GOZ005 - Ir-Ramla

Description

This site lies within a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and is located north-east of the island of Gozo. The seaward area of the site borders Il-Grigal ta' Malta Marine Protected Area. The site includes a water body that receives water from the mouth of Wied ir-Ramla. Marshlands are supported during the wet season. On the coastal side, this site is one of the few sites in the Maltese Islands still supporting sand dunes. Southern riparian galleries and thickets dominated by Tamarisk trees and Chaste Trees (to a lesser extent) grow on the banks of the water body. The dune system at Ramla is almost intact, and the best example in the Maltese Islands of this habitat type. The sand dunes at Ramla host a variety of rare and endangered invertebrate species, some of which are only found within this SAC. Several activities exert pressure on the ecology of the site. Ramla Bay is an important recreation location for tourists and locals, which can lead to littering, disturbance and trampling. Limited parking space is present near the site and a field that is used for agriculture during winter is used as a parking lot during the summer months. Haphazard parking could lead to trampling, disturbance and habitat modification. Parts of the site are seriously threatened by fires from illegal barbecues and in the past these have led to the loss of populations of the rare Bushy Restharrow (Ononis natrix). Various kiosks and restaurants and mobile kiosks are found within the catchment area. Camping is also practiced on the car park where campers stay throughout the summer months as well as along the coastal stretch above the dunes just west of Ramla beach. The dune vegetation can be negatively affected by excessive trampling and overuse of the area, including from camping, caravans and off-roading, all of which are prohibited at this site. The more recent recreational pursuit known as bouldering may lead to soil erosion and. The importance of the site for recreation has resulted in several regular interventions and impacts that can affect the hydrologic regime of the area. Such interventions have included the removal of pebbles from the beach, the removal of Posidonia from the beach, pollution of Ramla Valley's water course from agriculture, and over-abstraction from the aquifer affecting groundwater quality.Alien species damage ecosystems and communities by out-competing the native species. The most damaging invasive species at Ramla include the Giant Reed, Kaffir Fig, Cape Sorrel and the grapevine. The cover of the Giant Reed and the grapevine is increasing in view of the abandonment of former agricultural land backing the dune area. Care is also needed when implementing afforestation schemes; Tamarisk trees were planted in the area in the past, some of which are not the naturally occurring species for the Maltese Islands. The introduction of atypical species affects soil nutrients and pH conditions, negatively affecting the process of sand stabilisation. On the other hand, at this site, the planting of the French Tamarisk allowed the dune to increase in extent and also allowed the development of fixed dunes.

General information

Basic information

Wetland location:	Marine/Coastal
Wetland type:	Natural
Natural / Artificial:	Marsh / Swamp
Area (Ha):	0.30
Hydrological interaction with other wetland:	Yes - GOZ025/GOZ020/GOZ019/GOZ010
Water salinity:	Brackish (5.0-18.0 g/l)
Fresh water entry:	Catchment area (precipitation)
Surface water runoff:	Other
Open water area (%):	5 - 25
Hydroperiod:	Permanent

Geographic information

Census district:	Gozo and Comino
Island:	Gozo
Local council:	Ix-Xaghra
Coordinates (WGS84):	14.283640 E - 36.060940 N

Wetland condition

Wetland condition:	2 - Original habitats/landform still predominant (>50%)

Ramsar wetland types

Ramsar type	Coverage (%)
J -- Coastal brackish/saline lagoons; brackish to saline lagoons with at least one relatively narrow connection to the sea	

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	Ramla l-Hamra, Ghawdex	14812	100	Development Planning Act (Act VII of 2016)
National	Protected Beaches	Ir-Ramla l-Hamra	346048	47	Environment Protection Act (Act I of 2016)
International	Special Areas of Conservation - International Importance	L-Inhawi tar-Ramla	330733	100	Environment Protection Act (Act I of 2016)
Other	Scheduling - Archaeology	Buffer Zone for the Remains of a Roman Villa		93	

CDDA protection status

CDDA code	Category
MT01	Area of Ecological Importance
MT12	Protected Beaches
MT11	Special Areas of Conservation - International Importance

Ecosystem Services, Activities & Impacts

Ecosystem Services

Type of Ecosystem service	Ecosystem service	Scale of Benefit	Importance
Regulatory services	Water purification		
Regulatory services	Water regulation		
Supporting services	Provision of habitat		

Activities on wetland

Activities	Intensity
010 = Habitat conservation	Low
030 = Species conservation	Medium
701 = water pollution	Low
790 = Other pollution/human impacts/activities	Low
952 = eutrophication	Low

954 = invasion by a species	Medium

Activities on drainage basin

Activities	Intensity
100 = Cultivation	Low
110 = Use of pesticides	Low
120 = Fertilisation	Low
130 = Irrigation	Low
502 = roads motorways	High
621 = nautical sports	High
701 = water pollution	Low
790 = Other pollution/human impacts/activities	Medium
954 = invasion by a species	Medium

Impacts

Impact type	Intensity
EB- = Increase in aesthetic qualities	
ED- = Increase in sediment removal/retention	
EP- = Reduction of salt intrusion potential	
ES- = Increase in water supply	
EU- = Increase of tourist/recreation potential	
PU- = Increase of turbidity	

Habitats & Vegetation

Habitat types

Habitat types	Coverage (%)
1210 Annual vegetation of drift lines	< 5
1240 Vegetated sea cliffs of the Mediterranean coasts with endemic Limonium spp.	< 5
2110 Embryonic shifting dunes	< 5
2210 Crucianellion maritimae fixed beach dunes	< 5
2220 Dunes with Euphorbia terracina	< 5
92D0 Southern riparian galleries and thickets (Nerio-Tamaricetea and Securinegion tinctoriae)	76 - 95

Vegetation types

Vegetation type	Coverage (%)
Ammophilous	76 - 95
Emergent	
Halophytic	5 - 25
Shrubby / Arborescent	5 - 25
Wet meadow	

Species

Flora

Species	Dominance	Reference
Arthrocnemum glaucum		
Arundo donax		
Elytrigia juncea		
Eryngium maritimum		
Euphorbia paralias		

Jacobaea crithmoides		
Juncus sp.		
Medicago marina		
Opuntia ficus-indica		
Pancratium maritimum		
Salsola kali		
Sporobulus pungens		
Tamarix africana		
Vitex agnus-castus		

Fauna

Mammals	Presence in wetland	References
Crocidura sicula calypso (Hutterer, 1991)		
Erinaceus algirus (Lereboullet, 1842)		
Pipistrellus pipistrellus (Schreber, 1774)		

Birds	Population	Nesting status	References
Apus apus (Linnaeus, 1758)			
Hirundo rustica (Linnaeus, 1758)			

Reptiles	Presence in wetland	References
Chalcides ocellatus tiligugu (Gmelin, 1789)		
Chamaeleo chamaeleon (Linnaeus, 1758)		
Coluber viridiflavus carbonarius (Bonaparte, 1833)		
Podarcis filfolensis maltensis (Mertens, 1921)		

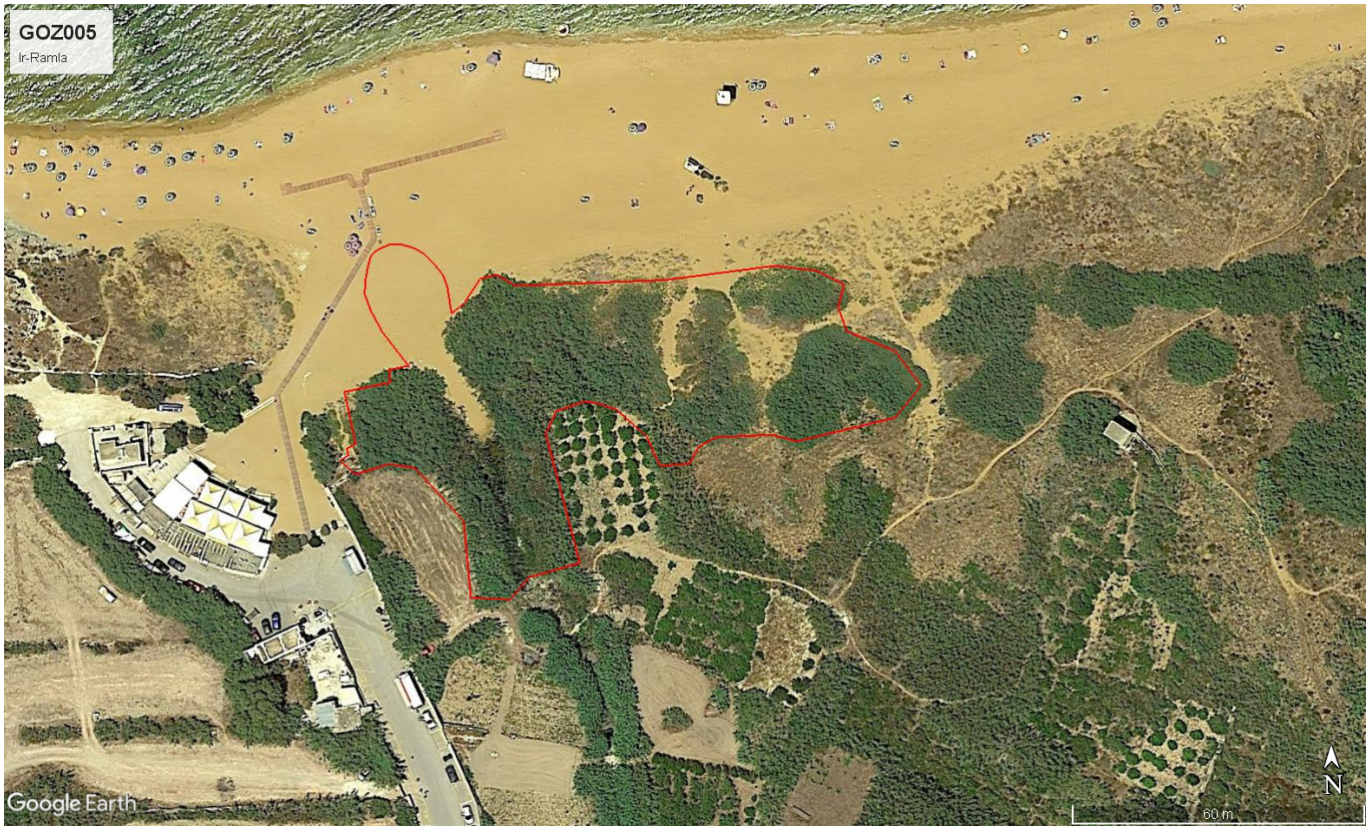
Invertebrates	Presence in wetland	References
Argiope lobata (Pallas, 1772)		
Nemesia macrocephala (Ausserer, 1871)		
Synema globosum (Fabricius, 1775)		
Anthicus fenestratus (W.L.E. Schmidt, 1842)		
Eurynebria spp.		
Harpalus spp.		
Masoreus spp.		
Ophonus spp.		
Othiorhynchus spp.		
Hypocaccus dimidatus (Illiger, 1807)		
Xenonychus spp.		
Pseudoseriscius cameroni (Reitter, 1902)		
Stenosis schembrii (Canzoneri, 1979)		
Xanthomus pallidus (Linnaeus, 1758)		
Odontellina sexoculata (Deharveng, 1981)		
Aphis spp.		
Graphosoma lineatum spp. Italicum (O.F. Müller, 1766)		
Apis mellifera (Linnaeus, 1758)		
Bembecinus tridens (Fabricius, 1781)		
Bembix oculata (Panzer, 1801)		
Cerceris quadricinta (Panzer,1799)		
Philanthus raptor siculus (Giordani Soika, 1944)		
Camponotus barbaricus (Emery, 1905)		
Crematogaster scutellaris (Olivier, 1792)		
Leptothorax spp.		
Messor capitatus (Latreille, 1798)		
Halictus fulvipes (Klug, 1817)		
Ammophila heydeni (Dahlbom, 1845)		
Prionyx lividocinctus (A. Costa, 1861)		
Sphex pruinosus (Germar, 1817)		
Polistes omissus (Linnaeus, 1758)		

Vanessa cardui (Linnaeus, 1758)		
Colias croceus (Geoffroy, 1785)		
Pieris brassicae (Linnaeus, 1758)		
Macronemurus appendiculatus (Latreille, 1807)		
Anax imperator (Leach, 1815)		
Sympetrum fonscolombii (Selys, 1840)		
Anacridium aegyptium (Linnaeus, 1764)		
Brachytrupes megacephalus (Lefèvre, 1827)		
Talitrus saltator (Montagu, 1808)		
Porcellionides pruinosus (Brandt, 1833)		
Tylos europaeus (Arcangeli, 1938)		
Tylos latreillei sardous (Arcangeli, 1938)		
Cochlicella conoidea (Draparnaud, 1801)		

References

Adi Epsilon Consortium (2014a) L-Inhawi tar-Ramla – Natura 2000 Management Plan (SAC). Prepared for the Malta Environment and Planning Authority under CT3101/2011. San Gwann, Malta, pp. 112 + Annex

Representative Image & Map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