



## MAL015 - Qalet Marku

### Description

The saline marshland is designated as an Area of Ecological Importance (Level 1) and a Site of Scientific Importance (Level 2) (GN 288 of 1995) and is known as Qalet Marku (SSI). A part of the Qalet Marku coastline is of scientific importance as it is the only known locality for *Elymus pycnanthus* (Sea Couch) [RDB: E, Rest (MI)], an endangered grass, which has a restricted distribution in the Maltese Islands. The watercourse at Wied ta' Kieli at Qalet Marku displays an interesting plant community consisting mainly of *Phragmites australis* (Common Reed) and *Juncus acutus* (Sharp Rush) with stands of *Arundo donax* on the sides. The watercourse retains its perennial species composition during the dry season. *Carex divisa* (Separated Sedge) has also been recorded at this site. Small embayments form at the mouth of the watercourse at Qalet Marku. These embayments accumulate pockets of sand and drift leaf litter of marine vegetation, mainly *Posidonia oceanica* (Neptune Seagrass) forming *Posidonia* banquettes, which support an interesting community of terrestrial and marine invertebrates. The existing Coast Road was widened in 2015, although during this process the footprint of the Qalet Marku marshland was not directly affected, the Coast Road itself introduces a barrier between the site and the sea. In the past the marshland was connected directly to the sea. Today the only connection to the seaward side is via a channel that passes beneath the road. The site does not retain water permanently. Further inland, the area is surrounded by agricultural land and a paddock for horses.

### General information

#### Basic information

<b>Wetland location:</b>	Marine/Coastal
<b>Wetland type:</b>	Natural
<b>Natural / Artificial:</b>	Marsh / Swamp
<b>Area (Ha):</b>	0.80
<b>Hydrological interaction with other wetland:</b>	No -
<b>Water salinity:</b>	Brackish (5.0-18.0 g/l)
<b>Fresh water entry:</b>	Catchment area (precipitation)
<b>Surface water runoff:</b>	Outflow controlled by pipeline
<b>Open water area (%):</b>	< 5
<b>Hydroperiod:</b>	Temporary/Intermittent

#### Geographic information

<b>Census district:</b>	Northern
<b>Island:</b>	Malta
<b>Local council:</b>	In-Naxxar
<b>Coordinates (WGS84):</b>	14.450170 E - 35.942630 N

#### Wetland condition

<b>Wetland condition:</b>	4 - Original habitats/landform highly modified (<10% untouched)
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## Ramsar wetland types

Ramsar type	Coverage (%)
H -- Intertidal marshes; includes salt marshes, salt meadows, saltings, raised salt marshes; includes tidal brackish and freshwater marshes	

## Property status

Public

## Protection statuses & other designations

### Protection status

Protection status category	Protection status subcategory	Site name	Code	Coverage (%)	Legislation
National	Area of Ecological Importance/Site of Scientific Importance	Bur salmastru f' Qalet Marku (I/tan-Naxxar)	174751	99	Development Planning Act (Act VII of 2016)

### CDDA protection status

CDDA code	Category
MT02	Area of Ecological Importance/Site of Scientific Importance

## Ecosystem Services, Activities & Impacts

### Ecosystem Services

Type of Ecosystem service	Ecosystem service	Scale of Benefit	Importance
Cultural services	Recreation and tourism		
Supporting services	Nutrient cycling		

### Activities on wetland

Activities	Intensity
010 = Habitat conservation	High
710 = Noise nuisance	High
920 = Drying out	High

### Activities on drainage basin

Activities	Intensity
100 = Cultivation	High
110 = Use of pesticides	High
120 = Fertilisation	High
130 = Irrigation	High
230 = Hunting	High
403 = dispersed habitation	Medium
430 = Agricultural structures	Low
502 = roads motorways	High
622 = walking horseriding and non-motorised vehicles	Medium
701 = water pollution	High
702 = air pollution	High
710 = Noise nuisance	High

### Impacts

Impact type	Intensity
AN- = Increase in noise	

HC- = Loss of wildlife corridor(s)

HF- = Habitat fragmentation

HL- = Habitat loss

PF- = Fertilizer/Excess nutrient pollution

PM- = Heavy metal pollution

PP- = Pesticide pollution

VCD = Loss of floral diversity

VP- = Decrease in population of floral species

## Habitats & Vegetation

### Habitat types

Habitat types	Coverage (%)
1410 Mediterranean salt meadows ( <i>Juncetalia maritimi</i> )	< 5

### Vegetation types

Vegetation type	Coverage (%)
Emergent	26 - 50
Emergent	> 95
Wet meadow	

## Species

### Flora

Species	Dominance	Reference
<i>Arundo donax</i>		
<i>Elymus pycnanthus</i>		
<i>Juncus acutus</i>		
<i>Phragmites australis</i>		

### Fauna

Birds	Population	Nesting status	References
<i>Circus cyaneus</i> (Linnaeus, 1766)			
<i>Tadorna tadorna</i> (Linnaeus, 1758)			
<i>Burhinus oedicnemus</i> (Linnaeus, 1758)			
<i>Charadrius morinellus</i> (Linnaeus, 1758)			
<i>Calandrella brachydactyla</i> (Leisler, 1814)			
<i>Erithacus rubecula</i> (Linnaeus, 1758)			
<i>Lanius senator</i> (Linnaeus, 1758)			
<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i> (Linnaeus, 1758)			
<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i> (Vieillot, 1817)			
<i>Phylloscopus sibilatrix</i> (Bechstein, 1793)			
<i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i> (Linnaeus, 1758)			
<i>Saxicola torquatus</i> (Linnaeus, 1766)			
<i>Sylvia conspicillata</i> (Temminck, 1820)			
<i>Sylvia melanocephala</i> (J.F. Gmelin, 1789)			
<i>Asio flammeus</i> (Pontopiddan, 1763)			

## References

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### Representative Image & Map

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