

Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands

1. **Date this sheet was completed/updated:** -
2. **Country:** Benin
3. **Name of wetland:** Lower Valley of the Couffo, Chenel Aho, coastal lagoon and Lake Ahémé
4. **Geographical coordinates:**
6° 16' – 6° 45' North latitude
1° 40' – 2° 20' East longitude
5. **Altitude:** -
6. **Area:** 47,500 hectares
7. **Overview:** -
8. **Wetland type:** Continental
9. **Ramsar criteria:** 1c, 2a, 3a, 3b, 3c, 4b
10. **Map of site included? Please tick yes -or- no**
11. **Name and address of the compiler of this form:** -
12. **Justification of the criteria selected under point 9, on previous page:** -
13. **General location:** -
14. **Physical features:** -
15. **Hydrological values:** -
16. **Ecological features:** There are mangroves (*Avicennia* spp. and *Rhizophora racemosa*); swamps of *Andropogon gayanus*; flooded grasslands of *Paspalum vaginatum* with scattered *Phoenix reclinata* (false date palm) and man-made wetlands with coconut groves and *Acacia auriculiformis*.
17. **Noteworthy flora:** -
18. **Noteworthy fauna:** -

There are 71 recorded species of fish, primarily seven species of tilapia, of which the most important are *Sarotherodon melanotheron* and *Tilapia guineensis*. Among the non-bird fauna are the aulacode (*Tryonomis swinderianus*), the green monkey (*Chlorocebus aethiops*), the royal python (*Python regius*), the Nile monitor (*Varanus niloticus*) and the hippopotamus (*Hippopotamus amphibus*). Among the birds found in this wetland, 70 per cent nest in habitats along the coastal lagoon, Chenel Aho and in the lower valley of the Mono. This bird life is composed of species of indigenous birds and migrating species (Afrotropical and Palaearctic). Among the species recorded, the following have the largest populations: the herons, sterna, waders, birds of prey and ducks (*Dendrocygna*).

19. Social and cultural values: -

20. Land tenure/ownership of: -

21. Current land use:

The production of fish, crabs and shrimp from this ecosystem is about 5,000 tons per year and employs about 10,000 professional fishermen. Only women gather the crabs and oysters. In addition, salt is extracted and an alcohol is produced from the *Phoenix reclinata*. Agriculture is dominated by the growing of maize and market garden products. There are also coconut plantations, and firewood is gathered.

22. Factors (past, present or potential) adversely affecting the site's ecological character, including changes in land use and development projects: -

23. Conservation measures taken: -

24. Conservation measures proposed but not yet implemented: -

25. Current scientific research and facilities: -

26. Current conservation education: -

27. Current recreation and tourism: -

28. Jurisdiction: -

29. Management authority: -

30. Bibliographical references: -