

Strong Health in Bahrain's Pearl Ecosystem

Study Shows Stable, Regenerating Pearl Oyster Populations

EXCLUSIVE

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Neethu V

Bahrain's natural pearl oyster beds remain healthy, with no evidence of widespread depletion following the revival of pearl diving, according to findings released under the Hayrat Project Initiative led by the Bahrain Institute for Pearls and Gemstones (DANAT).

The project, conducted between 2020 and 2023, assessed the condition of Bahrain's pearl oyster beds to determine whether the reintroduction of pearl diving licences had resulted in overharvesting or declining oyster populations.

Led by DANAT in collaboration with the Supreme Council for Environment and fisheries authorities, the project brought together more than 30 Bahraini experts and compared its findings with a national baseline survey conducted in 2012.

Researchers revisited the same 60 survey stations examined in the earlier study while adding four new nearshore monitoring sites. Using the same scientific methods enabled a direct com-



parison of changes over the past decade.

Findings

The study found that most pearl oyster beds maintained stable abundance and density, while several locations recorded increases in oyster populations. Only three of the 35 stations surveyed in Hirat Ashteh showed notable declines.

Researchers also observed a shift towards smaller oyster size classes, indicating strong natural recruitment and healthy regeneration, while larger breeding oysters remained present to sustain future populations.

The likelihood of finding natural pearls increased from 3.9 per cent in 2012 to 4.5 per cent, with

BETTER YOU KNOW

Bahrain is one of the few countries alongside Australia where pearl diving is still permitted under strict scientific monitoring and government regulation.

natural pearl yield improving by around 15 per cent. Water and sediment quality also remained largely unchanged, confirming that Bahrain's marine envi-



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The study enables direct comparison of a decade of ecological change using consistent scientific methods.
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NOORA JAMSHEER, CEO, BAHRAIN INSTITUTE FOR PEARLS AND GEMSTONES

ronment continues to support healthy oyster habitats. The project also produced

Bahrain's first comprehensive documentation and mapping of multiple pearl oyster species, along with associated marine fauna and flora across the surveyed sites, providing valuable new scientific data for conservation planning.

Based on the findings, researchers recommended continued long-term monitoring of pearl oyster beds, greater awareness among licensed pearl divers, protection of breeding-size oysters, and ongoing monitoring of biodiversity, water quality and habitat health.

Speaking to The Daily Tribune at the launch of its 2025 Sustainability Report, DANAT CEO Noora Jamsheer said the institute will continue long-term monitoring

DANAT Cuts Carbon Emissions by 21.7%

- 21.7% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions achieved between 2022 and 2025
- First full ESG disclosure includes Scope 1, 2 and selected Scope 3 emissions.
- Scope 2 (electricity use) remains the largest source of emissions.
- Sustainability focus areas: governance, social responsibility, marine conservation and risk management.
- More than 32 million pearls and gemstones have been tested since establishment.

of Bahrain's pearl oyster beds, describing the research as critical to ensuring the sustainability of the Kingdom's pearling sector.

The monitoring programme is carried out in collaboration with the Supreme Council for Environment and the Directorate of Fisheries through licensing, scientific research and continuous ecosystem assessments to ensure pearl oyster stocks remain healthy and protected from depletion.

DANAT has already launched its third monitoring cycle, reaffirming its commitment to evidence-based conservation and the long-term sustainability of Bahrain's natural pearl industry.

Faster Licensing Process for Recruitment Agencies

Service enhancement supports Bahrain's digital transformation

● **Enhanced system cuts processing time**

● **New two-stage licensing process**

● **Improved licensing platform simplifies procedures**

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The Labour Market Regulatory Authority (LMRA) has introduced an upgraded digital licensing service for recruitment agencies, marking another step in Bahrain's ongoing efforts to improve public services and accelerate digital transformation.

The enhanced service now follows a two-stage licensing process, beginning with initial approval before the issuance of the final licence. Licensed agencies will be authorised to provide employment mediation services, including match-



Bahrain Public Service Development

- 1,300+ government services documented, translated, and published
- 800+ services developed and re-engineered

ing job seekers with employers, facilitating employment contracts, recruiting domestic workers, and supplying foreign workers to companies and establishments for designated positions.

According to the LMRA, the upgraded system significantly reduces processing times,

requires fewer supporting documents, and standardises service information across all government channels. The improvements have also reduced the number of approvals needed to obtain a licence by 25%, making the process more efficient, transparent, and user-friendly for applicants.

LMRA Deputy Chief Executive for Services and Business Affairs, Ahmed Ibrahim Al Arabi, said the initiative reflects the Authority's commitment to adopting innovative digital solutions that enhance service quality, simplify procedures, and improve the customer experience. He noted that the enhancement supports the government's digital transformation agenda while strengthening the competitiveness of Bahrain's labour market.

Al Arabi added that the upgraded licensing service is designed to reduce the time and administrative burden on businesses while improving the overall effectiveness of the Kingdom's labour market regulatory framework.

Bahrain and UAE Unite in Cultural Celebration

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The Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities (BACA) and the Zayed National Museum will jointly host a cultural evening at the Bahrain National Museum on Saturday, July 4, at 7:00 PM, open to the public.

The event features a presentation titled "Zayed National Museum: Celebrating the Enduring Connections Between Magan and Dilmun", exploring deep-rooted trade, social, and economic links between the ancient civilisations of Dilmun — centred in present-day Bahrain — and Magan, associated

with the modern UAE.

A screening of the documentary "A Bronze Age Boat Sails Again" will follow, spotlighting traditional boat-building techniques that defined the Gulf's early maritime heritage.

First Collaboration

The event marks the first partnership between the two national museums since the Zayed National Museum opened last year. Cultural specialists attending include Noura Al Mubarak, Head of Corporate and International Affairs; Aisha Al Mansoori, As-



sistant Curator; and Dr. Emma Thompson, Head of Acquisitions and Commissions.

The collaboration underscores both nations' shared commitment to preserving heritage and strengthening bilateral cultural bonds.

Strengthening Media



Minister of Information, Dr. Ramzan bin Abdullah Al Nuaimi, received Mr. Mohamed Saleh Abdullah Bukhris, Chargé d'Affaires of the Embassy of Libya to the Kingdom of Bahrain, at the ministry headquarters in Manama. During the meeting, the Minister welcomed the Libyan diplomat and highlighted the deep fraternal relations between Bahrain and Libya. He noted that both countries continue to develop cooperation across various fields, reflecting their shared commitment to strengthening ties and advancing mutual interests. The discussions also reviewed a number of topics of common concern.

Security Cooperation Takes Center Stage in Bahrain-US Talks



General Shaikh Rashid bin Abdulla Al Khalifa, the Interior Minister, received Stephanie Hallett, US Ambassador to the Kingdom of Bahrain, in the presence of Lieutenant-General Tariq bin Hassan Al Hassan, Chief of Police. The Minister highlighted the two countries' shared commitment to further strengthening cooperation, coordination, and joint action at all levels, particularly in security cooperation, while expanding opportunities to exchange expertise. He commended the longstanding historical relations and strategic partnership between the Kingdom of Bahrain and the United States, noting their continued growth across various fields.

Garage Worker Jailed 10 Years



From The Court

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Rehab Mohammad

The First High Criminal Court of Appeal upheld prison sentences in a drug trafficking case involving a garage worker and three other defendants after investigations revealed the workshop was used to distribute narcotics in Bahrain.

The court confirmed a 10-year

prison sentence for the garage worker, along with a BD 5,000 fine and permanent deportation after serving his term. The second to fourth defendants each received a one-year prison sentence and a BD 1,000 fine for possession and drug-related offences; all seized narcotics and paraphernalia were confiscated.

Case details showed the workshop owner alerted authorities after noticing repeated suspicious visits to the garage. Police later discovered 195.3 grams of cannabis during a search, and investigations uncovered an organised network importing, storing, and distributing drugs across Bahrain.

Three Expats Jailed in Online Frauds

The Court of Appeal upheld a five-year prison sentence for three Asian nationals convicted in an online fraud scheme that targeted victims through fake traffic violation messages, causing losses exceeding BD 1,800.

The court also imposed BD

3,000 fines on each defendant, additional fines on the second and third accused, confiscation of electronic devices, and permanent deportation after serving their sentences.

Investigations revealed that the defendants used SIM cards to send fraudulent messages di-

recting victims to fake payment links, leading to unauthorised withdrawals from bank accounts. Authorities confirmed the involvement of an organised cyber fraud network after the stolen funds were used to purchase mobile phones in Bahrain.