



## Letter to the Editor of Entomology, Ornithology, and Herpetology: Current Research

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Iraq is situated in strategic geographical position of the Middle East and the world. It spans over 437,072 km<sup>2</sup> (168,754 sq mi) and sharing borders with six countries (Turkey: north; Syria: northwest; Iran: east; Jordan: west; Saudi Arabia: south and southwest; Kuwait: south). Border with the latter is marked by a narrow section of coastline stretching for 58 km (36 mi) in the northern Arabian Gulf. The habitats of Iraq include high mountains and rocky valleys, desert, sandy and grassy steppes, arid lands, and alluvial plain with its Mesopotamian marshlands. The history of Iraq's fauna is naturally connected to the zoogeographic realms of southern Turkey, western Persia, eastern Syria and the north eastern part of the Arabian Peninsula. Thus, such connection along with wide range of landscapes awards Iraq with a remarkable biodiversity; the avifauna and herpetofauna being not an exception.

Yet, little is known about Iraq's avifauna and herpetofauna. Since Allouse's [1] "*Birds of Iraq*" book, very few contributions concerning birds of Iraq were recognized. Those contributions were made mainly by international ornithologists who visited Iraq and less by Iraqi field researchers. During the 1980s and 1990s, very scarce ornithological field surveys and contributions were conducted due to Iraq-Iran war and Gulf war (I and II) respectfully. Regarding the amphibians and reptiles fauna of Iraq, Khalaf [2] representing the first illustrated reference for such important biota for Iraq. Regardless, several contributions were made later by international and local herpetologists respectfully. Arguably, the ornithological and herpetological field studies in Iraq have been refreshed after 2003, especially during the intensive field surveys that were made by Iraqi authorities in cooperation with International institutes through the restoration of the southern Iraqi Marshes.

Previously, the majority of avifaunal and herpetofaunal contributions obtained from Iraq were mainly submitted to local journals and newsletters. The "*Bulletin of the Iraq Natural History Museum*" published by the Iraqi Natural History Research Center and Museum in the University of Baghdad and "*Marsh Bulletin*" published by University of Basra are the main local journals concerning ornithology and herpetology in Iraq. Moreover, few manuscripts from

Iraq in the forms of short communications, field reports, and articles published in few regional journals and newsletter after 2003. After June 2014, the situation of the Iraqi field became critical due to heavy conflicts. Nowadays, conducting ornithological and herpetological field surveys in certain areas of Iraq is quite impossible. Many territories in western and central Iraq are now restricted military zones with limited chances for further field studies/surveys. Despite to what mentioned above, the ornithological and herpetological outcomes are present especially in southern and northern Iraq (Kurdistan) such as Mohammad [3] and Al-Sheikhly and Al-Barazengy [4]. The aspiration of publishing contributions in international and regional journals has been encouraged by the Iraqi scientific authorities. However, the ambition of Iraqi field researchers and scientists to submit their contributions to be published in credible, peer reviewed, and high standard journals is dramatically increasing [5].

Quoting from the Entomology, Ornithology & Herpetology: Current Research journal scheme "*EOH: CR is a major platform for all authors to share their novel work which were peer reviewed by eminent scholars related to this field*". The EOH: CR objectives meet with the ambition of the Iraqi authors of choosing highly standard journals for their submissions. From our perspective, it is crucial to raise knowledge about the EOH: CR and distribute its valued criteria among national and regional ornithologists, herpetologists, and filed researchers; encouraging authors to shorten their list by selecting EOH: CR as essential choice when convenient.

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