# 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

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

### Geographic information

| | |
|---|---|
| **Census district:** | Northern |
| **Island:** | Malta |
| **Local council:** | In-Naxxar |
| **Coordinates (WGS84):** | 14.450170 E - 35.942630 N |

### Wetland condition

| | |
|---|---|
| **Wetland condition:** | 4 - Original habitats/landform highly modified (<10% untouched) |

### 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 (l/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 (Juncetalia maritimi) | < 5 |

## Vegetation types

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

# Species

## Flora

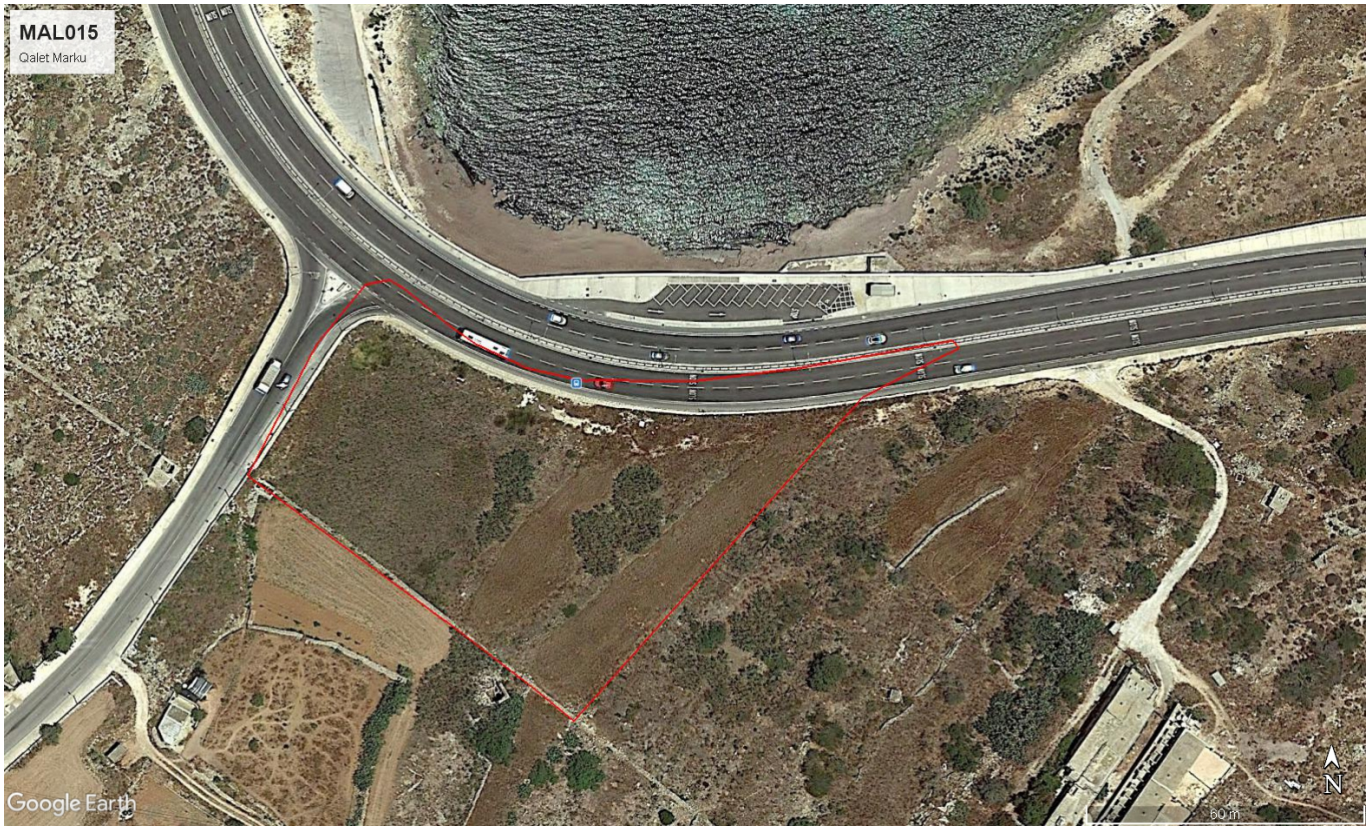
| Species | Dominance | Reference |
|---|---|---|
| Arundo donax | | |
| Elymus pycnanthus | | |
| Juncus acutus | | |
| Phragmites australis | | |

## Fauna

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

## References

## Representative Image & Map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