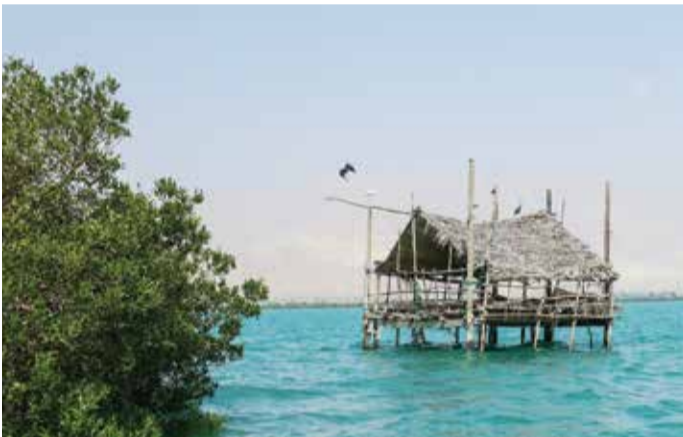


# Khuran Wetland preserves nature, inspires wonder



Iranica Desk

In the heart of Hormozgan Province's coastal strip — where the land and sea share a bond thousands of years old — lies a vast wetland adorned with evergreen forests: Khuran Wetland (Bandar-e Khamir), the largest wetland in southern Iran. It is not merely a habitat for birds and aquatic life but a mirror of natural balance that breathes in silence. On the southern edge of Bandar-e Khamir, where the warm, silvery waters of the Persian Gulf gently extend into the land, the Khuran Wetland unfolds — a 100,000-hectare expanse intertwined with the sea, home to countless birds, marine species, and mangrove trees, IRNA wrote. Khuran Wetland is more than a wetland or an ecosystem; it is a living testament to the harmony of humanity, nature, and history. The evergreen hara (mangrove) trees, rising in orderly grace from the salty waters, breathe and give life with every ebb and flow of the tide.

These mangrove forests are not only sanctuaries for thousands of migratory birds but also the first line of defense protecting the coasts from erosion and storms. The sound of seabirds flapping their wings and the sunlight reflecting off the lagoon's surface have transformed Khuran Wetland into a living painting of southern nature, where rare species make their nests. The city of Bandar-e Khamir, situated along the edge of this wetland, carries the title of "Iran's Wetland City" — a place where daily life, local culture, and even the economy are closely connected to the wetland. This lagoon, listed among the international wetlands of the Ramsar Convention, has in recent years become vulnerable to threats such as coastal pollution, overfishing, unsustainable development, and climate change. Environmental experts have repeatedly emphasized the need to develop and implement conservation programs, because the Khuran Wetland, though appearing full and vigorous, is silently

losing its natural balance. Today, attention is focused not only on preserving this wetland but also on using its potential wisely in nature-based tourism, environmental education, and the local economy. Khuran Wetland could become a model of participatory conservation in southern Iran — a place where humans stand alongside nature rather than dominate it. With all its beauty and grandeur, the Khuran Wetland is neither reproducible nor replaceable. Protecting it is not a choice but a necessity for the future of the children of this land — a future where, if we do not act today, the sound of its birds will be heard only in books tomorrow. The value of the Khuran Wetland in the wetland city of Bandar-e Khamir is so great that it has been designated a biosphere reserve. Its numerous islands and unique, beautiful ecosystem create a dreamlike setting for tourists and unforgettable memories. The hara (mangrove) forests of Bandar Khamir are also located

within the Khuran Wetland International Wetland; this lagoon is the largest marine wetland in the Middle East, protected under two international treaties (UNESCO and Ramsar). Hormozgan's wetlands are home to a variety of birds as well as rare and endangered species. Hormozgan's wetlands, in addition to being habitats for birds and aquatic life, are home to rare plant species such as hara and mangrove forests due to their proximity to the sea or their location along floodwater channels flowing into the Persian Gulf. These forests play a crucial role in coastal ecosystem sustainability and offer high potential for nature-based tourism development in southern Iran. Another advantage of Hormozgan's international wetlands is their position along floodwater pathways to the sea or adjacent to the coastline, which supports the growth of hara and mangrove forests. The Director General of Hormozgan Province's Department of Environment Habib Masihi

Taziani noted that the province contains over 33% of Iran's wetlands, emphasized its special status in the field of wetlands. He highlighted Khuran Wetland as the largest wetland in the province and Shidvar Wetland as a recognized wildlife refuge with coral reefs. He stated that Khuran Wetland, covering more than 100,000 hectares, is one of the province's most important natural habitats and plays a key role in preserving regional biodiversity. He em-

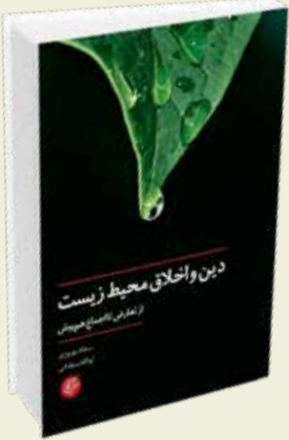
phasized that Hormozgan Province ranks second in the country in terms of wetland area after Khuzestan Province, and first nationally in the structure and extent of hara forests. Bandar-e Khamir, as Iran's first wetland city and host of the Khor Khuran Wetland, is located 70 kilometers west of Bandar Abbas and currently plays an important role in protecting and transmitting local knowledge related to hara forests and the region's natural habitats.

## Introduction to the book: Religion and Environmental Ethics

### From conflict to overlapping consensus

The book entitled Religion and Environmental Ethics, authored by Abul-Qasem Fanaei and Sajad Behrooz and published by Mofid University Press in 2022, represents an innovative effort to explore the ethical dimensions of environmental responsibility by applying the concept of "overlapping consensus," originally introduced by John Rawls in political philosophy, to the domain of environmental ethics. comprising 253 pages, it seeks to demonstrate that a common moral understanding regarding the environment can be achieved among followers of both religious and secular ethical frameworks. At its core, the book addresses the fundamental question of humans' moral responsibilities toward the environment. This includes both living beings — animals, plants, and other sentient entities — and non-living components such as mountains, rivers, minerals, and other natural resources. The text examines whether

moral consideration and ethical status extend beyond humans to other elements of nature, and if so, how this shapes the limits of human actions. If non-human living beings are granted moral standing, humans' rights to exploit these entities become ethically constrained. Moral status, in this view, not only establishes human duties but also delineates the permissible boundaries of those duties. Regarding non-living entities, human obligations are derived indirectly — not from the inherent moral status of these entities, but from the moral or legal rights attributed to God, to humans, or to other living beings in relation to the use of natural resources. The book addresses three central questions in environmental ethics: (1) Do humans have moral duties toward the environment? (2) What is the scope of these duties? (3) Are these duties direct — toward the entities themselves — or indirect, concerning



them only in relation to the rights of others? By analyzing these questions, the work clarifies whether obligations are grounded in human-centered considerations, divine command, or the intrinsic value of nature itself. From a religious perspective, certain theological assumptions — such as human stewardship and moral pre-eminence — have sometimes been

interpreted as justifying exploitation of nature. However, this book interrogates such interpretations, suggesting that these principles can equally imply profound ethical responsibilities: humans, as morally elevated or divinely appointed stewards, bear a duty to respect and protect the environment rather than to dominate it. Nature, in this sense, may be viewed as a divine trust, with harm or destruction representing a clear moral transgression. The text also explores secular perspectives and argues for common ethical ground. Drawing on the idea of "overlapping consensus," the author demonstrates that it is possible for individuals with diverse worldviews — religious and non-religious — to agree on fundamental environmental principles without necessarily agreeing on the underlying justifications. In practice, this means achieving broad consensus on principles such as respecting nature, prohibiting destructive exploitation, and safeguarding the rights of future generations, even when the rationale differs. The book emphasizes that these moral frameworks are not purely theoretical. They have practical implications for everyday life and public policy,

providing guidance for sustainable environmental behavior and collective responsibility. By bridging religious and secular ethics, it offers a foundation for cross-cultural dialogue and cooperation in addressing global environmental challenges. This work also serves as a model of rigorous philosophical research and applied ethics, illustrating how complex moral questions can be addressed in a way that is both conceptually precise and socially relevant. It is intended for scholars, students, policymakers, and anyone interested in deepening their understanding of environmental ethics and fostering a more sustainable relationship with the natural world. In sum, this book is a pioneering contribution to environmental ethics, demonstrating how humans can responsibly navigate their moral obligations toward both living and non-living elements of nature. By offering a framework that resonates across religious and secular traditions, it provides a compelling vision of shared ethical responsibility for the preservation and respectful use of the environment.

*This book has not been translated into English.*