jadriyah bridge, but most of this portion is restricted access.





The general habitat of Jadriyah (photo by Omar F. Al-Sheikhly, 2010)



Site Description: The University of Baghdad which contains the Jadriyah site has made the area familiar to many Iraqis. Prior to the construction of the University in the 1960s, the habitat was datepalm orchards and farmland with dense thickets. Today the site is predominantly urban with little of the original habitat left, although pockets are still found on the southern and western edges of the campus. The western part of the Jadriyah site along the Tigris River has been converted into an artificial pool for tourists, with water from the Tigris obtained through water regulators that pump in a continuous flow. These are blocked until the water becomes shallow or evaporates during the summer, exposing submerged vegetation that serves as a good environment for migrant waterfowl and waders.

A zone of cultivated land extends in an arc along the Tigris River, where there is year-round agricultural activity and many vegetable fields. Dense orchards of date palms are found here, although they are more common in the Doura district of Baghdad across the river, to the south (outside the survey area). Umm Al-Khanazeer Island, which is not really an island, was named for the large wild boar *Sus scrofa* population that once lived there. It has similar habitat to the site across the river but now has restricted access because the site is used by police authorities.

Key Biodiversity Area Criteria	Notes	
V. Vulnerability Criteria: Presence of Critically Endangered and Endangered species – presence of a single individual or Vulnerable species – 30 individuals or 10 pairs.		
<i>Rafetus euphraticus</i>	A specimen of Euphrates Softshelled Turtle was examined near the eastern shores of the Tigris within the site. There are frequent reports of this species on the river banks by locals and UoB farmers.	
Important Bird Area Criteria	Breeding population estimate based on extrapolation using area/transect counts and area of known habitat. (see methodology on pXX).	
A2. Range-restricted species		
	Breeding	Wintering/Passage
Iraq Babbler <i>Turdoides altirostris</i>	17 pairs (2009-2010)	20 (2010)

(Resident)		
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Additional Important Bird Observations: During the surveys 57 bird species were seen. Marbled Duck *Marmaronetta angustirostris* (Vulnerable) and four breeding Sahara-Sindian Desert biome-restricted species (Table X) were recorded but at levels that did not trigger inclusion under IBA criterion A3. The endemic race of Little Grebe *Tachybaptus ruficollis iraquensis* also occurred. In November 2011, there was a new observation of six individuals of African Darter *Anhinga rufa* at Umm Al-Khanazeer Island (November, 2011), outside its known range. In addition, Nature Iraq has received other reports of this species in the Baghdad area. Grey Hypocolius *Hypocolius ampelinus* breeds on Umm Al-Khanzeer Island (Simanand Bunni, 1978; Siman, 1975).

Other Important Fauna: Golden Jackal *Canis aureus* occurs. Among reptiles, *Mabuya aurata aurata*, *Hemidactylus flaviviridis*, and *Hemidactylus persicus* were recorded. The snake *Walterinnesia aegyptia* was observed. No fish surveys were attempted.

Plants & Habitats: No botanical survey was conducted. Wild species include *Zizyphus* sp., *Phragmites* sp., *Typha* sp., and *Carex* sp. Cultivated trees predominate, mainly date palms as well as *Populus* sp., *Eucalyptus* sp., *Albizia* sp., *Morus* sp., and other common species.

Conservation Issues: No environmental management plan exists and only small undisturbed areas remain. The site is a crowded area of Baghdad and leads to continuous impact from human intrusion. Many students and local people use the artificial pool of Jadriyah called “Bohairatt Al-Jadriya or Bohairatt Al-Nahrean” for recreation. The waters of the Tigris are used to feed this pool, which is located on the west side of Jadriyah, but without much thought to ecological consequences or management; this was also considered a very high impact. Construction within and around the area to increase housing and other urban development were rated high threats. Transportation and road building within the university campus and in the vicinity of Umm Al-Khanazeer Island are rapidly increasing. Umm Al-Khanazeer has been opened to the public with expansion of its facilities. Another high threat is the expansion of the roads leading to the University of Baghdad and Umm Al-Khanazeer including extension of utility and service lines.

Hunting at the site and generally in Baghdad is forbidden according to the current security precautions that prevent the firing of guns around public dwellings throughout the city. Upstream of the site fishing is forbidden because it is close to the main Iraqi official authority complex (“The Green Zone”) that is highly protected, but the riverbanks below the 14th of July bridge and along the University are popular for hook and line fishing. Due to the high level of development and urbanization of this part of Baghdad after 2003, local fishermen indicated that there are few fish in this portion of the river.

Pollution, at least on the Jadriyah side, is mainly restricted to garbage and solid wastes but these appear to be managed by the University of Baghdad and thus were considered only a medium impact. Overall, pollution threats are very high at the site, and one of the most important causes are waste produced by “Al-Doura” electricity station, one of the main power stations in Baghdad. Several studies and post-graduate theses primarily at the University of Baghdad have assessed the negative impacts of Al-Doura electricity station on the Tigris River and near vicinity.

Recommendations: It is necessary to devise and implement a conservation plan for the site as quickly as possible as it is an important bird habitat that could prove suitable for educational programs, tourism and ornithological studies, given the amount of open land remaining and its close proximity to the University. A proposal was submitted in 2004 to the Dean of College of Science to create a wildlife study area in Jadriyah and Umm Al-Khanazeer for the use of the Departments of Biology in both the Colleges of Science and Science for Women, but as yet there has been no response. Such actions are strongly recommended and must be taken to conserve what biodiversity still remains. It is also necessary to review the results of previous studies on the impacts to biodiversity, the Tigris River and the vicinity around Al-Doura Electricity Station and craft a comprehensive plan to reduce and control the pollution.

Further reading

Siman, H. Y. (1975). *Breeding biology of the Grey Hypocolius on Umm Al-Khanazeer Island*. M.Sc. Thesis, University of Baghdad.

Siman, H. Y. and Bunni, M. K. (1978) *Nesting of the Grey Hypocolius Hypocolius ampelinus in Umm-Al-Khanazeer Island*. Baghdad. *Bull. Nat. Hist. Res. Centre Baghdad* 7(2):69-83.

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