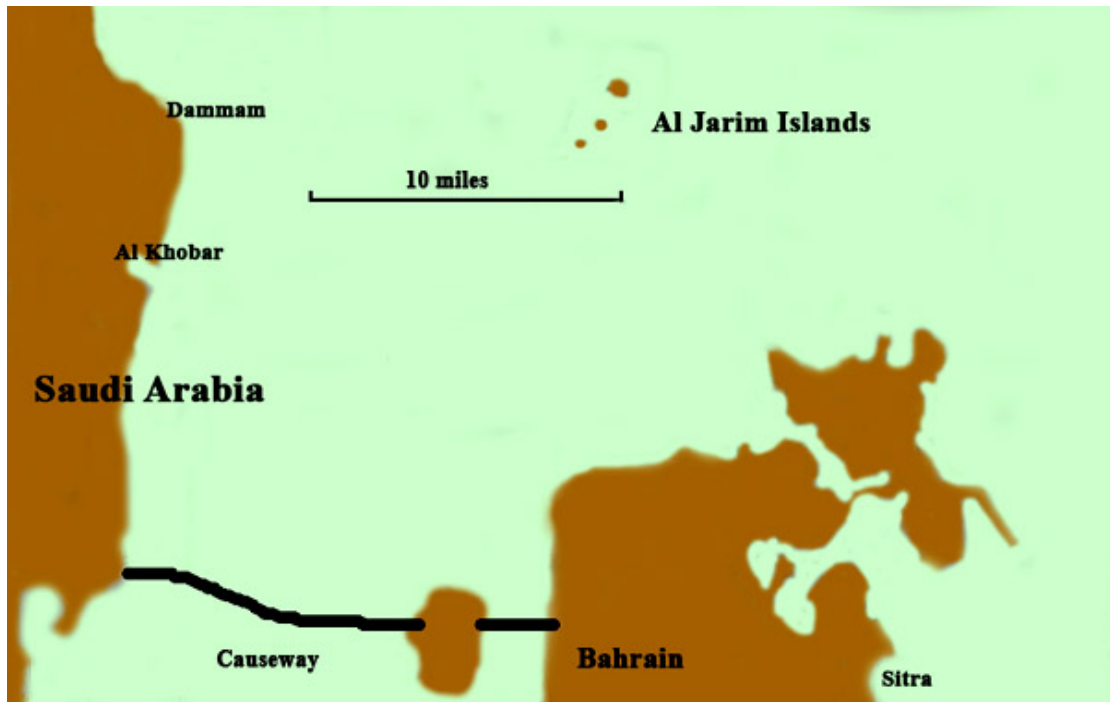


AL JARIM ISLANDS, BAHRAIN, JULY 2007

by Adrian Drummond-Hill



Above: A map of the location of the islands in the Persian Gulf.

Al Jarim Islands consist of three small islands in the Persian Gulf at 26° 24' 03.22"N 50° 28' 49.25" S. The southern island contains large breeding populations of Bridled Terns and Lesser Crested Terns. The middle island has white-cheeked terns and lesser-crested terns. The most northern island is used by the Bahraini royal family.

I set off on Thursday 26th July from my house in Al Khobar, Saudi Arabia at 07:00 and had arranged to meet two friends, Dr Brendan Kavangh and Juhani Kyrro who work in Bahrain. Brendan is a BTO trainer A ringer and Juhani a keen bird watcher and photographer. The causeway over to Bahrain was very busy and by the time I'd got across and booked into my hotel, it was 08:50. Brendan and Juhani met me there and we drove to the Bahrain Yacht Club where Ali, our guide and boat driver for the day met us. The conditions were far from ideal as the weather forecast was "Temperatures between 30 and 40° C and humidity between 60 and 90%, the apparent temperature will be 56°C!" When I saw the boat Ali was using I was a bit concerned as there was no shade or respite from the sun.



Above: Leaving the Bahrain Yacht Club with Ali in charge.

The trip took about 40 mins in Ali's fast boat with a 200 hp Yamaha engine pushing us.



Above: Traditional dhows just off shore from Bahrain.



Above: Our destination

As you can see the islands are not very big, this, the southern most, was probably just over 100 meters wide and was covered in sparse vegetation. The Bridled Terns prefer this environment, as they tend to keep their young hidden in it. The White-cheeked Terns on the other hand corralled their young in large groups on the beach.



Above: Bridled Tern chick, hiding in the undergrowth.



Above: White-cheeked and Lesser Crested Tern chicks waiting for food. The Socotra Cormorants are great opportunists and were stealing what fish they could.



Above: White-cheeked and Lesser Crested Terns going off for more food.



Above: While Juhani and I set off to do some photography, Brendan, assisted by Ali went in search of Bridled Tern chicks to ring.



Above: The master at work.

Ali and Brendan managed to find 44 Bridled Tern chicks, which was quite a feat considering the heat and the thick bushes the chicks were hiding in. We all helped to round up the White-cheeked Tern chicks and managed to collect 53 for ringing.



Above: Here's Juhani clicking away. There were so many terns it was hard to concentrate on one.



Below: Time for a cool down.

The only available shade was under Ali's boat, without this I think we would have been in serious trouble! It's hard to describe the heat but if you have been in a steam room, it's very similar.



Above: Bridled Terns waiting to head out to sea.



Above: Bridled Tern on finals.



Above: Bridled Tern making a pass



Above: Bridled Terns



Above: I think these Lesser Crested Terns were showing off by doing some aerobatics and passing fish from one to the other.



Above: I mentioned earlier that it was so hot the soles of my shoes came off, well here they are.



Above: Eventually the sponge layer came off as well and I was down to the cotton base.

Bye

Adrian Drummond-Hill, July 2007

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