

## Biodiversity and ecosystem management the Iraqi Marshlands- screening study on potential World Heritage nomination



**Figure 1** Iraqi marschlands

In April 2010, UNEP has requested IUCN through its Regional Office for West Asia (ROWA) to take the lead of “Biodiversity and ecosystem management of the Iraqi Marshlands: screening study on potential World Heritage nomination”. This study came under the joint UNEP-UNESCO initiative which uses the World Heritage convention as conservation and management tools of Iraqi Marshland values.

This study is aimed to establish an inventory of data and information on the Iraqi marshland ecosystem, biodiversity and management since the 1970s, provides technical guidance on the existing assessment framework and tools and guidance on the development of a network among academia, researchers and institutions in the field of ecosystem management and biodiversity conservation, in relation to possible next steps in the World Heritage nomination process.

The requested report was compiled by a team of two consultants with extensive support from the Ministry of Environment of Iraq, national and international NGOs and experts, as well as IUCN.

The general conclusion of the study identified a large number of knowledge gaps and research needs, which will need to be addressed before a final decision about the most relevant criteria for a nomination of the Marshes as a World Heritage Site. The study appears to be sufficient evidence to support further development of work towards a full World Heritage nomination of the area. However, the feasibility and success of such nomination will depend on the confirmation of values by further analysis, the design of the nomination to meet the integrity requirements of the World Heritage Convention.