

Chamchamal (IQ035)

Sulaimani–35.421389°N 44.618333°E

IBA Criteria: **A2**

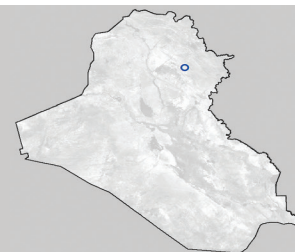
IPA Criteria: **A4 and B1**

Area: **24745ha** - Altitude: **420-900 m**

Ecoregion: **Middle East Steppe**

(**PA0812**)

Status: **Unprotected**



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Site Description: This area includes the foothills located approximately 12 km southwest of the town of Chamchamal. Main habitat is steppe but the botanical survey evaluated an area of the Riverine Forest of the Plains (Al-Ahrash) along the Khra Azizy, which is a small seasonal stream that runs

southwards through the area. There are also small drainages running between the hills made by seasonal rainfall. The site is located in the Moist Steppe Zone. The geology consists of sandstone, clay and sandy gravel and the soil type is sandy clay. The non-vegetated area covered about 50% of the site.

Important Bird Area Criteria	Observations made 2007-2009.	
A2. Restricted-range species	Breeding	Wintering/ Passage
Iraq Babbler <i>Turdoides altirostris</i> (Resident)	90 pairs (2007-2008)	
Important Plant Area Criteria		
A4. Site contains national endemic, near endemic, regional endemic and/or regional range-restricted species or infraspecific taxa		
Endemics historically recorded here include: <i>Anthemis plebeia</i> , <i>Centaurea rigida</i> var. <i>schizophylla</i> , and <i>Thymus neurophyllus</i> ; a near endemic historically recorded was: <i>Echinops mosulensis</i> , and nationally rare species were <i>Juncus effusus</i> and <i>Glaucium corniculatum</i>		
B1. Site is particularly species-rich example of defined habitat type		
Riverine Forest of the Plains (Al-Ahrash) habitat type		

Additional Important Bird Observations: A total of 64 bird species were seen during the survey period. Eastern Imperial Eagle *Aquila heliaca* (Vulnerable) was observed in winter; the site held breeding populations of two Mediterranean, three Irano-Turanian and three Sahara-Sindian Desert biome-restricted species but these did not trigger inclusion under criterion A3.

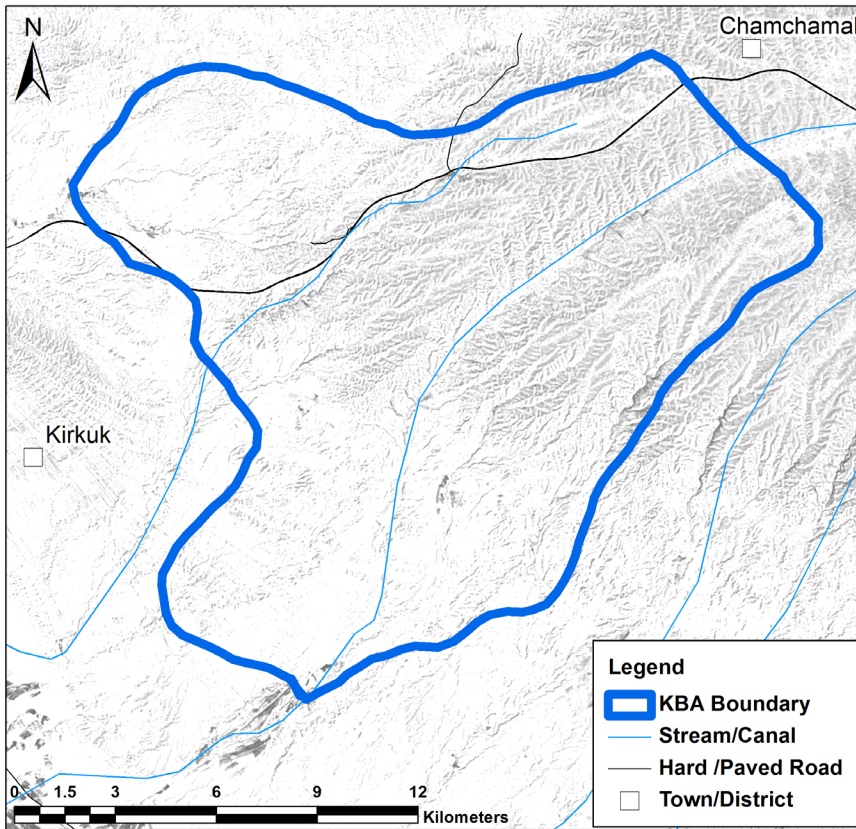
Other Important Fauna: There have been reports of Goitered Gazelle *Gazella subgutturosa* (Vulnerable) being hunted in the area. Not enough data were collected to assess this population.

Fish: This site has a small, shallow stream. Data were collected in 2007 and 2008, and three significant species were observed: *Acanthobrama marmaid*, *Alburnus mossulensis*, and *Garra rufa*.

Additional Plant & Habitat Information: This site contains some plants, which are important as genetic resources including *Triticum aestivum*, *Triticum durum*, and *Hordeum vulgare* ssp. *Spontaneum*.

Conservation Issues: This is an important plain areas in Iraq and is under serious threat from agriculture and hunting. Field crops and vegetable fields were observed throughout, and livestock grazing had a noticeable impact on vegetation at the site. The site is also affected by picnicking (people were seen cooking and throwing garbage); related human intrusion, pollution but also transportation threats were considered high.

Recommendations: Hunting needs to be better regulated and agriculture, including grazing activities should be more



closely examined and controlled. Agreements with local stakeholders utilizing the site could result in a more sustainable schedule for grazing to prevent habitat degradation. Springtime is the period of time when the area gets the highest recreational use, so this should be the period when focused environmental education and awareness programs are implemented.

