

# Hessel Marsh, a seasonal symphony of nature's beauty



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## Iranica Desk

*Hessel Marsh is a natural wonder nestled in Chalous, Mazandaran Province, renowned for its vibrant display of algae in hues of green, pink, and red that change with the seasons.*

*The term hessel signifies both stagnant water and a seasonal water reservoir. Situated south of Talaju and Sinava village, this enchanting marsh lies 10 kilometers southwest of Chalous and 15 kilometers northwest of Marzanabad, deep within the renowned Mash'al Forest.*

### A picturesque oasis

Hessel Marsh is a hidden gem, cocooned within a lush forest adorned with majestic trees and veiled in mystery. As you traverse the forest's winding paths, the air takes on a tangy quality, signaling your approach to this captivating destination.

Upon reaching Hessel Marsh, you'll be greeted by a spectacle of trees and plants encircling it like precious pearls, enhancing its allure. Perched at an elevation of 250 meters above sea level, the marsh's size fluctuates, reaching less than a hectare at its fullest. Studies conducted in 1996 estimated its area to be approximately 3,800 square meters, adding to its mystique and charm.

The waters of Hessel Marsh stir from its depths and core, untouched by any flowing rivers or streams. Towards the marsh's lower extremity, an ancient tree shelters a bubbling spring, seamlessly merging with the marsh's essence. This subaqueous spring is an integral part of Hessel Marsh. On its eastern flank, a channel meanders, occasionally carrying excess water towards the Chalous

Valley when overflow occurs. The primary source of water for Hessel Marsh stems from seasonal rains commencing in late autumn and persisting until mid-spring. Some years witness a decline in water levels, resulting in a significant decrease in the marsh's water capacity.

Within the tranquil confines of Hessel Marsh, time drifts by in serenity and calm. The surface remains undisturbed, devoid of waves or ripples, adorned with a lush carpet of algae, reaching a depth of half a centimeter, leaving no gaps untouched. These algae exhibit varying hues, transitioning from green in shaded areas to orange and finally a vibrant red in the sunlight, casting a breathtaking spectacle.

### Vegetation

Hessel Marsh was once a habitat for numerous animals and creatures; however, with the disruption of the marsh ecosystem, these species are no longer seen or are less abundant. Perhaps the reason for this is the opening of the area to tourists by building a road in the heart of the forest.

Turtles, lizards, and leeches were once common inhabitants of Hessel Marsh, yet their presence has diminished over time. While fish do not populate the marsh, it offers an ideal habitat for amphibians. Historically, the region also served as a watering spot for larger animals like lynxes and leopards. Before the area's designation as a national park, the Hessel Marsh surroundings were utilized as grazing lands by the villagers of Sinava and Talaju. The marsh's vegetation cover includes a variety of trees such as oak, walnut, elm, ash, and maple, as well as fruit-bearing trees like wild apple, wild grape, fig, and pomegranate, along with an assortment of medicinal plants like chamomile and fennel.

### Different seasons

**Spring:** As spring unfolds in Hessel Marsh, a tapestry of vibrant green hues blankets the landscape, exuding a sense of rejuvenation and vitality. To witness the marsh adorned in its verdant glory, a visit during the early days of spring is recommended. The weather during this period is

notably pleasant, enhancing the overall experience.

**Summer:** Transitioning into summer, Hessel Marsh undergoes a shift towards drier conditions, diminishing some of the allure found in other seasons. The forested surroundings contribute to warm and humid weather, rendering this season less conducive for exploration and travel.

**Autumn:** Embrace the enchanting allure of autumn by visiting Hessel Marsh during this season, a time when nature paints a mesmerizing canvas of red, pink, and orange hues. The marsh transforms into a captivating masterpiece, offering a visual feast for all who visit.

**Winter:** Even in the tranquil embrace of winter, Hessel Marsh retains its unique charm and beauty, showcasing hues of pink and orange amidst the serene landscape. The winter season unveils a picturesque scene where walnut and maple tree branches persist in their verdant glory, while clusters of renowned tree plants maintain their lushness, adding a touch of elegance to the winter.



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## Se Kuhe Castle showcasing a unique architectural style



Sistan and Baluchestan Province, one of the largest in Iran, harbors a rich historical legacy and remarkable tourism potential. Nestled within this region lies the captivating Se Kuhe Castle (literally meaning Three Mountains Castle) near Zabol. This ancient fortress has witnessed pivotal moments in history, particularly during the reign of Nassereddin Shah Qajar, amidst political and military complexities.

Dating back to the Afsharid period, Se Kuhe Castle has hosted various rul-

ers and stands as a testament to the enduring heritage of the region. The castle's formation itself is steeped in intrigue, with its origins tied to the emergence of three islands as the waters of the Se Kuhe village receded, eventually revealing the majestic fortress.

Comprising three distinct sections — the southern citadel, the central citadel, and the northern citadel — this architectural marvel showcases the unique Sistani style. Each citadel served a specific purpose, from providing a resting place for the ruler and his companions to housing soldiers and servants. The castle's significance is further underscored by its inclusion in the Iranian National Heritage List, signifying its cultural and historical importance.

Se Kuhe Castle, situated along the Zabol-Zahedan route, not only embodies the enduring spirit of Sistan architecture but also beckons travelers to explore its rich history, making it a jewel in the crown of Sistan and Baluchestan Province's tourism industry.

Se Kuhe Castle is one of the locations in Sistan and Baluchestan Province where the Iranian flag was raised during the struggle between Iran and Britain. This fortress witnessed the peak of military and political conflicts between the two nations for many years. According to historical documents, coins were minted in this castle. Additionally, there was a well on the southern side of the castle where bodies were thrown during the war. This well was exceptionally deep, to the extent that when people dropped a stone into it, no sound was heard. Today, only a hole remains at this location. This fortress is an integral part of the region's history, witnessing numerous political and social events.

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