

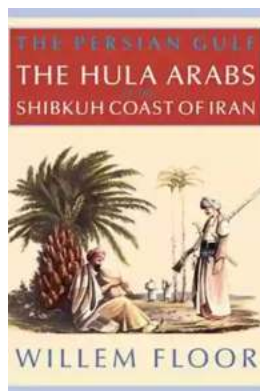
# The Hula Arabs Of The Shibkuh Coast Of Iran: Unveiling the Secrets of a Unique Persian Gulf Community

When people think of Iran, the first things that often come to mind are historical sites like Persepolis or the beautiful city of Isfahan. However, few are aware of the fascinating cultural diversity that exists within the country, including the unique community of Hula Arabs on the Shibkuh Coast of the Persian Gulf.

The Hula Arabs, also known as "Al-Hawl" or "Red-Heads," are an ethnic group that has inhabited the Gulf region for generations. Their distinctive culture, language, and way of life offer a glimpse into the rich tapestry of Iran's coastal communities.

## Origins and Language

The Hula Arabs trace their origins back to the Arabian Peninsula, specifically the United Arab Emirates, from where their ancestors migrated to the Iranian coastline several centuries ago. They speak a peculiar dialect known as "Hulawi," which combines elements of Arabic, Farsi, and ancient Bedouin languages. The Hulawi language plays a vital role in preserving their unique identity and is a testament to their enduring connections with their Arabian heritage.



## The Persian Gulf: The Hula Arabs of The Shibkuh Coast of Iran (Mage Persian Gulf Series Book 6)

by Willem Floor (First Print Replica eBook Edition, Kindle Edition)

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

Language : English

File size : 27203 KB

Screen Reader : Supported

Print length : 288 pages



## **Traditional Occupation and Lifestyle**

The Hula Arabs are primarily fishermen and pearl divers, engaging in traditional maritime practices that have been passed down through the generations. These skills require immense knowledge of the sea, its currents, and the behavior of marine life. Their expertise enables them to navigate the treacherous waters of the Persian Gulf, in search of sustenance and a livelihood. It is truly remarkable to witness their fishing techniques that have remained largely unchanged for centuries, demonstrating their deep-rooted connection to the sea.

Aside from fishing, the Hula Arabs also engage in date farming and camel breeding in the nearby Shibkuh desert. These activities provide them with additional means to support their families and sustain their communities.

## **Cultural Practices and Festivities**

One of the most intriguing aspects of Hula Arab culture is their unique set of cultural practices and festivities. The community follows a strict code of conduct that revolves around tribal unity, respect for elders, and close-knit family values. They are known for their hospitality and warmth towards visitors, always eager to share their customs and traditions with outsiders.

Every year, the Hula Arabs celebrate traditional festivals, showcasing their vibrant music, dance, and art forms. These festivities provide a window into their rich cultural heritage, with the rhythmic beats of their drums and the twirling of their dancers transporting spectators to another world. Their traditional clothing, adorned with intricate patterns and vibrant colors, adds to the breathtaking spectacle of their celebrations.

## **An Endangered Culture**

Despite their profound cultural significance, the Hula Arab community faces numerous challenges that threaten their way of life. The impact of modernization, urbanization, and climate change has had a profound effect on their ability to sustain their traditional occupations. Overfishing, pollution, and a diminishing supply of pearls have led to economic hardships for these proud people, pushing many of them to abandon their ancestral practices.

It is crucial for us to recognize the importance of preserving this extraordinary community and their age-old customs. By supporting sustainable fishing practices and encouraging eco-tourism, we can help empower the Hula Arabs to protect their environment and safeguard their heritage for future generations.

## **A Gateway to Cultural Understanding**

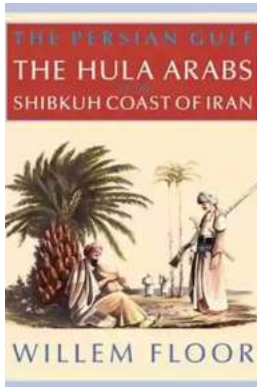
The Hula Arabs of the Shibkuh Coast are more than just a hidden gem within Iran's coastal communities - they are a testament to the diversity and resilience of humanity. Exploring their culture, traditions, and the challenges they face can serve as a gateway to deeper cultural understanding. By shining a spotlight on their unique way of life, we can bridge gaps, break stereotypes, and foster appreciation for the intricate tapestry of cultures that exist within Iran.

So, the next time you embark on a journey through Iran, don't hesitate to seek out the Hula Arabs of the Shibkuh Coast. Engage with them, learn from them, and allow their captivating stories to transport you to a world where tradition meets the ever-changing tides of the Persian Gulf.

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Little is known about the Arab migrants who settled on the Iranian coast between Bushehr and Lengeh in the late 1500s. They were a disparate group of small tribes of sailors, traders, fishermen, pearl divers, and cultivators. Although they were all referred to as the Bani Hula, they were not a uniform group. In fact, they were each other's fiercest competitors for access to the pearl banks. This frequently led to bloody and murderous encounters and feuds. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the Arabs of Nakhilu had a fearsome reputation as pirates--which the Portuguese soon discovered to be warranted.

The Bani Hula received much attention during the eighteenth century when they tried to fill the power vacuum in the Persian Gulf caused by the fall of the Safavid dynasty and the civil war in Oman. However, although they were a maritime force to be reckoned with, they had no common cause and dissipated their strength by fighting among themselves. Furthermore, they had no staying power as their political and economic base was too narrow. Throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and down to the early twentieth century, one of the most active groups of Hulas were those of Kangan and Taheri. Their history, told here in some detail, is emblematic for the other Hula groups. Apart from showing the violence against each other, their story also highlights how their local lineages dominated political and socio-economic life for centuries in their area, often

spanning more than one or two dynasties. It was these local families that guaranteed stability, continuity, and permanence even when, at the national and international level, there was turmoil, upheaval and profound change.



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