

Kuwait - Biodiversity conservation data

MAIN PHYTOGENETIC RESOURCES OF KUWAIT AND THE MAIN THREATS

The native flora comprises sparse coverage of low-growth shrubs and pastures, the main plants being a combination of hardy annuals and perennials (Halwagy and Halwagy, 1974a, b, Halwagy et al., 1982). Boulos and Al-Dousari (1994) identified 374 species belonging to 55 families of vascular plants in Kuwait. Some of the most representative are *Haloxylon salicornicum*, *Rhanterium epapposum*, *Cyperus congoense*, *Zygophyllum qatarense*, *Panicum turgidum*, *Stipagrostis plumosa*, *Moltkiopsis ciliata*, *Plantago boissieri*, *Schimpera arabica*, *Arnebia decumbens* and *Astragalus* sp.

Plant biodiversity in Kuwait has been damaged over recent decades because of large-scale destruction of land. Zaman (1998) stated that desert plant species are more vulnerable to changing habitats.

STATUS OF IN-SITU AND EX-SITU CONSERVATION

In-situ conservation

Perhaps the largest terrestrial ecosystem to date that has been designated a protected area in Kuwait (1995) is in the north-west, and is known as the *Kuwait Nature Reserve*. This park is 330 kilometres long and stretches from Um-Alaish in Kuwait Bay to Hoban and Medirah. It is an important source of plant diversity for the country. The predominant vegetation is *Rhanterium*, *Haloxylon*, *Halocnemon*, *Seidlitzia*, *Nitraria*, and *Zygophyllum*.

In 1979, the Sulaibiya Field Station (SFS) was set up on 20 km² in Kabd (south-west Kuwait). This is a zone for research and conservation of *Rhanterium* / *Cyperus*.

Ex-situ conservation

The Kuwaiti Institute for Scientific Research is a state research centre run by the Public Authority for Agricultural Affairs and Fishing and its main function is agricultural research. It has three divisions: Environment and Earth Science, Water Resources, and Biological Resources and Food. The Institute is a coordinating body for genetic engineering, tissue cultivation and research and planning related to biological diversity conservation. It has a germplasm bank of native plant material (2003).

Kuwait University (KU) has also carried out activities relating to the conservation of plant diversity, and houses a herbarium and a Science Museum. The university collaborates with these two facilities and provides technical training for the development of strategic programmes and national plans of action in the field of biodiversity conservation.

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Centers of Plant Diversity

- [Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research](#)
- [Herbarium and Science Museum of the Kuwait University](#)

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