

Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands

1. Country: Portugal

3. Ref: 7PT004

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5. Name of wetlands: Paúl de Madriz (Madriz marsh)

7. Geographical coordinates: 40°08'N, 008°38'W

8. General location: Região Centro/Coimbra

9. Area: 226 ha

10. Wetland type: S; Y

11. Altitude: 61m (maximum); 8m (minimum)

12. Overview: Freshwater marsh permanently innondated in open alluvial plain on the southern edge of the lower Mondego valley. Extensive reed bed areas (*Phragmites*) in association with *Salix* and other marshland species.

13. Physical features: Sedimentary soils in alluvial basin; natural area with a permanent water table but innondation levels fluctuate widely during the year. Freshwater only with no tidal influences. There is a small freshwater spring within the wetland, ensuring water availability even in exceptionally dry years. Climate temperate with Atlantic influences.

14. Ecological features: Extensive reed beds (*Phragmites*) with *Salix* and other water-tolerant plant species. *Typha latifolia* and *Scirpus lacustris* along ditches and in areas of deeper water within the marsh.

15. Land tenure/ownership of: (a) site: Most of the area is private and belongs to a number of distinct owners.

(b) surrounding area: Privately-owned forest and farmland.

16. Conservation measures taken: The wetland is a Special Protection Area (SPA) under Article 4 of the EC Wild Birds Directive (79/409). Further protection under national law is due to come soon.

17. Conservation measures proposed: Management plan under way, with plans to get some control of agriculture and water management activities in adjoining areas.

18. Current land use: (a) site: No relevant economic activities are now carried out in the wetland.

(b) surroundings/catchment: Agriculture (rice cultivation), forestry, cattle raising, hunting.

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

(a) at the site: No immediate threats, except for chemical inputs and water ablation associated to agriculture developments nearby. Illegal hunting, eventually.

(b) in the surroundings/catchment: Further to 19a, waterfowl hunting may eventually become a problem in some areas around the wetland.

20. Hydrological and physical values: This wetland is very important to maintain the water tables in the area. It has also an important role to help prevent flood damage locally.

21. Social and cultural values: Important as an amenity site in periods of drought. Also an important waterfowl sanctuary in the lower Mondego area, essential for allowing some shooting pressure in adjacent zones.

22. Noteworthy fauna: The area holds important concentrations of breeding mallard *Anas platyrhynchos* and many other wintering waterfowl species. The breeding avifauna includes *Ixobrychus minutus*, *Cettia cetti*, *Acrocephalus arundinaceus* and *A. scirpaceus* but no population figures are yet available for any of these species. The otter *Lutra lutra* also occurs in the area.

23. Noteworthy flora:

24. Scientific research and facilities: There are no research facilities at the site, the closest being based at Coimbra (Mus. Zool. Univ. Coimbra).

25. Conservation education: There are plans to set up a small visitors centre at the periphery of the wetland using farm settlement now ruined. Current facilities are provided through the nearest headquarters of SNPRCN at Coimbra.

26. Recreation and tourism: Some recreational use at regional level but not really qualifying as "tourism".

27. Management authority: SNPRCN/Núcleo de Coimbra, R. Padre António Vieira, 1, 1^o, 3000 Coimbra, Portugal. Tel: +351 39 22 151, Fax: +351 39 25 352

28. Jurisdiction: State jurisdiction/Min. Environment

29. Bibliographical references: Grimmett & Jones 1989; Santos 1989; Rufino 1992; SNPRCN 1992.

30. Reasons for inclusion: The wetland area qualifies under 1a and 1d; also under 2b and 2c; the area is important also under 3b.

31. Map of Site: enclosed.