

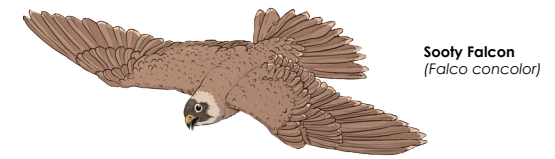
# Oman's Underwater Jewel

## Ad Dimaniyyat Island Nature Reserve

### OVERVIEW

Ad Dimaniyyat Island Nature Reserve (DINR) is an Important Bird Area and a Marine Protected Area designated under Royal Decree No. 23/96 in 1996, and managed by Ministerial Decree No. 62/2019. The reserve comprises of nine islands arranged semi-linearly over 21 km, and are located 15 km offshore from Muscat. The largest island is Jazirat Jabal Al Khabir (0.46 km<sup>2</sup>) and the smallest is commonly known as Jazirat Awlad Al Jawan (Little Joon) (0.01 km<sup>2</sup>). The islands are uninhabited, apart from a ranger station located at Jazirat Jabal Al

Khabir. Their surrounding waters are characterised by diverse marine wildlife and some of Oman's best developed coral reefs. Their beauty and clear waters make them a popular recreational destination, particularly for scuba diving and snorkelling. Island visits are prohibited from May to October during which sea turtles (hawksbill and green turtles) and sea birds nest on the island's shores and cliffs. Island access is only possible from November to April with a permit from the [Environment Authority](#) (Ministerial Decree No. 62/2019).



Sooty Falcon  
(Falco concolor)





#### Reserve Visiting Season

- Marine reserve area visits - permitted all year round
- Landing on the islands - prohibited from May to October



Hawksbill Turtle  
(*Eretmochelys imbricata*)

### FUN FACT

The name 'Dimaniyyat' may be derived from the Arabic 'Al Demani' referring to the time of the year with favourable winds for travelling.



\*Map is not to scale and is not a formal reference for international borders

### FAUNA AND FLORA

The islands are composed of limestone, marl and coral cliffs with shallow soils and beach areas. Some islands are covered in dense vegetation, dominated by drought tolerant shrubs such as seablites (*Sueda moschata* and *Suaeda aegyptiaca*), while others are barren.

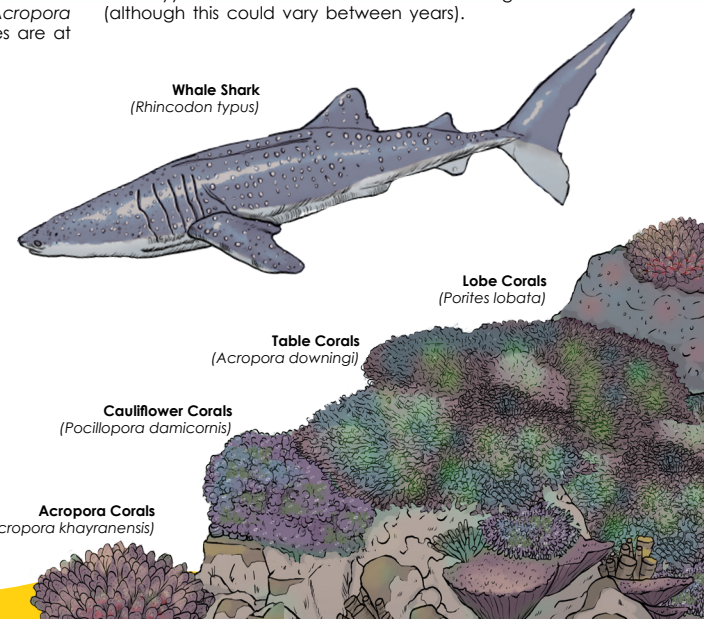
The cliffs and rocky areas provide ideal shaded places for birds to nest and rest. The birds nesting on the island include sooty falcon (*Falco concolor*), osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*), sooty gull (*Larus hemprichii*), bridled tern (*Onychoprion anaethetus*), white-cheeked tern (*Sterna repressa*), roseate tern (*Sterna dougallii*), brown noddy (*Anous stolidus*) and red-billed tropicbird (*Phaethon aethereus*). Some of these species nest in large, concentrated colonies, and others at individual nest locations.

In the nesting season, green (*Chelonia mydas*) and hawksbill (*Eretmochelys imbricata*) sea turtles lay their eggs at night on the island's beaches with varying densities. Those beaches support one of the most important nesting aggregations for the Critically Endangered hawksbill sea turtle in the region, where over 1,000 nests are laid seasonally by at least 250 nesting females.

The coral reefs of the islands are classified as "fringing reefs", meaning they are located near the coastline and are formed by loose aggregations of corals from various origins. Dense corals feature on the southern side of the islands, dominated by cauliflower corals *Pocillopora damicornis*, and table corals such as *Acropora downingi* and *Acropora khayranensis*. Some coral colonies are at

least 200 years old and include millions of interconnected polyps.

Coral reefs form a foundation of a healthy ecosystem, and provide food, shelter and habitat for fishes, sharks, marine mammals, and other wildlife life such as echinoderms (sea urchins), nudibranchs (sea slugs) and invertebrates (crabs, sea jellies and mollusks). Table corals provide an ideal hiding place for many reef fishes and have been severely impacted by crown-of-thorns sea stars in the last few years. The endangered whale shark (*Rhincodon typus*), the largest fish in the ocean reaching up to 10 m, is a regular visitor to Ad Dimaniyyat Island Nature Reserve between August and November (although this could vary between years).



Whale Shark  
(*Rhincodon typus*)

Lobe Corals  
(*Porites lobata*)

Table Corals  
(*Acropora downingi*)

Cauliflower Corals  
(*Pocillopora damicornis*)

Acropora Corals  
(*Acropora khayranensis*)

### MAJOR THREATS

#### 1. Unsustainable Fishing

Can cause decline in fish populations over time and disturb ecosystem balance.

#### 2. Littering and Plastic Pollution

Can lead to plastic ingestion, suffocation and entanglement of marine and terrestrial species. [A large proportion](#) of marine waste consists of plastic, including fishing nets.

#### 3. Ghost Gear

Abandoned, lost or otherwise discarded fishing gear can trap, entangle and kill marine wildlife, destroy habitats and corals, and is a hazard to divers and navigation.

#### 4. Natural Predation

The crown-of-thorns sea star (*Acanthaster planci*) preys upon coral reefs and can influence their community structure and reduce their cover over the long term, especially the *Acropora* coral species at the Ad Dimaniyyat Island Nature Reserve.

#### 5. Habitat Disturbance, Degradation and Destruction

Wildlife species lead a fragile existence and an increased number of visitors can cause environmental damage, disturbance and degradation.

Seablite  
(*Sueda moschata*)

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**BRANDMARKS**

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### HOW TO HELP

-  Reduce your footprint
-  Avoid flashing lights and loud music
-  Avoid touching wildlife
-  Avoid anchoring on coral reefs
-  Use mooring buoys
-  No fishing
-  Collect your litter
-  Reduce packaging
-  Raise awareness
-  Respect reserve visiting season
-  Respect reserve laws
-  Support ESO