

From ICONA document, Madrid, Sept. 1994

TRANSLATION FROM ORIGINAL SPANISH TEXT (1 Dec 1994, Dave Fawcett)

[Square brackets indicate translator's notes. The direct translations of Spanish common names may not always equal the common name used in English. I have left the translation in quotation marks (") where I felt that this may be the case. Spanish common names etc. that I could not translate have been left in italics.

~ Indicates text is present in the original but has not yet been translated.]

[Site ref: ES032]

RIA DEL EO

"Eo Estuary"

1. PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

1.1. GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION. BOUNDARIES.

~not yet translated

1.2. CLIMATOLOGY

~not yet translated

1.3. GEOLOGY AND GEOMORPHOLOGY

~not yet translated

1.4. FLORA. VEGETATION COMMUNITIES.

One of the principal points of interest of estuaries is the collection of vegetation communities which are exclusive to these coastal landscapes.

The most unique are the submarine eelgrass beds formed by the two species of *Zostera*. In this estuary there is a bed of *Zostera marina*, which in all probability is the most extensive in the Cantábrico. The beds of *Zostera noltii*, are situated in areas with period of uncovering-flooding by the increasing tides.

Other halophytic vegetation formations, such as the beds of *Sarcocornia perennis* or the *Puccinella maritima* meadows [*both=saltmarsh habitats*], are much more scarcely represented on the ría del Eo.

By contrast, the rush beds of *Juncus maritimus*, a species which is usually accompanied by others like *Glaux maritima*, *Carex extensa* & *Juncus gerardi*, or by reed beds of *Scirpus maritimus* or *Phragmites australis*, occupy more significantly sized areas, where the influence of the high tides - and as a result, the salinity - is less.

As regards the immediate surroundings of the estuary, it is found to be greatly altered from its original state. The primordial woodlands of oak *Quercus robur* and alder *Alnus glutinosa* are today practically reduced to relicts and the vegetation is dominated by plantations of eucalyptus *Eucalyptus globulus* and pine *Pinus pinaster*, mown grassland and horticultured crops (maize, potato,....).

1.5 FAUNA. VERTEBRATE COMMUNITIES

~not yet translated

2. LAND REGIME

2.1. LAND USE

The area around the edge of the estuary is occupied by plantations, and horticultural and fodder crops, as well as by three important centres of human settlement, which together hold 4,000 permanent inhabitants.

Within the estuary, the reed and rush beds are divided into plot and are periodically harvested for cattle bedding.

Seafood harvesting, above all of razor-shells and clams, is commercialized and an area of 60 ha is dedicated to oyster and clam culture.

Fishing in the inner part of the estuary is of a small scale type - almost just sport - with the exception of elver fishing, which is seasonal.

2.2. OWNERSHIP

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2.3. FORM OF PROTECTION

The estuary is declared a Hunting Refuge, both on the Galician side and the Asturian.

The planning regulation is very inconsistent, being subject to regulations of three municipalities and two Autonomous Communities [=regional authorities], although from the strictly legal point of view the land could be considered to be sufficiently protected.

2.4. PROBLEMS

Some in-fillings [perhaps with waste?] of little significance are affecting the Vegadeo "Specially Protected from Development Land" in Asturias, whilst some of the coastal localities of Galicia discharge untreated sewage water directly into the estuary (a problem which increases in summer owing to the population being swelled by tourism).

A potential problem could be the excessive proliferation of aquaculture [presumably of molluscs], both through the affect of its development on the saltmarsh meadows [presumably of *Puccinella*] and *Zostera* beds, and because the species used are non-native, and some, in other areas, have already become vectors of algal plagues.

3. CRITERIA FOR INTERNATIONAL IMPORTANCE

3.1. Waterbird criteria

Only the pintail *Anas acuta* meets the Ramsar numerical requirements for qualification of the wetland as Internationally Important.