

Template for Submission of Scientific Information to Describe Areas Meeting Scientific Criteria for Ecologically or Biologically Significant Marine Areas

Title/Name of the area: Al Mahra Coastal Area, Yemen

Presented by (*Abdulkarim A N Saeed, Sana'a University, Yemen, Dr., karimnasher@yahoo.com*)

Abstract

Al Mahra is the most easterly governorate in Yemen, extending from Hadhramout to the borders with Oman. Its long coastline is mainly sandy intercepted with rocky areas. Several species of sea birds, sharks, and dolphins are seen along Al Mahra waters at different times the year. Two locations, where my activities are going on, are important sites for green turtle nesting.

Introduction

As it is true for most Yemeni coastal areas, Al Mahra coasts have received very little attention by scientists. The long coastline of Al Mahra extends from Hadhramout at 15°04'30.12" N; 50°45'40.96" E to the border with Oman at 16°38'59.99" N; 53°06'32.87" E.

Human fishing activities along this coastline contribute to the degradation of the coastal environment which may affect the wellbeing of aquatic and coastal wildlife. To my knowledge, the only conservation activities in the area are confined to our activities at sea turtle nesting sites.

Location (Map 1)

Al Mahra is located between 15°04'30.12"N; 50°45'40.96"E to the border with Oman at 16°38'59.99" N; 53°06'32.87" E. However, the turtle nesting sites are located at Al Fatk (16° 31' 27.3"N; 052° 43' 30.7" E to 16° 30.0' 00.2" N; 052° 39' 20.0" E) and at Ad damar Beach (16° 07' 08.5" N; 052° 12' 10.7" E to 16° 04' 43.4" N; 052° 11' 47.1" E).

The area is within Yemen's national jurisdiction.

Feature description of the proposed area (Figure 2 -3)

The area under study is ideal for sea turtle nesting. The area at Al Fatk is highly affected by fishermen which disturbs the habitat.

Feature condition and future outlook of the proposed area

The area is heavily affected by fishermen who cause a decline in its stability and sustainability of marine wildlife. Current activities funded by US Fish and Wildlife Service, Marine Turtle Conservation Fund, aim at local community's awareness and capacity building, protection of marine turtles and their habitats.

Assessment of the area against CBD EBSA Criteria

(Discuss the area in relation to each of the CBD criteria and relate the best available science. Note that a proposed area for EBSA description may qualify on the basis of one or more of the criteria, and that the polygons of the EBSA need not be defined with exact precision. And modeling may be used to estimate the presence of EBSA attributes. Please note where there are significant information gaps)

CBD EBSA Criteria (Annex I to decision IX/20)	Description (Annex I to decision IX/20)	Ranking of criterion relevance (please mark one column with an X)			
		No information	Low	Medium	High
Uniqueness or rarity	Area contains either (i) unique ("the only one of its kind"), rare (occurs only in few locations) or endemic species, populations or communities, and/or (ii) unique, rare or distinct, habitats or ecosystems; and/or (iii) unique or unusual geomorphological or oceanographic features.				
Explanation for ranking					

Special importance for life-history stages of species	Areas that are required for a population to survive and thrive.				X
<i>Explanation for ranking</i> The two beaches at Al Fatk and Ad Ddamar represent two important sites for the green turtle and to some extent for loggerhead sea turtles. Poachers excavate turtle eggs and butcher adult females. Hatchlings require special protection from predators, such as sea birds and ghost crabs and feral dogs.					
Importance for threatened, endangered or declining species and/or habitats	Area containing habitat for the survival and recovery of endangered, threatened, declining species or area with significant assemblages of such species.				X
<i>Explanation for ranking</i> The green sea turtle <i>Chelonia mydas</i> is an endangered species listed on CITES appendix 1					
Vulnerability, fragility, sensitivity, or slow recovery	Areas that contain a relatively high proportion of sensitive habitats, biotopes or species that are functionally fragile (highly susceptible to degradation or depletion by human activity or by natural events) or with slow recovery.				
<i>Explanation for ranking</i>					
Biological productivity	Area containing species, populations or communities with comparatively higher natural biological productivity.			X	
The area is rich with fisheries.					
Biological diversity	Area contains comparatively higher diversity of ecosystems, habitats, communities, or species, or has higher genetic diversity.				
<i>Explanation for ranking</i>					
Naturalness	Area with a comparatively higher degree of naturalness as a result of the lack of or low level of human-induced disturbance or degradation.				
<i>Explanation for ranking</i>					

Sharing experiences and information applying other criteria (Optional)

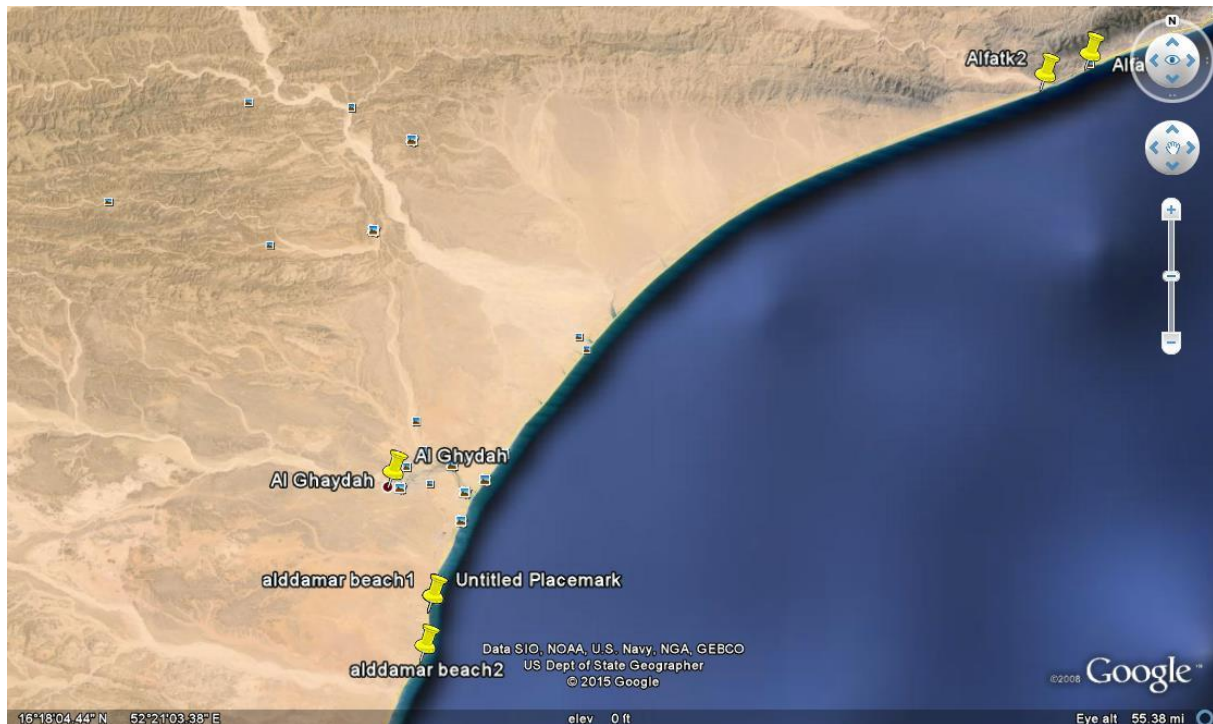
Other Criteria	Description	Ranking of criterion relevance (please mark one column with an X)			
		Don't Know	Low	Medium	High
Add relevant criteria					
<i>Explanation for ranking</i>					

References

Nasher, A. K. and Al Jumaily, M. (2014). Conservation of Marine Turtles in Yemen: Involvement of local communities. Power point presentation made at the “Aqaba International Conference on Marine and Coastal Environment, status and Challenges in the Arab World. Aqaba, Jordan 27-29 October 2014.

Nasher, A. K. and Al Jumaily, M. (2015) Steps to building long term sea turtle conservation in Yemen. Wildlife Middle East News. (In press).

Maps and Figures



Map 1. Part of Al Mahra coastline showing the two sea turtle nesting sites (Al Fatk and Ad Damar) (Source: Google Earth).



Fig. 2. Sandy beach at Al Fatk with turtle tracks



Fig. 3. Sea turtle nesting site interrupted by rocks