

## **Bahrain (Bahrein)**

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### **Location and area**

Bahrain is an independent state in the Middle East, comprising an archipelago of 33 low-lying and rocky islands in the southern Persian Gulf, between the Qatar Peninsula on the east and the coast of Saudi Arabia on the west. It has a total area of 707 km<sup>2</sup>. (Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia 2002).

### **Topography**

Only Bahrain Island rises to an elevation of 135 m in its centre. (Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia 2002).

### **Climate**

The climate is arid, with less than 100 mm of rain falling annually, nearly all in the winter months. Average temperatures vary from about 19° C in January to about 36° C in July. (Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia 2002).

### **Land use**

Desert vegetation predominates. Many natural freshwater springs, mainly along the northern coast of Bahrain Island, are used for water supply and irrigation (Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia 2002).

### **Wetlands**

Since the 1970s the flow of fresh water has dwindled (Mohamed 1995), because depletion of aquifer has occurred, lowering the water table.

Wetlands are under threat from various human activities, including oil spills, but mostly from the reclamation of land for development, which has destroyed many biologically rich areas such as muddy shores and mangroves (Spiers 1999).

### **Peatlands**

No record of the occurrence of peatlands is known.