

Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands

1. **Date this sheet was completed/updated:**
2. **Country:** Benin
3. **Name of wetland:** Lower Valley of the Ouémé, Porto Novo lagoon and Lac Nokoué
4. **Geographical coordinates:**
 - 6° 22' – 6° 57' North latitude
 - 2° 20' – 2° 45' East longitude
5. **Altitude:** -
6. **Area:** 91,600 hectares
7. **Overview:** -
8. **Wetland type:** -
9. **Ramsar criteria:** -
10. **Map of site included? Please tick yes -or- no**
11. **Name and address of the compiler of this form:** -
12. **Justification of the criteria selected under point 9, on previous page:** -
13. **General location:** -
14. **Physical features:** -
15. **Hydrological values:** -
16. **Ecological features:** -

There are flooded forests of *Mitragyna inermis* and *Raphia hookeri*; seasonally flooded forests of *Berlinia grandiflora* and *Dalium guineense*; seasonally flooded grasslands of *Paspalum vaginatum* and *Typha australis*; floating vegetation dominated by *Eichornia crassipes* and *Pistia stratiotes* and a mangrove area of *Rhizophora racemosa*.
17. **Noteworthy flora:** -

18. Noteworthy fauna:

There are 78 species of fish recorded, including seven species of tilapia of which the most important are *Sarotherodon melanotheron* and *Tilapia guineensis*. Among the mammals are *sitatunga*, *guib arnaché*, mongoose, *potamochère*, speckle-throated otter, African python, ball python, red-bellied guenon, land tortoises and marine turtles. Approximately 168 species of birds were identified in Benin in 1996, of which 72 per cent were found in the lower delta and the Ouémé Valley, especially herons, waders, birds of prey, ducks (*Dendrocygna*) and sterns.

19. Social and cultural values: -

20. Land tenure/ownership of: -

21. Current land use:

Approximately 21,000 tons of fish, crabs and shrimp are produced from this ecosystem per year, employing about 24,000 fishermen and 13,000 seasonal workers. This activity supports more than 200,000 persons up and down stream, including market-garden farmers and pirogue builders. Agricultural production is dominated by the growing of manioc, maize, sugar cane, sweet potato and market garden products. Other crops are grown during the flood or dry seasons. There are also oil palm and coconut plantations. Gathering activities are female tasks; primarily the gathering of reeds and *typha* for the weaving of mats and *thalia* leaves, which are used for wrapping *akassa* (a local food paste). *Raphia hookeri* is used for roofs, structures, ceilings, fencing, poles and the making of palm wine.

22. Factors (past, present or potential) adversely affecting the site's ecological character, including changes in land use and development projects: -

23. Conservation measures taken: -

24. Conservation measures proposed but not yet implemented: -

25. Current scientific research and facilities: -

26. Current conservation education: -

27. Current recreation and tourism: -

28. Jurisdiction: -

29. Management authority: -

30. Bibliographical references: -