

INFORMATION SHEET ON RAMSAR WETLANDS

(as approved by Rec.C.4.7 of the Conference of the Contracting Parties, Montreux, Switzerland - July 1990)

1. Country: Islamic Republic of Mauritania

2. Date: Aug 1994

3. Ref: 1MR002

4. Name & address of compiler:

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5. Name of wetland: **Parc National du Diawling**

6. Date of Ramsar Designation: 23 August 1994

7.Coordinates: 16°13 - 16°30'N 16°20 - 16°26'W

8. General location: on the right bank of the River Senegal 50km west of Rosso, to the south of Keur Macene, to the north of St. Louis (Senegal).

9. Area: 15,600ha

10. Wetland type: F I J K L

11. Altitude: 0 to 1 m.a.s.l

12. Overview: Floodplain on very saline clay and silt (sebkhas) with low sand relief in the lower delta of the River Senegal. Three coastal lagoons: the Bassin du Diawling (7200ha), the Bassin du Bell (4500ha) and the Bassin du Gambar (3900ha). The Gambar presently makes part of the Diama reservoir (freshwater lake). The fresh water which passes through the park creates an estuary in the basin of the Ntiallakht (peripheral zone).

13. Physical features: Floodplain on very saline deltaic silt and clay sediments (sebkhas) broken by shallow swamp-pools and dotted with low sand relief. The plain used to be flooded during the swelling of the river (end of July-end September). Afterwards, there was progressive drainage of a series of depressions which retained the water for a longer time. In these temporary pools the water became yet more saline. The drainage swamp-pools were in contact with the estuary: the Ntiallakht basin (high tide of about 0.5m). In the dry season the river bed and the swamp-pools experience the upstream encroachment of the saline landstrip. Following the installation of the Diama barrage and accompanying infrastructure (dike on right bank), two thirds of the park (Bassin du Diawling and Bassin du Bell) have been cut from their supply of fresh water from the River Senegal and can not be fed by sluice gates. One third (Bassin du Gambar) makes part of the Diama reservoir and is flooded to 1.5 m

above the National Geographical Institute reference level. Sahel type climate with an oceanic influence (mists). The rainfall is generally less than 200mm a year. Mean temperatures of 24.1°C (annual) and 28.5°C (dry season).

14. Ecological features: because of the drainage and the barrage, the ecological characteristics have been profoundly modified. Theoretically it should have: large temporary pools (sebkhas) lacking vegetation; low relief dunes with a little vegetation (*Tamarix senegalensis*); swamp-pools with *Nymphaea lotus* et *Sporobolus robustus*. In the less saline zones: a vegetation of ephemerophytes after wintertime and a climax of *Acacia nilotica*. Presently in the Diama reservoir: large expanses of *Typha*.

15. Land tenure/ownership of:

(a) site: State owned under the direct administration of the park. Decree of creation no. 91-005 of 14 January 1991.

(b) surrounding area: State owned without protection status. Anyone who undertakes management [*i.e. settles, cul*

(c) *tivates, exploits etc*] can become owner after 5 years.

16. Conservation measures taken: apart from the designation of the site and the general written laws which apply to all the district (forestry law, hunting law), no conservation measures are in force.

17. Conservation measures proposed but not yet implemented: a management plan is being prepared with IUCN support.

1. the Bassin du Diawling will be a "zone of complete protection"

2. the Bassin de Bell will be accessible to controlled traditional exploitation (gathering/harvesting, fishing, grazing)

3. the Bassin de Gambar will be a "zone of complete protection"

18. Current land use: principal human activities:

(a) site: inhabited area, traditionally with fishing, harvesting (*Sporobolus robustus* for handicraft work and *Nymphaea lotus* for consumption) and grazing. After flooding has ceased, few activities. A bit of fishing and harvesting of *Typha* in the Gambar.

(b) surroundings: traditionally a fishing, gathering/harvesting and grazing area.

19. Disturbances/ threats, including changes in land use and main development projects:

(a) site: the water-admitting dams are not large enough, the implication of which is that the time needed to refill the lagoons becomes longer with the risk of spreading of *Typha*. Strong population pressure for putting the most water possible for the longest time possible (risk of the spreading *Typha*, water-borne diseases). Project for international tarmacked road which will cross the park. Strong pressure from the search for new grazing land by herders seasonally moving livestock. Insufficient control over the land (over exploitation of resources, poaching).

(b) surroundings/ catchment: absence of legal status of the peripheral zone; development of rice paddies on the border of the park with the risk of discharge of polluted waters near the park; the risk of uncontrolled tourism development; barrage project on the Ntiallakht with destruction of the estuarine zone (certain mangrove trees known as "paletuviers", feeding

grounds of fish and shrimps/prawns), development of gardens on the edges of the dune and a tarmacked road project on the bark border with problems of access to water for fauna.

20. Hydrological and physical values: the water-admitting dams of the park are the only means of imitating the floods and restoring the ecological functions of the old floodplain and part of the old estuary. The dykes of the park allow the attainment of water levels which can contribute to recharging the phreatic cover of dune formations on the periphery of park. The water which passes through the park also contributes to succession into an estuary of the Chott boul, old mouth of the river to the north of the park. Two dams are currently being built. Three dykes and three dams still need to be created (financed by the "Pays-Bas acquis").

[additional information from earlier handwritten Information Sheet: The hydrology has as its source the river Senegal and takes its form from several water courses which are occasionally regulated by the dams/dykes. The floods are sometimes important and will become reservoirs for the future North and Zire dykes.

21. Social and cultural values: the restoration of ecological functions of the estuary and floodplain will allow a reprise of traditional activities (fishing, harvesting, handicrafts, grazing, forestry) of the population of the peripheral area. In the decree of creation it is stipulated that the park has as its object:

- the conservation and sustainable use of the natural resources of an example of the lower-delta ecosystem;
 - the harmonious and lasting development of the diverse activities of the local populations;
 - the coordination of grazing and fishing activities conducted on its territory;
- and by this decree, there are no other rights of use.

22. Noteworthy fauna: no recent quantitative data

birds: *Phoenicopterus ruber*, *Phoenicopterus minor*, *Pelecanus onocrotalus*, cormorants, storks, spoonbills, egrets, herons, African and European ducks, waders, *Ardeotis arabs*, *Balearica pavonina*

mammals: "phacochères", jackals, patas monkeys. The last gazelles have disappeared recently.

[additional information from earlier handwritten Information Sheet: Aquatic fauna: "lamantins" and crocodiles on the way to extinction; crustaceans (Pink Prawn, Blue Crab) fish (African "Alise", mullet, Speckled/Mottled Bass...)].

23. Noteworthy flora:

(a) in the park: few data, *Sporobolus robustus*, *Nymphaea lotus*

(b) peripheral area: mangrove *Avicennia africana* in peripheral area [confluence of Bell and Khurumbam according to earlier handwritten Information Sheet] very threatened: loss of brackish water. Forests of different species of *Acacia* [e.g. *nilotica* known as "gonakier" mentioned in earlier handwritten approved form] and other sahelian trees and shrubs on the dunes on the edge of the park very threatened by desertification.

24. Scientific research and facilities: park headquarters in construction, little or no scientific facilities, some research projects (hydrology, botany, ichthyology, ornithology) are in preparation in the framework of the management plan.

25. Education and information: apart from the viewpoint on the bank/shore of the Bassin du Diawling, no infrastructure, brochures, nor activities in this area. The park is in the course of developing some programmes.

26. Recreation and tourism: The part is not yet officially open to tourism hence currently little or no activity in the area. There is the possibility of developing an ecotourism rustic village.

27. Management authority: Directorate of Parc National du Diawling (public establishment with administrative nature), BP 3935, Nouakchott, République Islamique de Mauritanie, Tel./Fax 00 222 256922

28. Jurisdiction:

territorial: Wilaya du Trarza, Moughataa de Keur Macène, Arrondissement de N'Diogo

functional: Ministère du Développement Rural et de l'Environnement, BP 366, Nouakchott, République Islamique de Mauritanie. Tel 00 222 251500 / 00 222 257475

29. Bibliographical references:

Triplet, P and Triplet, P., 1993. Contribution à la connaissance des zones humides de la partie Mauritanienne du delta du fleuve Sénégal. Bulletin d'information et de liaison du Groupe de Travail Oiseaux Migrateurs du Pléarctique occidental. No 11, p 19-22

30. Reasons for inclusion:

1b, 1c, 2a, 3b.

31. Map of site: 1:50,000 blue print in file