

INFORMATION SHEET ON RAMSAR WETLANDS

1.- Country:

Spain

2.- Date:

14 May 1992

3.- Ref.:

7ES017

4.- Name and address of compiler:

Servicio de Espacios Naturales. Dirección General de Conservación del Medio Natural. Conselleria de Medio Ambiente. Generalitat Valenciana. c/ Bailía 1. 46003 Valencia.

5.- Name of wetland:

Paraje Natural del Prat de Cabanes - Torreblanca.

6.- Date of Ramsar Designation:

8 May 1992

7.- Geographical coordinates:

40° 14' N; 00° 12' E.

8.- General location:

Plana Alta sector. Castellón Province. Close villages: Oropesa and Torreblanca.

9.- Area:

812 Has.

10.- Wetland type:

E, J, U.

11.- Altitude:

Average: 1'5 m above sea level. Min.: 0 m. a.s.l..Max.: 3'5 m a.s.l.

12.- Overview:

This marsh is the most extensive in Castellón Province. It owes its great ecological and educative importance to hold well developed plant communities. The hydrophylic and halophylic vegetation are in very good conditions.

13.- Physical features:

The marsh is constituted by muds and abundant organic matter, filling the older coastal lagoon through a natural siltation process. It contains high amounts of peat. The littoral line corresponds to the sand bank emerging above the sea being constituted by flat stones and calcareous gravels.

Climate is typically mediterranean and microclimatic variations are important due to marine breezes and high humidity on the air. Average annual temperature is 16'4° C and average annual rainfall is about 400 mm.

Soil characteristics are closely linked to the litology and geomorphology of the area. Peat contents, watertable level and salt contents, are the factors controlling the soil type. Hydrosols are the most representatives, being also present Solochanks and Gleysols. The aquifer is detritic-quaternary type.

14.- Ecological features:

Three main kinds of vegetation are present in this area: aquatic vegetation (errantophytic, rooted hydrophytes and cane-like vegetation), halophylic vegetation and dune vegetation.

15.- Land tenure/ownership of:

a) site:

Municipalities State property Municipal property Private prop.

CABANES	9'4 %	81'5 %	9 %
TORREBLANCA	5'2 %	44'8 %	50 %

b) surrounding area

16.- Conservation measures taken:

The Generalitat Valenciana protected this marsh under the Natural Place (Paraje Natural del Prat de Cabanes y Torreblanca) conservation figure by Decree dated 12 December 1988.

17. Conservation measures proposed but not yet implemented:

At the moment the Management Plan is in the phase of final approval. In this plan the final arrangements are determined in relation to accessibility of this natural area.

18.- Current land use: principal human activities in:

a) site: The activities occurring here are: farming in bordering areas and industrial exploitation of peat, that is made under certain restrictions.

19.- Disturbances/threats including changes in land use and major development projects:

a) at the site: Touristic and recreative activities occurring in littoral areas are a major problem, since they mean severe alterations in dune ecosystems. Peat exploitation gives rise also to serious problems, as well as other primary productive activities (extensive grazing and agriculture)

b) in the surrounding/catchment:

20.- Hydrological and physical values:

El Prat's aquifer is detritic-quaternary type. It is fed by run-off with both fluvial and irrigation excedent origin. Pumping for urban and agricultural purposes is its main output. In addition, there are also local discharges or "ullals" located in the western areas.

Inputs and outputs are in unbalance, what means falls in the watertable. As a consequence of that, marine waters intrude beyond the interfase, being increased progressively the aquifer's salinity.

21.- Social and cultural values:

The sub-horizontal litoral plain as a highlighting element being isolated from the sea by stone and gravel bank, provides a great interest to the landscape .

This area has a great ecological and educative interest for Conservation Education.

22.- Noteworthy fauna

The site owes its faunistic importance to endemic species with coastal mediterranean scope, like *Palaemonetes zariquieyi*, *Aphanius iberus* and *Valencia hispanica*, this one with a restricted area. Some nesting bird species not well represented in this Region are present here: *Glareola pratincola* with the most important breeding colony of the Valencia Community, *Circus pygargus*, *Sterna albifrons*, *Acrocephalus melanopogon* and *Emberiza schoeniclus*.

23.- Noteworthy flora:

Some species with a high ecological value may be underlined: *Juniperus oxicedrus macrocarpa*, very locally spread in Valencia coast, *Iris xiphium*, *Limonium angustibracteatum*, endemic from Valencia, *Limonium girardianum*, endemic from west Mediterranean coast, *Limonium densissimum*, with the most northern populations of the species and *Limonium doufourii* endemic from Valencia and endangered of extinction.

24.- Current scientific research and facilities:

Two main lines are being developed: on one hand management and conservation activities for nesting species and on the other hand a project for decreasing the impacts generated by peat exploitation.

25.- Current conservation education:

The site has a Reception and Interpretation Center directed in a special way to children, and also to the other visitors in general.

26.- Current recreation and tourism:

The beach of this wetland is one of the cleanest in these coasts, and hence the massive flows of people in summer months. Some attempts to stablish the uses and the regulation of this piece of coast are being made.

27.- Management authority:

Servicio de Espacios Naturales. Dirección General de Conservación del Medio Natural. Conselleria de Medio Ambiente. Generalitat Valenciana.

28.- Jurisdiction:

Conselleria de Medio Ambiente. Generalitat Valenciana.

29.- Bibliographical references:

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URIOS, V., E. ERRANDO, J. PLOU and J. VERDEJO (1987). Las rapaces diurnas de la provincia de Castellón. I Jornadas Internacionales sobre Aves Rapaces. Madrid.

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30.- Reasons for inclusion:

1 a, 2 b, 3 b.

31.- Map of the site:

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