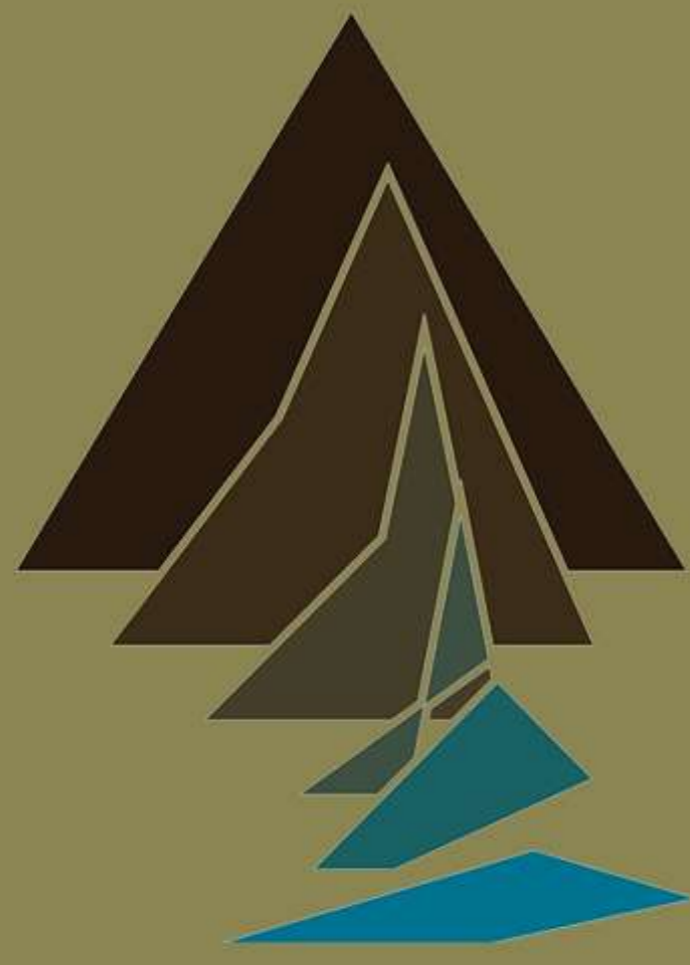


Geopark

Qeshm

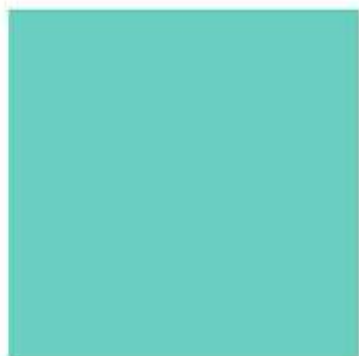


QESHM ISLAND GEOPARK



GEOPARK
Qeshm Island

In the Name of GOD



QESHIM FREE AREA



What is the Geopark ?

The Global Geoparks idea is being adopted by increasing numbers of Member States. The Geoparks are becoming very popular due to their combination of conservation, sustainable development and community involvement. UNESCO started to be active in this area in 1999 when Geoparks were proposed as a UNESCO programme (see document 156 EX/11 Rev.). However, in 2001, at the 161st session of UNESCO's Executive Board, the majority of Delegates decided 'not to pursue the development of a UNESCO geoparks programme, but instead to support ad hoc efforts within individual Member States as appropriate'. Thus, today UNESCO gives its ad hoc support to national Geopark initiatives which are coordinated through a Global Network of National Geoparks (Global Geoparks Network [GGN]) where national geological heritage initiatives benefit fully from their membership of a global network of exchange and cooperation.



Where is Qeshm Geopark ?

Being registered in GGN in 2006, Qeshm geopark is the first and the only geopark in the Middle East. Only 27 countries including Iran have registered geoparks by now (2012). Furthermore due to high strategic state in Persian Gulf, Qeshm geopark enjoys high level of significance. On the other hand, because of being located between Asian and European geoparks, this geopark has found a special importance in the region. This geopark is unique regarding geological, ecological, and archeological features. Local knowledge of the people is also manifested in the architecture of the island especially in collecting and keeping freshwater. The

other manifestation of the island uniqueness is in its wildlife, lifestyle and the local old culture. The coastline of the geopark covered with Mangrove forest has added to tourist's attractions and incredible beauty of the island. There are more than 220 bird species, 30 reptile species, and 20 mammal species living in the geopark. There are more than 20 geo-sites in Qeshm geopark. The most important geo-sites include ChahKuh Valley, Stars Valley, Roof of Qeshm (Bame Qeshm), Statues Valley (Tandis-ha Valley), Shour Valley Geo-site, Namakdan Cave, Doulab, and Korkorakuh. Each of these natural geo-sites enjoys unique characteristics and attractions with exceptional natural geo-tourism landscapes that you will not forget. Constant water and wind erosion are the two challenging risks seen in these geo-sites.



Qeshm Island Global Geopark presents some of its self-made handicrafts as symbol to the Fifth International Conference of UNESCO on Geoparks in Japan





In cooperation with borke khalaf education and training deputy, Qeshm Geo-park holds tours which students draw their geo-conceptual Ideas.

Borke-khalaf village which is located 15Km far from Qeshm city is the gate way to reach one of the most important and most visited Geo-sites of Qeshm Island Geo-park Yesterday (on Saturday 21, Dec, 2013) students of this village were taken to the stars valley to get familiar with the conception of geology, geo-tourism, geo-sites and geoheritages. Then they started to collect trashes which were left within the geosite to say to everybody: "WE ARE GEO-PROTECTORS In the end of this one-day geo-tour program, all the students painted and draw their thoughts and conceptions about Geo-park and stars valley Geo-site in according to their teacher explanations and their own understanding and observations.

همایش مدرسه و ژئوپارک
روزوارک جهانی قشم
مهر ۱۳۹۱
Geopark and schools seminar
Qeshm Global Geopark
25th oct/2011
GEOPARK
Qeshm Island



Local Women Training

Women of Qeshm Geopark receive their handicrafts skill certification after they pass the related examination and proving their ability.

Following “empowerment and attracting local communities’ participation” project, women from 4 villages took apart in the handicrafts skill examination after they finish the related course. This project which is directed and conducted by the Qeshm Geopark management has been holding since 8/May/2013 among Island west villages and is supported by “SGP”.

since April, the 25th Next step of “empowering and attracting rural societies to take a part in Qeshm Island Global GEO-PARK participatory managing” project which is one the supported programs of SGP has been holding on, on the western part of the Qeshm Island which is located in the Qeshm GEO-PARK territory.

The most important goals of this project is to establish the rural and local organizations which are relied on women society participation and collaboration.

The Qeshm Island Geo-park believes that empowering the rural women society will cause that women can play a direct role in conducting and advancing the families economy aims hereinafter and it can cause to see women around society more powerful and efficient. Now to achieve this goal the first step of this project has been running on by training the art of “GOLABATOON DOOZI” to the rural women.

GOLABATOON DOOZI which is a kind of needlework or something like broidery, is the art of sewing colorful designs with golden strings on bright textiles and clothes, this art is the sample of the handicrafts of creative, artist and capable women of the Qeshm Island.

More than 170 women will be taught during this 3months-course and they will be given the certification of “cultural heritage, handicrafts and tourism” sector of Qeshm free area Organization to be able to work in the society.





Education & Conservation



Hawks bill Turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata bissa*): Environment Management office, Mr. Bijan Darrehshouri, who is known in Iran as Marine turtle reviver, of Qeshm Free Area found out the nesting of Hawksbill Turtles (*Eretmochelys imbricata*) in Qeshm Island and for the first time in Iran, it began protecting and studying on these animals. Each year, an estimated 200 Hawksbill Turtles come to lay their eggs in the soft sand above high water mark on a 25-km stretch of beach between Direstan Gulf and Suza town, on the south coast of the island. With the efforts of the Environmental Management Office and at the request of the GEF Small Grants Program, this stretch of beach, including a strip of land 120 meters wide above mean high water mark, has been declared a protected area for the turtles to help conserve the habitat. For the past six years, the Environmental Management Office has been working with the people of Shibderaz village in this project to protect the nests and eggs of the turtles. The project includes awareness rising by conservation and art work, developing a community based eco-tourism plan including income generation activities, and preparation of CDs, booklets and videos on



the lessons learned for wide dissemination. Five to seven local youths are employed for five months each season to find the turtle nests, remove the eggs, and rebury them at the main project site.



Qeshm Geopark

Visitor Center



Visitor Center building locating on stars valley, was opened to host dear guests.

The building has been designed like a geomorphologic phenomena, then it can be used as an open amphitheater because of its roof Visitor center has been built to hold event such as exhibitions, training courses and Geopark events in





Qeshm Geopark Museum

Qeshm Island Global Geopark museum opened in 2005 and it welcomes thousands of visitors. The purpose of the Geopark museum and archives is to collect and preserve samples of natural and cultural heritages and make them available for research and exhibit documents and artefacts that will serve to illustrate the local people history and culture. This includes the collection of taxidermy of native and migration birds, Reptiles, mammals, fishes and insects of Qeshm Island Global Geoparks. The fossils of coral and bivalves of that Geopark are exposed in the museum. Geotourism Atlas of Qeshm, birds' atlas of Qeshm, hand book of Harra community (Mangrove forest), map of Qeshm and books about the geological of Qeshm are available to give knowledge to visitors and tourists.





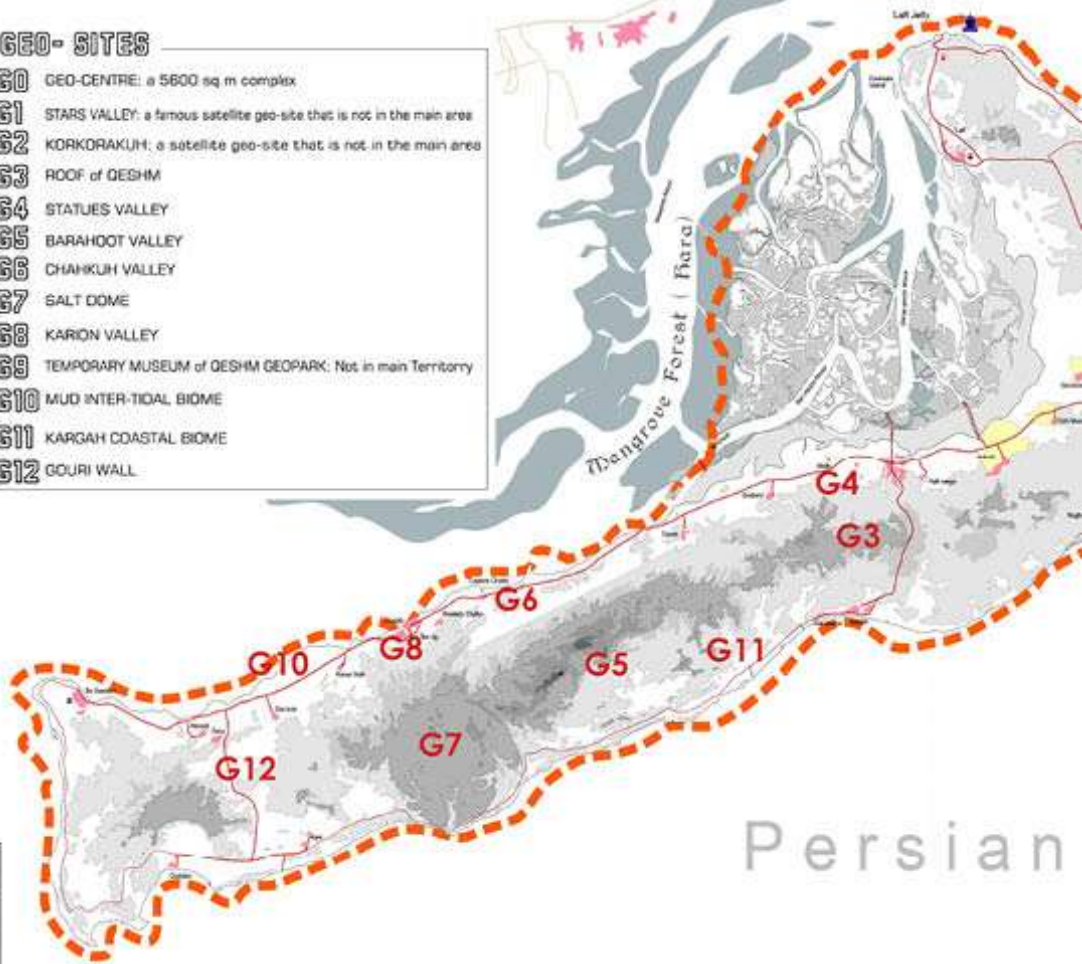
Qeshm Free Area



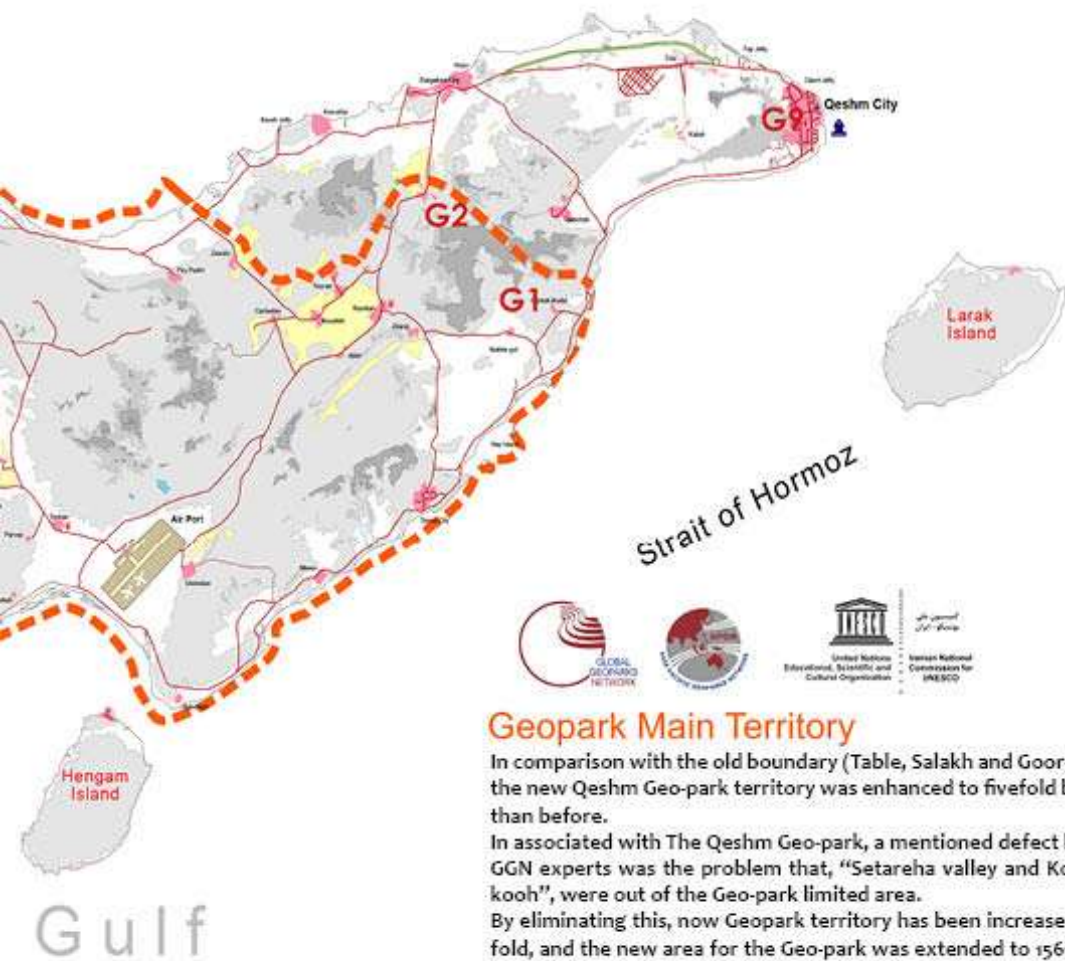
Hormozgan Province

GEO-SITES

- G0** GEO-CENTRE: a 5600 sq m complex
- G1** STARS VALLEY: a famous satellite geo-site that is not in the main area
- G2** KORKORAKUH: a satellite geo-site that is not in the main area
- G3** ROOF of QESHM
- G4** STATUES VALLEY
- G5** BARAHOOT VALLEY
- G6** CHAHKUH VALLEY
- G7** SALT DOME
- G8** KARION VALLEY
- G9** TEMPORARY MUSEUM of QESHM GEOPARK: Not in main Territory
- G10** MUD INTER-TIDAL BIOME
- G11** KARGAH COASTAL BIOME
- G12** GOURI WALL



Persian



الجمهورية الإسلامية الإيرانية
 Iranian National
 Commission for
 UNESCO

Geopark Main Territory

In comparison with the old boundary (Table, Salakh and Goor-kani), the new Qeshm Geo-park territory was enhanced to fivefold bigger than before.

In associated with The Qeshm Geo-park, a mentioned defect by the GGN experts was the problem that, "Setareha valley and Korkora kooch", were out of the Geo-park limited area.

By eliminating this, now Geopark territory has been increased five-fold, and the new area for the Geo-park was extended to 1561 km². So, all of "mangrove forest, Naz Islands, Korkora kooch, turtle egg laying site, Eco-park and Dolphins Gulf" geo-sites are surrounded in the Geo-park boundaries now.



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Stars Valley Geosite

Located near Berkeh Khalaf Village, not far from the Town of Qeshm, the Star Valley is at present the most visited among all Geosites.

The Star Valley is a unique example among all Geosites to study erosion. The local name for this area is “Estalah-kaftah” which means “the Fallen Star”. The reason for naming this area as such is that the locals believe that once upon a time a star (comet) has hit the earth at this site and as a result of this collision, the stones and soil have been thrown in the air and been frozen, forming these geological structures. There are also local beliefs regarding the presence of Ghosts and “Jinns” in this Valley during the dark which may be due to the unusual geological forms and wind blowing into the Valley at night.

The geological morphology of this site is the result of erosion by rainstorms, wind and gravity on various layers. In areas where the geological structures are more resistant to erosion, they have remained intact, however in areas with softer geological

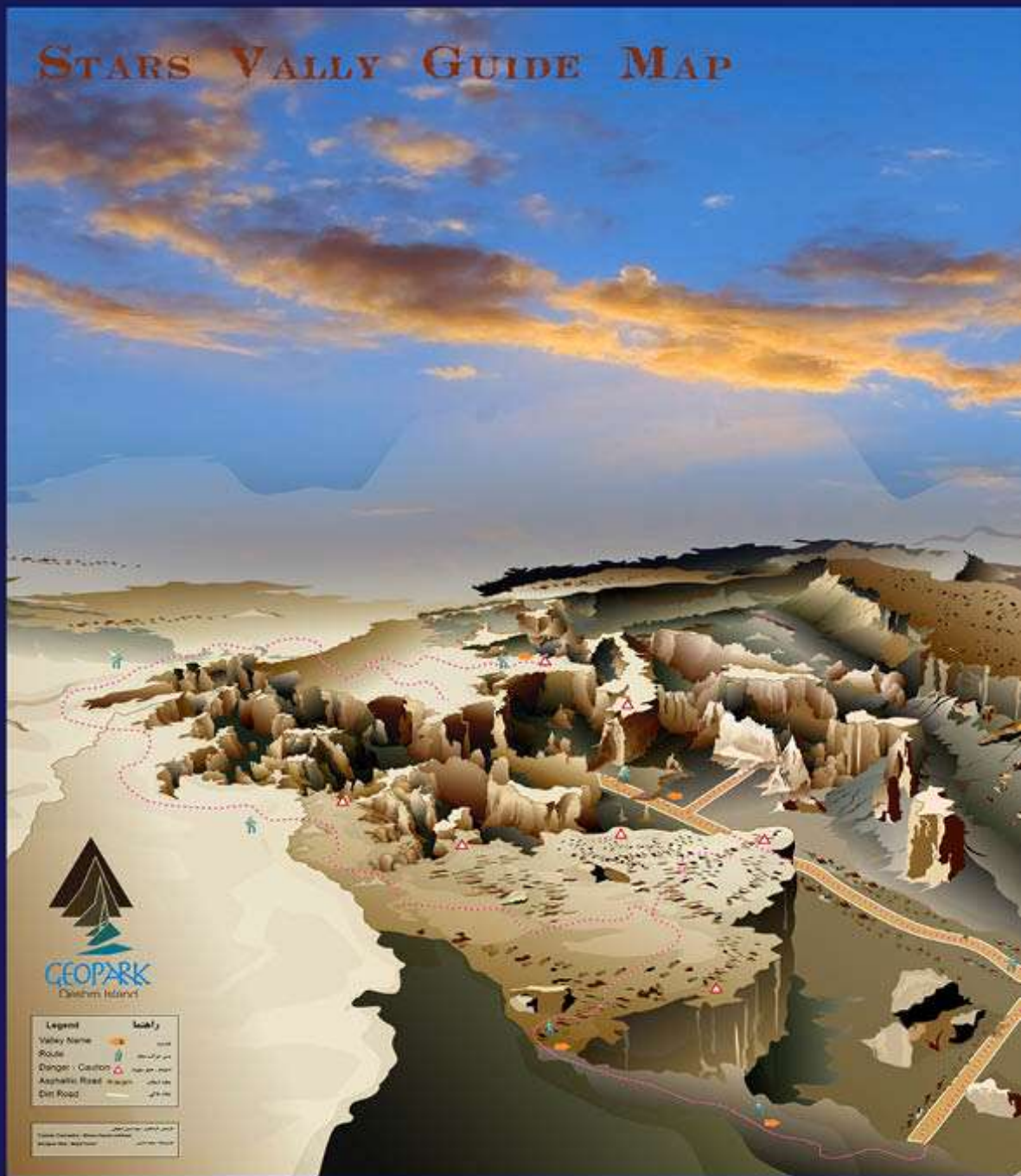


structures, erosion has altogether degraded and vanished those parts. In the walls of this Valley, one can observe two different types of layers: A thick and soft layer of light color (beige or light grey) underneath a thinner layer of harder nature, in white or dark grey. The bottom layer due to its soft structure usually gets eroded while the layer above because of having some kind of natural cement (limestone), is more resistant to erosion, protecting the whole structure. In areas where the upper layer is eroded, smaller canyon-like structures have been formed. In some areas within this Valley, geological structure in form of "Pillars" columns may be observed, some of which are needle-shaped. One of the factors which have caused these structures is rainstorm water that is in general seasonal, washing away in circles the soft parts of the geological structure, leaving the harder parts intact as pillars columns or needle shapes. The remnant of hard structures sometimes are "Hat-like" cap rock which almost protects the pillar column from further erosion, while the rest of the structure has been already eroded and disappeared. Various layers in this Valley are thus very vulnerable and fragile, some of them may not even tolerate the weight of a human being. Thus stepping on geological structures could be very dangerous as they might fall apart. Despite a harmonious strong appearance, some areas are critically soft and vulnerable as the bottom layers have already been emptied by erosion. Please note that although by stepping on these structures they do not fall apart right away, the upper layers may get thinner and more fragile by trembling and as a result of narrow cracks these geological structures may get degraded more easily in the future. Thus, avoiding to walk on top of the structures overlooking the Valley may help in protecting this geological heritage for future generations to observe.



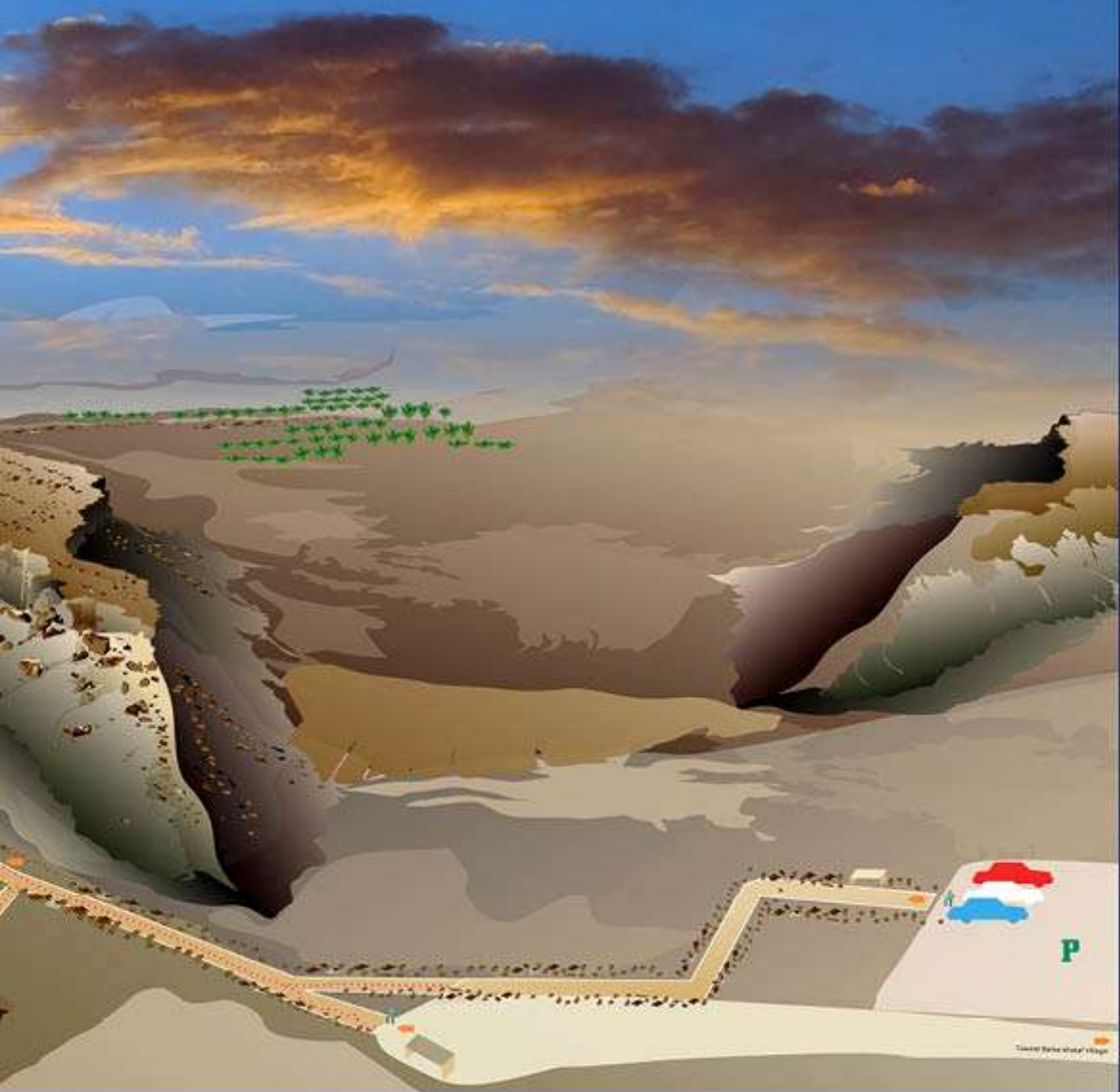
Visitors are asked to follow the signs in the geo-site, and not to touch the walls, and the columns. Also, they are warned not to walk out of the specified routes, which is quite risky.

STARS VALLY GUIDE MAP



Legend	Maqol
Valley Name	nom
Route	yo'nalish
Danger - Caution	diqqat bilan o'tish kerak
Asphaltic Road	asfalt yo'li
Dirt Road	to'xtov yo'li

Maqol nomi: Stars Vally
Maqol nomi: Stars Vally





Naz Island Geosite

During low tide, these lands are no longer islands but lands connected to shore from one side. Tourists can walk on the bed of islands undergoing water in the high tides. Tourists and their cars are required to go back to beach before the high tide. The beach is in very fine sand which makes shoeless walking a different and pleasant experience.

HORMOUZ, HENGAM & LARAK ISLANDS

Hormouz Island - A small and beautiful island, just 18 km of Qeshm, with nice and hospitable people. This island is so famous among geologists and geotourists and it is known as the paradise of geology. A small and beautiful island, just 18 km of Qeshm, with nice and hospitable people. This island is so famous among geologists and geotourists and it is known as the paradise of geology.

Hengam Island - Hengam is famous because of large groups of Dolphins live around it. The number of dwellers is so few and it is a very suitable place for trekking.

Larak Island - Larak, a beautiful small island in the Straits of Hormuz to the south of Hormuz Island, located approximately 24 km southeast of Bandar Abbas and 6 km southeast of the eastern end of Qeshm Island. It's so famous among divers because of aquarium fishes living around.





Turtle Egg-laying Geosite

Hawksbill sea turtles are critically endangered in International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) red list in all around the world. They are so close to be extinct in nature. This turtle is one of the five sea turtle species in Persian Gulf and Oman Sea that she nests in sandy beach of Shibderaz village in south of Qeshm Island yearly.

Hawksbill turtles lay eggs from early March to the early June in Shibderaz beach. During this period the coastline is protecting by local people and the supervision of environment department of Qeshm free area organization to ensure safe nesting for these turtles. The eggs hatch out from May to late July after about two months protection in an appropriate hatchery site.

Seeing turtles laying eggs and tiny baby turtles hatching out of eggs are amazing natural events those attract many tourists to Shibderaz village. People who wish to see these events should be in shibderaz village at night during March to July and coordinate with the supervisor of sea turtles protected nesting site and visit the site under the supervision of site staff. All visitors should follow the site disciplines like as observing silence and not to use any kind of light in the site.



Bottlenose dolphin

Bottlenose dolphins are very lovely marine mammals that we can visit them in dolphin bay between Qeshm and Hengam Island. They swim in small groups in this protected area and visitors can see them from the safe distance by boats those local people have prepared for dolphin watching. Visiting these animals involve to pay attention to the rules of dolphin's watching that present before entering the site by boatmen.

Intelligent Dolphins, swimming in groups of 5 to 10, are so interesting for tourists. Between Qeshm and Hengam islands is the best place to find dolphins. Dolphin site is close to Shibderaz villages and Kandalou jetty. Local people have prepared several boats to take tourists close to dolphins. Dolphins living in this part of Persian Gulf are different from those in Mangrove forest.



Dolphins that are living in this part of the Persian Gulf are called Bottlenose Dolphins. (*Tursiops aduncus*) They live in warm water of the Pacific Ocean, west of southern Africa, south of Asian and south east of Australia.



- Designated wetland under Ramsar Convention
- Designated Protected Area (IUCN)
- Man & Biosphere Reserve (MAB)



Mangrove Forest Geosite (Harra)



Mangroves are salt tolerant trees adapted to live in harsh coastal conditions. One of the most wonderful natural mangrove forests is located in North part of Qeshm Island near two villages named Soheyli and Tabl. Since the dominant species of mangrove in Iran is *Avicenna marina* and it's called "Harra" in Persian, these forests are named "Harra" in Iran.

This protected area is very important ecologically for both of marine and terrestrial animals. Mangroves host many unique species of resident and migratory birds.

The view of sunrise and sunset from mangrove forests and sailing the waterways with green trees half in water and half in air at the both side of the channels are like dreams. Hara is a paradise for bird watchers to see many species of birds in a sweet silence of mangroves.

Visiting this forest involve observing this protected area disciplines that will be presented to visitors before interring the forest.





Hara Protected Area (85,686 ha) was established in 1973 to protect the most extensive stands of natural mangrove forest on the south coast of Iran. It was upgraded to National Park in the mid-1970s, but subsequently downgraded to Protected Area again in 1980. It is situated within a larger Ramsar Site (100,000 ha), designated as a Wetland of International Importance under the Ramsar Convention in June 1975. As a Contracting Party to the Ramsar Convention (the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat), the Government of Iran has an inherent commitment to maintain the ecological character of this wetland. The Protected Area was designated as a UNESCO (MAB) Biosphere Reserve in June 1976, and was identified as an 'Important Bird Area' by Birdlife International in 1994. A general description of the area is given in A Directory of Wetlands in the Middle East. The importance of the mud-flats and mangrove areas along the North Coast of Qeshm Island for migratory water birds has long been recognized, and was one of the principal reasons for the establishment of Hara Protected Area in 1973 and designation of a Ramsar Site in 1975. Water bird surveys and censuses have been carried out in the Protected Area and Ramsar Site by personnel of the Department of the Environment in





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Mangrove Forest Guide Map South face



مپو ځمکنی او ځمکنی
Parker Corporation - Baku - Azerbaijan
Design Map - World Maps





Tourists boat and visit different parts of the Mangrove. Local Guides are ready to give tours enough information about mangrove wildlife.



A Forest in the Sea

One of the most beautiful natural landscapes in the island is Mangrove Forest which is located in tidal zone of the central part of the Northern coastline.

Mangrove is called "Hara" in Persian. Mangrove Forest was named Avicenna Marin after Avicenna, Iranian scientist. Different types of fishes, amphibians and birds live in these valuable ecosystem.

The view of sunrise and sunset from mangrove forest is a dreamlike experience. Sailing the waterways (water channels) with green trees half in water and half in air at the both sides of the channels will be awarding by the excitement of seeing birds such as Pelicans and Great Egrets flying over your head.

Sohell Jetty is well equipped to offer tourists a variety of services such as local dishes (mostly delicious sea foods), local guides, the island handicrafts, boating and camle riding. If lucky, you can see traditional music and dancing performance too.



The Geosite of Roof of The Qeshm



The Roof of Qeshm is one of the main attractions among all Geosites. It is a semi-high plateau that is located in the central parts of the island, continuing into the western parts of the island and overlooking the northern coastline. It is called the Roof of Qeshm because it is the largest and highest plateau in the island and offers a unique opportunity for visitors to observe the beautiful landscapes from above. The Roof of Qeshm overlooks the Tandis Valley from the north, where its beautiful geomorphology may be observed. The top layers at the Roof of Qeshm are formed from hard structures (mainly limestone) covered by numerous fossils (mainly bivalves), while in its peripheral sections, presence of silt and marl as well as sand, has resulted in heavy erosion. A good way to access this Geosite is to travel through Tabl-Salakh road which through a gravel road and 15 minute hike could lead to the Roof of Qeshm. When arrived at the main plateau, the remnants of an ancient village (Kalat-Koshtaran) may be observed where relics of walls, “Aghols” and “Anbars” still remain. In addition, pieces of pottery that probably date back to the Islamic period may be found among the ruins. It is worth noting that limestone was used in forming these manmade structures which has probably been extracted from the upper layers of the plateau. The presence of a traditional water reservoir (Ab-anbar) with a roof shows that in recent years the villagers (from Table and Salakh) may have been using the area more as a picnic ground during the hot season.



Statues Valley Geosite



This Valley is located south of the Harra Forest. It is known for its beautiful geological structures that represent a highland that has been heavily eroded. In fact, the Tandis Valley is remnant of a high plateau that has been once connected to the Roof of Qeshm. As the island has risen and the seawater has retrieved gradually, the surface area of the island has increased. The Tandis Valley is part of those areas which have been once underneath the water, and when pulled up, it has been heav-

ily eroded by sea waves among other factors. This type of erosion gets reduced gradually while moving more towards the Roof of Qeshm, which has remained intact. In the Tandis Valley, similarly to other geosites, whenever the upper and harder structures (mainly limestone) that usually protect the softer layers beneath, have been degraded, erosion has been a determining factor in forming the geomorphology. However, if these harder structures remain, softer ones are also protected. This is the main reason high plateaus are observed among lower and heavily eroded lands in Qeshm Island. At this geosite, interesting forms may be observed as if nature has been powerfully carving them through ages. In some areas of the Valley numerous fossils may be found including fossils of bivalves, in some areas as colonies. Another interesting geological phenomena in the Tandis Valley is sedimentation forming muddy mud cracks, which has created beautiful and interesting landscapes. During and after the rainfall, it is important to pay attention to muddy areas where sometimes the mud is very sticky and dangerous to walk on at this geosite.





You can find the most fantasized natural masses in this expansive land. It is a land where you can find geological statue-like masses and figures.

You might find one of them resembling an eagle and the other looking like Cleopatra's head. That is why the valley is called Statues (Tandis-ha) Valley. They in fact have been formed in strong wind and rain as their sculptures.

Several fossils-made hills enchant you on your arrival in the valley. They are precious bivalve fossils which had been living at the bottom of the ocean several million years ago.

Tandis-ha Valley includes smaller valleys. Cars are allowed only in limited parts and you should visit most of the parts walking. You can manage the approximate time and way you expect to spend in the valley by using the valley map. Tandis-ha Valley is located in Northern coastline and 3 km of Tabl Village.



Statues Valley Guide Map



روستای سلخ
Selakh Village

جاده خاکی
Soleh, Esfahan

جاده خاکی

8

7

5

6

Legend	راهنما
Valley Name	نام دره
Route	مسیر
Danger - Caution	خطر - احتیاط
Asphaltic Road	جاده آسفالت
Dirt Road	جاده خاکی

جاده خاکی
Soleh, Esfahan

روستای تابل
Tabl Village

جاده خاکی
Soleh, Esfahan





Qeshm Roof

بازارچه روستایی
ناحیه تفریحی - تفریح
Toward East Chain

کرانه آبی با دریا همسایه است
کرانه آبی با دریا همسایه است





Chahkuh Valley Geosite

Chahkuh valley is on the north-western part of the island not far from Table Village. This Geosite is an exceptional example of erosion through rainstorm water. Heavy rainstorms (that are also rare) quickly flush water through geological structures. Erosion however has been a secondary factor in forming this beautiful valley. In fact, it has primarily been affected by the Salt Dome and related anticline. An anticline is a fold that is convex up and formed due to tectonic compression. While under pressure, these arch-like structures may break in areas that are weaker, forming grooves on the walls. Chahkuh has been initially formed by these geological phenomena, and secondarily been washed away by erosion.

Vertical to the main valley axis, there is a second valley, which has also been formed through tectonic pressures. In general, anticlines and areas around them could be counted as «unstable» as they are more or less exposed to tectonic pres-





IRAN History & Nature

Iran (ērān, ĩrān), 1,648,000 sqkm, original home to one of the oldest major civilizations of the world. Iran is located in Asia south west, in Middle -East where most of the world's ancient settlements have been excavated.

The peoples of the Iranian plateau have a written history of at least 2,500 years. The Persian Empire extended from Egypt to northern India, and the influence of the Persian language, literature, and architectural styles is still evident across western and central Asia.

Iran now is bordered on the north by Armenia, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, and the Caspian Sea; on the east by Afghanistan and Pakistan; on the south by the Persian Gulf and the Oman Sea; and finally on the west by Turkey and Iraq. Tehran is the capital of Iran and close to the highest point of Iran, Mt. Damavand (5671m). It is the largest city of Iran and its administrative, commercial, and industrial center.

Physiographically, Iran lies within the Alpine-Himalayan mountain system and is composed of a vast central plateau rimmed by mountain ranges and limited lowland regions.

The Iranian Plateau consists of number of arid basins of salt and sand, such as those of Dashte-kavir and Dasht-e Lut with magnificent natural landscapes and also cultural background.

The plateau is surrounded by high folded mountain chains in north, called Elburz and the other one from north-west to south that is named Zagros mountain. Most of Iran has a subtropical and continental climate with hot summers.

Winters are cold in the north and west, mild in center and warm in the south. Most mountainous cities of Iran enjoy the variety of four seasons throughout a year. Cultural and natural diversity are considered as the most remarkable attractions of Iran tourism.

Official language (of Iran) is Persian. Persian serves as a lingua franca in Iran and most publications and broadcastings are in this language.

Next to Persian, there are many publications and broadcastings in other relatively popular languages of





tures and compression causing numerous joints and faults in formations.

The presence of concave and round structures or linear and oval structures on the walls of the valley is the result of erosion by water.

One of the main characteristics of geological formation of this geosite is its impermeability to water, which keeps the water in holes and grooves, causing further erosion. The locals have taken advantage of this structure by digging wells inside the main axis of the valley to act as water reservoirs. Considering the low level of rainfall on the island, and the scarcity of freshwater, this was a very innovative way to gather water from rainstorms and use it during dry seasons. Chahkuh is aesthetically very attractive, and it is very important to warn the visitors against writing any graffiti on its walls.



Chahkuh Valley Guide Map





Shour Valley Geosite

E



This Geosite is located in the southern part of the island near the Namakdan Dome. It is a vast area encompassing plains and plateaus that have created beautiful sceneries. At this Geosite, a plain has been formed through erosion of soft structures (such as small sediments of Marl). As a result, a

large and harmonious flat plain is surrounded by hilly areas of badland type. On the steeper slopes of these hills, parallel waterways may be observed which have been formed by erosion through rain-storm water, creating a unique landscape.

As this Geosite is located on the Salakh Anticline, it is exposed to movements of earth, as a result of this phenomena, erosion has been working more effectively on forming the geological structures at this geosite.

In some areas on this plain, some stone-like structures may be observed on the ground ground is covered by some pieces of hard rock. These are remnants of the harder calcareous layers which once covered the soft layers, and have now collapsed partially due to erosion.



E



In the central part of the Darrehshour Valley, there are some mineral springs. These springs may be classified as cold hypothermal sulfur springs as they contain sulfur. The locals have since old times been using these springs by building some pools around them, especially effective for skin diseases as well as joint and bone problems, and relaxation. The presence of sulfur in this area is due to natural gas reserves that exist near beneath Salakh Anticline. The geomorphology of the land in Darrehshour geosite offers a unique opportunity for visitors to experience peace and calm in a beautiful natural landscape.

Shour Valley Guide Map (G5)



Legend	داده‌ها
Valley Name	نام دره
Route	مسیر
Danger - Caution	خطر / احتیاط
Parking	محل پارکینگ
Asphaltic Road	جاده آسفالت
Dirt Road	جاده خاکی



Toward Tall Village

بازرف روستای ملیل

بازرف روستای سلخ

Toward Razan Village

جاده خاکی

رودخانه اسفی به دره سوز

جاده خاکی

ساختمان مسکونی
You Are Here

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The Salt Dome is located on the south western part of Qeshm of island, and hosts the longest salt cave of the world (Namakdan Cave) that is 1 km in length.

Salt domes are formed when a huge amount of salt moves towards the earth's surface due to its light structure compared to its surrounding structures. Salt domes emerge in areas which have weak surface structures and openings, and appear as Salt dome on the earth surface. The Salt domes have many interesting aspects such as salt falls, salt springs and salt caves, with various geological formations that have been prone to erosion and dissolution processes.

Rainwater gradually penetrates the Salt Dome through its crevices, allowing the water dissolve the salt and enter the dome. Similar to other calcareous caves of the world, the formation of the Salt Cave has been following a Karst-like mechanism, by which water penetrating through a joint may gradually dissolve the surrounding areas, forming open and large cave-like structures. As the dissolution process is not the same for all areas, size and shape of these caves and openings differ, giving rise to large and open spaces in some areas, while in other areas very narrow corridors are formed where one only can get through the cave by crawling.

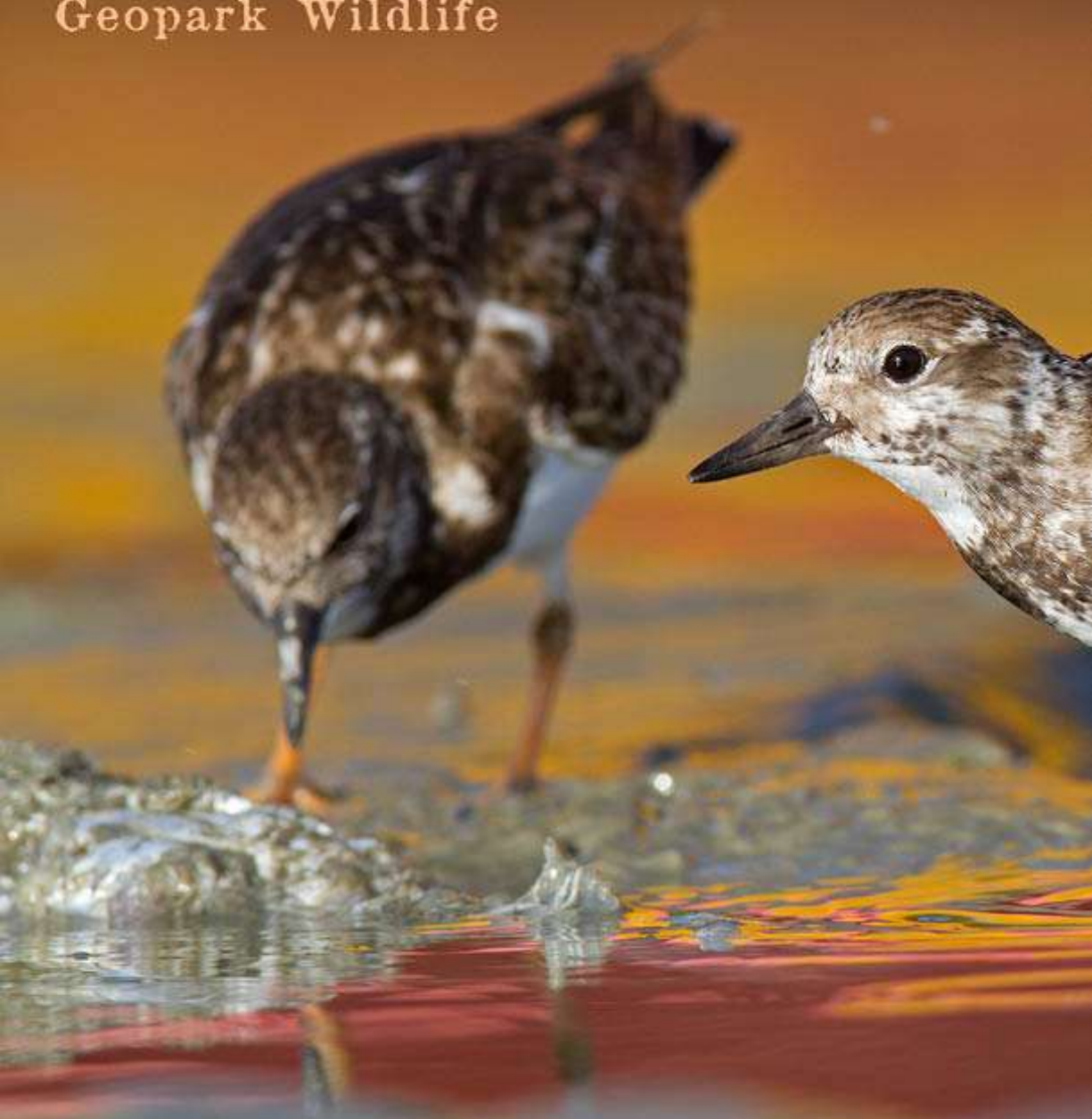
Some of the most amazing structures that may be found inside the Salt Cave are Stalactites and Stalagmites, as well as salt crystals (such as needle-shaped, round, or multi-facet) formed by sedimentation of



salt. In addition, in some areas where water has penetrated to the ground, some beautiful ponds have been formed with salt crystals at the bottom. One of the main attractions around the Salt Dome and the Salt Cave, are geological structures that are composed of various layers of colorful minerals and stones. These are indeed gifts from the depths of the earth which have been brought to the surface through the rise of the Salt dome. The age difference between these minerals and other geological structures on the island is over millions of years, and different color in minerals represent different chemical elements. For example, the red color represents the Iron, and the yellow color reflects the presence of Sulfur. Another interesting phenomena around the Salt Dome, is the presence of very shiny and silvery particles, reflecting the presence of Oligist (a type of Iron oxide) that may be observed on the sandy beaches, creating a beautiful landscape. These are the remains of large Oligists that have broken down and eroded, and widely distributed. Oligists and other Iron oxides may be found in abundance around Salt domes. While visiting the Salt Dome and the Salt Cave, one has to be extremely cautious not to fall, as there are many holes that have been formed by dissolution process and are sometime hidden and covered by a thin layer of salt, which is hard to distinguish at first sight. It is important to note that this geosite is very vulnerable to visitation, as the Salt Dome and the Salt Cave and their related structures have taken thousands of years to form. Each piece of salt crystal that has been formed inside the Salt Dome and Salt Cave, if damaged, needs another hundreds of years to be formed. Therefore, extreme caution by visitors is highly required and advised to protect and conserve this unique geosite for the next generations.



Geopark Wildlife





Bird name: Turn stone



Iran such as Azeri, Kurdish and even in less popular ones such as Arabic and Armenian. Many languages originated in Iran, but Persian is the most used language. Persian belongs to Iranian branch of the Indo-European family of languages. The oldest records in Old Persian date to the Achaemenid Empire, and examples of Old Persian have been found in present-day Iran, Iraq, Turkey and Egypt. Persian is spoken today primarily in Iran, Afghanistan and Tajikistan, but was historically a more widely understood language in an area ranging from the Middle East to India, significant populations of speakers in other Persian Gulf countries, as well as large communities around the World.



Qeshm Island History & Nature

Qeshm, also spelled Qishm, in Persian Jazīreh-ye Qeshm, is the largest Iranian island in the Persian Gulf region and it's located in the strait of Hormoz.

The island has a surface area of 1491 square kilometers and is 2.5 times the size of Bahrain. Qeshm city, located at the easternmost point of the island, is 22 kilometers from Bandar Abbas.

The island comprises 59 towns and villages and the population is approximately 100,000.

References to the Qeshm island can be traced back to the Achaemenid Empire era some 500 years BC.

PERSEPOLIS the monuments of the acropolis of the city of Pārsa, the dynastic center of the Achaemenid Persian kings, located in the plain of Marvdasht, some 57 km northwest of Shiraz. One of the best-known sites of the ancient world, that was registered by the UNESCO as a World Cultural Heritage.





Qeshm is the home of rare and even strange animal species. The world smallest mammal called Shrew weighting 1.3 g and approximately 4 cm in length is living in proximity of Humpback Whale which is 15m long and considered one of the world's largest whales.

With a unique geographical location, mangrove forests, deserts, and other natural habitats, Qeshm is considered as a safe home for birds, and a proper place for sea and coastal creatures.

Various species of birds, mammals, insects, and reptiles live on the island. While Qeshm is chosen as a temporal home by migratory birds heading from South and East Africa to Siberia, there are other species that choose Mangrove forest as

their permanent home.

Meanwhile, some of them are considered to be endangered or protected species. They build their nest and reproduce in the woods or around.

And there is no wonder if you find a Grey-leg Pelican, the world largest flying bird which is 170 cm in length or a Purple Sunbird which is only 10 cm long. Fox and Jabeer are the most significant mammals in the island. But there are more than 50 species of mollusks, crustaceans, and also a variety of sea corals living along the island coasts. Coral reefs, colorful aquarium fish, and other aquatic organisms form the island's underwater mysterious world.

You can see birds in all parts of Qeshm Island year round. If you are a professional birder you should visit Mangrove Forest that is a very suitable ecosystem for birds.

Every year when the weather is getting cold in northern regions, migrating birds, in big groups, come here and stay for several months. You can see some rare birds like Dalmation Pelican or Flamingo.

Generally 120 species of birds have been recorded in Mangrove forest, located in tidal zone of the central part of the Northern coastline of Qeshm Island. Some places near Mangrove are considered as a very silent and potential birding sites.





In 2003, the Environmental Management Office submitted a proposal for the establishment of a Bird Sanctuary on the North-East coast of the island, to include the broad expanse of inter-tidal mudflats between Qeshm town and the village of Dargahan. This was approved by the QFA administration. The sanctuary extends for about 11 km from east to west, and 500 metres out to sea beyond mean high water mark. It also includes a strip of land 120 metres wide above the mean high water mark (giving a total area of about 680 ha). This is one of the most important areas for migratory water birds on the island, regularly holding large numbers of Dalmatian Pelicans, Greater Flamingos, Eurasian Spoonbills, herons, egrets, shorebirds, gulls and terns. It is also an important fishing area, with about fifteen permanent fish traps. These will be unaffected by sanctuary status, but the construction of further fish-traps will be prohibited. It is hoped that it will be possible, in the future, to construct a research centre with accommodation for students in or adjacent to the sanctuary.



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Geotourism in Qeshm Geopark

Geotourism should be defined as tourism which sustains and enhances the identity of a territory, taking into consideration its geology, environment, culture, aesthetics, heritage and the well-being of its residents.

In Qeshm island, geotourism is the most dominant activity among tourists. Qeshm geopark enjoys several geosites with various geomorphological and cultural landscapes. In this island with long geological history, geotourism is linked to human and environment.

Most of 20 geosites, located in different parts of the island from west to east, are close to villages and some of them have an important role in people's folklore and beliefs.

Taxis, local guides or even local accommodations and foods are always accessible. All of them are provided to help geotourists to enjoy their stay in the Qeshm geopark.

Finding geological statues-like figures is an unforgettable part of geotourism enjoyment.

This figure is located in Qeshm geopark. Is this a statue of a conjurer or a clown? It depends on your imagination.



Rural Tourism in Qeshm Geopark

Iran is the motherland of one of the most ancient civilizations in the world. It's a country where the oldest signs of human primary sedentary and rural life have been found.

Variety of climates in Iran has gradually resulted in significant variety of cultures and architectures in Iranian rural life. These varieties have attracted many tourists to Iranian villages.

In Qeshm, the villages have been built according to the region's climate and construction materials. Although closely spaced, every individual village enjoys a different socio-cultural history.

The villages have been constructed in ways to access waterways and drinking water resources easily. Touring through the rural areas in Qeshm will be an introduction to inhabitants of an ancient island with different customs, clothing, dialect, and lifestyle from other parts of Iran.

The history of settlement and living in rural areas in this region probably goes back to Elamites, (2700–539 BCE), many centuries before Christ.

The potteries found in the region prove the habitable quality of the island in the 1st millennium BCE during Achaemenid Empire.

The rural inhabitants of Qeshm are hospitable and welcoming. You may find young people who know English.



Designated as the World Intangible Cultural Heritage (UNESCO)

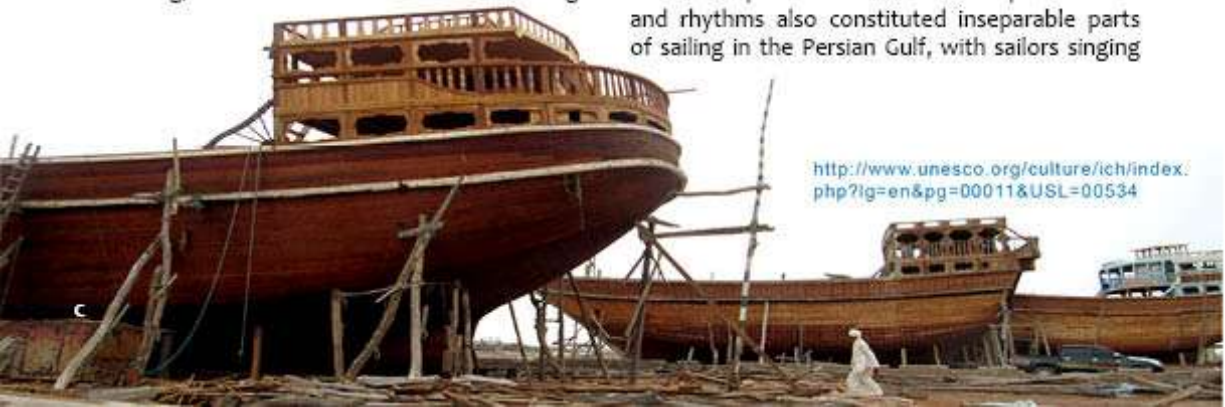
Lenj Boat

Traditional skills of building and sailing Iranian Lenj boats in the Persian Gulf




Iranian Lenj vessels are traditionally hand-built and are used by inhabitants of the northern coast of the Persian Gulf for sea journeys, trading, fishing and pearl diving. The traditional knowledge surrounding Lenjes includes oral literature, performing arts and festivals, in addition to the sailing and navigation techniques and terminology and weather forecasting that are closely associated with sailing, and the skills of wooden boat-building

itself. The navigational knowledge used to sail Lenjes was traditionally passed on from father to son. Iranian navigators could locate the ship according to the positions of the sun, moon and stars; they used special formulae to calculate latitudes and longitudes, as well as water depth. Each wind was given a name, which along with the colour of water or the height of waves was used to help forecast the weather. Specific music and rhythms also constituted inseparable parts of sailing in the Persian Gulf, with sailors singing



<http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/index.php?ig=en&pg=00011&USL=00534>



particular songs while working. Nowadays, the community of practitioners is small and mainly comprises older people. Wooden Lenjes are being replaced by cheaper fibreglass substitutes, and wooden Lenj construction workshops are being transformed into repair shops for older Lenjes. The philosophy, ritualistic background, culture and traditional knowledge of sailing in the Persian Gulf are gradually fading, although some of the associated ceremonies continue to be practised in a few places.

Iranians were among the first nations to acquire the marine knowledge and to make use of it in business and military affairs. The inhabitants of Qeshm enjoy a unique technique in making Lenj-boats. There are several Lenj building workshops near a village called Gouran which could be of certain interest to the tourists.



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You Are Always Welcome to Qeshm Geopark Guest Houses

Guest Houses in Qeshm Geopark

An instance of interactions between Qeshm Geopark and the island locals is the establishment of local guest-houses for international tourists. Through such collaborations, locals understand the advantages of having tourists in the Geopark, like developing infrastructures and generating income, which lead to improvements in their life quality. Thus they recognize the capital that they are living on and prioritize preservation of their geological heritage.

Today, locals interested in reaping the rewards of tourism have converted their rural houses here and there to guest-houses and restaurants located across the geosites of Qeshm Geopark, in order to provide guests, tourists and visitors of Qeshm International Geopark with traditions and rituals of this all-beautiful island.

Kholf Pond, Shibadzar, Direstan Beach, Naqasheh, Soheli, Tabl and Haft-Rangou are among the villages active in such income-generating activities for years, not only providing income for their families, but also helping in sustainable development of the region and Qeshm Geopark.

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Handicrafts

Traditions, handicrafts and local architecture are among the prime features of Qeshm Geopark. These links to rich culture and arts of the past brighten the lives of the beaming locals while attracting visitors to the Island. There is a great variety of local ceremonies in Qeshm Geopark that includes rites of Rezif (Azwa), birthdays, weddings, dhow launchings, rain prayer, Nowruz fishers' ceremony (in Salkh Village). All these ceremonies show how cheerful are these people at their hearts. Each ceremony is held upon a specific occasion in a certain time and location.

Garments of the locals demonstrates artistic instincts of the women of Qeshm. Dresses can be made using various traditional techniques like Golabatoundouzi, Khouzdouzi, Shak and Zaribafi, as well as golden burqas. Currently, several stalls are located throughout villages and geosites of Qeshm Geopark to offer handicrafts to tourists wishing to take a souvenir from Qeshm. Dhow-building is

another handicraft of Qeshm that is built by hard-working people of Guran, Peyposht, Laft and Doulab villages. Furthermore, local music instruments can be found in abundance throughout the island. These handmade instruments made with utmost finesse, in fact, preserve a deep-rooted old art of the area. Architecture of Qeshm is characterized by wind towers and sabats that are relics of distant past and illustrative examples of what might be called "the art of living" in such a hot and humid weather as that of Qeshm. If you are running away from urban modern life, Laft historical village welcomes you with its peculiarly unique atmosphere. And last but not least, the local cuisine is another facet of the culture in Qeshm, with several types of sea-food, different kinds of bread, traditional confectionaries, and spicy meals which their delicious smell raises from chimneys of all the houses and restaurants.







More recently travelers such as Marco Polo in the 13th century have also mentioned Qeshm in their writing. Qeshm is famous for its wide range of Ecotourism attractions such as the Qeshm

Geopark's geological features and Mangrove marine forest.

Also there are several historical sites like ancient Portuguese castles in Qeshm city or Ba-saeedoo, historic mosques in Ramchah village and Tabll village, the shrines of Seyyed Mozaffar and Bibi Maryam and etc.



Travel Highlights in Qeshm Island

- 1- Explore Qeshm Geopark, which is the 1st one in the Middle east. Arrange your time to visit the most wonderful geological features of this Geopark.
- 2- Try a delicious spicy meal in one of the local houses, which are prepared to serve tourists, and enjoy the hospitality of locals and variety of seafood in Qeshm island.
- 3- Become one of the few people to dive on the reefs and wrecked tankers around Qeshm Island.
- 4- Watch the sun set behind wooden Lenges or Mangrove forest in the unfeasibly photogenic coasts, in Qeshm Island.



Fisherman Norouz Ceremony



Salakh village is best known for a very old festival, that is celebrated on 22nd of July every year as the first day of real summer.

This ancient festival is called Fishermen Norouz Ceremony (Norouz-e Syyad) . Native inhabitants of the island believe that all springs move toward sea in this day.

So they celebrate the holiday by swimming in the furious sea to protect their body from diseases and sufferings. They also pray for blessing and health of their children and their old parents by pouring water on their bodies in the sea. Fishing is forbidden in this holiday.

Another attracting tradition of Qeshm people will be held on on 6th of August Iranian never stop their celebrations and festivals, even on the warmest days of year and on one the warmest lands of the country. They have fun and run traditional jubilation even in such situations.

In Salakh village which is located on the central part of the Qeshm Island on Persian gulf, every year indigenous people do a fantastic custom which is called "Fisherman new day Jubilation" in Persian" Jashn-e nowrooz-e sayyad".

On this special day nobody goes fishing and eats seafoods; that's because they want to let the sea to rest and begin a new season of life. Inhabitants of Salakh village celebrate this day as a public ceremony and host many guests from all over the world. They run variety of cooking, singing, dancing, swimming, and sport competitions for guests and this is good that everybody can take a part in the competitions. This year, the ceremony y will be held on by postpone on 6th of august instead of 20th of July.





Laws and regulations visit to Qeshm

Executive Bylaw on the Issuance of Visa to Foreign Nationals in the Free Trade-Industrial Zones of the Islamic Republic of Iran

Article 2 : For direct entry into the Free Zones through authorized points of entry and exit, foreign nationals are not required to obtain visa in advance.

Note 1

For persons mentioned above, the representatives of the Disciplinary Forces at entry points of a Zone, shall affix the seal of residence permit of their valid travel documents. The respective residence permit is issued for a period of two weeks and may be extended up to six month upon the request made by the Authority.

Note 2

Residence for a period exceeding six months shall be governed by the provisions of the Regulations on Employment of workforce, Insurance and Social Security in Free Trade – Industrial Zones of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Note 3

Issuance of permit for residence in the Zones is prohibited with respect to all persons who are legally barred from entry in to the country .

Article 3 : For entry into the Zones which lack the direct points of entry (air , sea or land), foreign nationals are required to obtain visa from the country's legations abroad. The legations of the Islamic Republic of Iran abroad shall issue, without inquiring headquarters, double entry visas valid for three days, in accordance with relevant regulations and upon presentation of a return ticket by the applicant .

Article 4 : Foreign nationals who, after entry into the country want to go to the other parts of the country, are bound to submit their request to the representative office of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs located in the Zone..

<http://www.freezones.ir/Default.aspx?tabid=36>

QESHM AIR ROUTE MAP



Access to Qeshm Geopark



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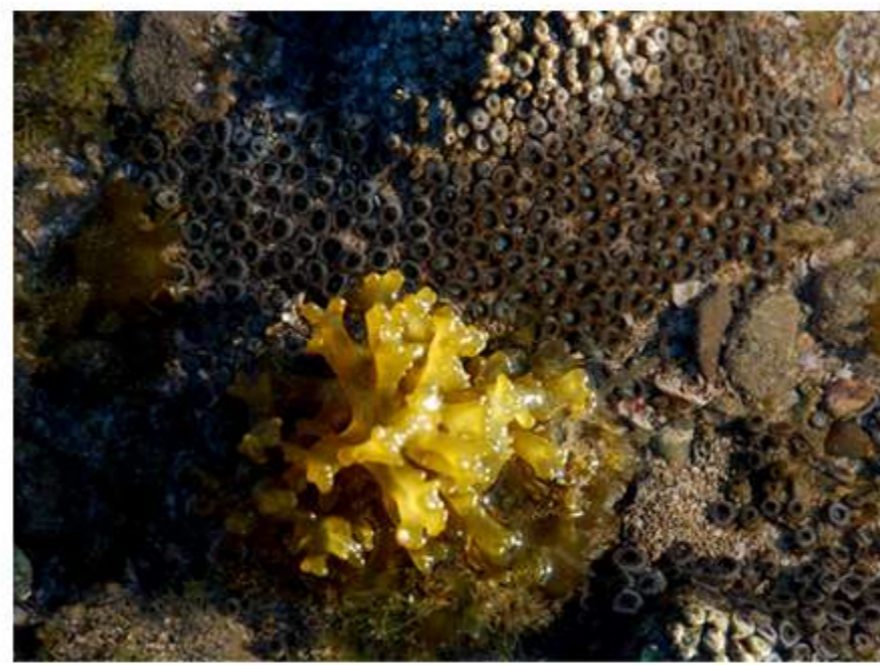
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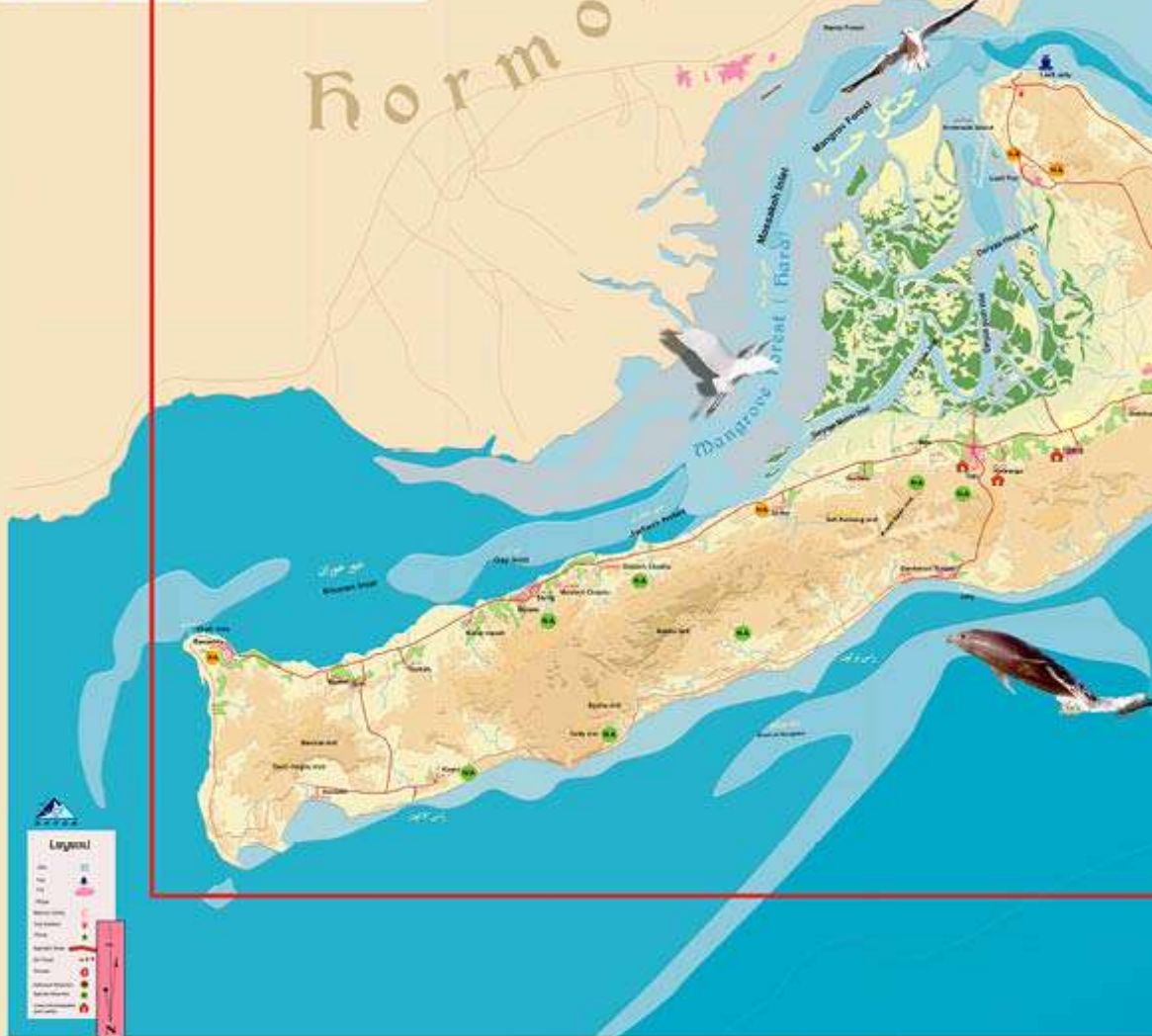
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Strait of Hormuz

Kangan Island

Persian Gulf