## Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands

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

NOTE: Please read the accompanying guidelines before attempting to complete this form. An example of a completed data sheet is also included.

Completed sheets should be returned to: T.A. Jones, Ramsar Database, IWRB, Slimbridge, Gloucester GL27BX, England

1. Country: MALTA

2. Date: 30.4.91

3. Ref: office use on

office use only 7MT 00 1

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Office of the Parliamentary Secretary for the

Environment

Beltissebh - MALTA

5. Name of wetland:

GHADIRA WETLAND

6. Date of Ramsar designation:

SEPTEMBER 30, 1988

7. Geographical coordinates:

N 35° 58'

E 14º 21'

8. General location: (e.g. administrative region and nearest large town)

North Western Malta, between ic-Cumnija and Mellieha Bay

9. Area: (in hectares)

1.12 Km 2

10. Wetland type: (see attached classification, also approved by Montreux Rec.C.4.7)

H Q 5

11. Altitude: (average and/or maximum & minimum)

the entire area lies between -1m and

+ 5 m above sea level.

12. Overview: (general summary, in two or three sentences, of the wetland's principal characteristics) One of the remaining salini marshlands. A brackish water pool with fluctualing salinity. Typical Mediterranean salt marsh vegetation is present with communities incorporating the sand dimes and rare, endangered and endemic fauna and flora. The area is an attraction to avifauna especially water birds.

13. Physical features: (e.g. geology; geomorphology; origins - natural or artificial; hydrology; soil type; water quality; water depth; water permanence; fluctuations in water level; tidal variations; catchment area; downstream area; climate)

The Wetland is a seaward part of a graben characteristic which is a water catchment area. The surface water, largely derived from winter rains becomes steadily more saline during the hot summer months. Water depth varies from lm to 15m in the wetland and in a few deeper spots from between 60 cm to nearly 4 metres.

14. Ecological features: (main habitats and vegetation types)

The area has been used for cultivation and saltpans in the past, but the pool is now surrounded by halophile scrub, with species such as seablite: <a href="mailto:sueda marittima">sueda marittima</a>. Sandy patches support a rare species of grass. The wetter patches also supports stands of cane. Adjoining sand dine supports a rare broomrape.

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15.	Land	tenure /	owners	qın	or:

(a) site

State

(b) surrounding area

State but leased for farming

16. Conservation measures taken: (national category and legal status of protected areas - including any boundary changes which have been made; management practices; whether an officially approved management plan exists and whether it has been implemented)

The area is managed by the Office of the Parliamentary Secretary for the Environment. It boundaries since designation as Ramsar site have not been altered. Area protected from shooting under the Bird Protection Regulations Legal Notice 126/78

17. Conservation measures proposed but not yet implemented: (e.g. management plan in preparation; officially proposed as a protected area etc.)

NONE

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

(a) site

nature conservation including both scientific studies and education activities

(b) surroundings/catchment agricultural

19. Disturbances/threats, including changes in land use and major development projects: (factors which may have a negative impact on the ecological character of the wetland)

(a) at the site

NONE

(b) in the surroundings/catchment

adjacent beach heavily frequented by tourist, especially during summer

20. Hydrological and physical values: (groundwater recharge, flood control, sediment trapping, shoreline stabilisation etc.)

Surface water largely derived from winter rains, becomes steadily more saline during hot summer months.

21. Social and cultural values: (e.g. fisheries production, forestry, religious importance, archaeological site etc.)

Important for environmental education and study of marshland fauna and flora. The area is the latest and one of the few remaining saltmarshes in the island.

22. Noteworthy fauna: (e.g. unique, rare, endangered, abundant or biogeographically important species; include count data etc.)
The area supports a very diverse entomofauna, some species of which are known only from this area, eg. tettigonid grass hoppers and two species of possibly undescribed endemic wasps. The Brackdsh water fish Aphianus fasciatus, which is in danger in other parts of the island is found at this reserve in a healthy population. A new species of brackish water snail has also been identified and is still being studied. Noted for great number of migrant species.

23. Noteworthy flora: (e.g. unique, rare, endangered, or biogeographically important species/communities etc.)

The adjoining sand dune is one of two supporting the only European population of Sand Broomrape (Orobanche densiflora form melitensis) Tassel Weed (Ruppia drapensis) occurs only in this wetland area. This is both rare and threated not only locally, but also on a European Scale. Rare species of arrow grass (Triglochin bulbosum) is found in sandy patches.

24. Current scientific research and facilities: (e.g. details of current projects; existence of field station etc.)

Bird ringing and bird watching are carried out.

25. Current conservation education: (e.g. visitors centre, hides, information booklet, facilities for school visits etc.)

A visitor's centre and a hide are weekly used by school children and other visitors.

26. Current recreation and tourism: (state if wetland used for recreation/tourism; indicate type & frequency/intensity)

NONE

27. Management authority: (name and address of body responsible for managing the wetland)

Department of the Environment Office of the Parliamentary Secretary for the Environment Beltissebh, MALTA

28. Jurisdiction: (territorial e.g., state/region and functional e.g. Dept of Agriculture/Dept of Environment etc.)

Office of the Parliamentary Secretary for the Environment Beltissebh MALTA

Bibliographical references: (scientific/technical only)

Schembri P.J. et. al. (1987)
"Localities with Conservation values in the Maltese Islands" pp 1 - 18

30. Reasons for inclusion: (state which Ramsar criteria - as adopted by Rec.C.4.15 of the Montreux Conference - are applicable)

1 (D) 2 (C) 2(D) 3(B)

31. Map of site (please enclose the most detailed and up-to-date map available - preferably at least 1:25,000 or 1:50,000)

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