

# Information Sheet on Ramsar Wetlands

Categories approved by Recommendation 4.7 of the Conference of the Contracting Parties.

NOTE: It is important that you read the accompanying *Explanatory Note and Guidelines* document before completing this form.

## 1. Date this sheet was completed/updated:

01. 03. 90; revised 16. 09. 94

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY.

DD	MM	YY

Designation date

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Site Reference Number

## 2. Country:

France

## 3. Name of wetland:

Marais salants de Guérande et du Més

## 4. Geographical coordinates:

Guérande: 52°53' - 52° 60' N, 5°25' - 5°37' W

Més: 52°65' - 52°72' N, 5°25' - 5°35' W

## 5. Altitude: (average and/or max. & min.)

0-7 m

## 6. Area: (in hectares) 5,200 ha approx.

## 7. Overview: (general summary, in two or three sentences, of the wetland's principal characteristics)

The combined effects of geological and climatic factors make these wetlands suitable for salt production. The marshes have been divided up into a mosaic of pans separated by clay mudwalls fed with water by channels. In the Més marshes, the salt workings date back to Roman times.

## 8. Wetland Type (please circle the applicable codes for wetland types as listed in Annex I of the *Explanatory Note and Guidelines* document.)

marine-coastal: A . B . C . D . E . F . G . H . I . J . K

inland: L . M . N . O . P . Q . R . Sp . Ss . Tp . Ts  
. U . Va . Vt . W . Xf . Xp . Y . Zg . Zk

man-made: 1 . 2 . 3 . 4 . 5 . 6 . 7 . 8 . 9

Please now rank these wetland types by listing them from the most to the least dominant:

## 9. Ramsar Criteria: (please circle the applicable criteria; see point 12, next page.)

1a . 1b . 1c . 1d | 2a . 2b . 2c . 2d | 3a . 3b . 3c | 4a . 4b

Please specify the most significant criterion applicable to the site:

10. Map of site included? Please tick *yes*  -or- *no*

(Please refer to the *Explanatory Note and Guidelines* document for information regarding desirable map traits).

## 11. Name and address of the compiler of this form:

Cf. section 4 French original

**Please provide additional information on each of the following categories by attaching extra pages (please limit extra pages to no more than 10):**

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**12. Justification of the criteria selected under point 9, on previous page.** (Please refer to Annex II in the *Explanatory Note and Guidelines* document).

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**13. General location:** (include the nearest large town and its administrative region)

Atlantic coast of Loire-Atlantique Département, 20 km north-west of St Nazaire.

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**14. Physical features:** (e.g. geology, geomorphology; origins - natural or artificial; hydrology; soil type; water quality; water depth

water permanence; fluctuations in water level; tidal variations; catchment area; downstream area; climate) The salt marshes and the traicts (local name for mud flats) lie in a tectonic depression. The Guérande hills and the coastline from Pouliguen to Le Croisic are probably the result of the escarpment of two parallel fault lines lying WNW-ESE. The subvertical fractures later produced the Guérande trough and the Le Croisic islands and caused the present-day cave-in of the marshlands. In the Guérande area the dune belts at La Turballe, Pen-Bron and La Baule were formed around 7,000 BC, cutting off an area of shallow water which nevertheless remains subject to tidal phenomena through two inlets: between Le Croisic and Pen-Bron point, and at Pouliguen. In the Més area, the marshes lie in an alluvial valley, which gradually subsided and was little by little submerged in a way similar to the Finistere rias.

**15. Hydrological values:** (groundwater recharge, flood control, sediment trapping, shoreline stabilisation etc)

The whole marsh area is protected by an important dike network, which requires constant maintenance and supervision to avoid submersion through breaches in dikes during high tides.

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**16. Ecological features:** (main habitats and vegetation types)

Broad expanses of slikke (small and large traict, Pen-Bé and Rostu traicts), salt marshes subject to regular tidal movements at some perimeter points and through the feeder channels. Most of the salt marshes have been transformed into salt pans flooded at varying intervals, whether they are under exploitation or at different stages in their evolution.

Species groups: *Zosteretia marina*, *Ruppiaetea*.....Cf. section 14 French original.

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**17. Noteworthy flora:** (indicating, e.g., which species/communities are unique, rare, endangered or biogeographically important, etc)

Pen-Bron and Pont-Mahé dunelands:

an exceptional assemblage of great floristic wealth. Very varied plant groups, with all transitions present, from salt to fresh water habitats, from water to dry land. Presence of numerous rare or protected species, including a number from the south. The very high level of primary production, particularly on the mudflats, can be observed throughout the trophic chains.

*Galium arenarium*....cf. French original section 23 for full list in Latin.

Salt muds and salt marshes:

Slikke: cf. French original section 23

Schorre: id.

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**18. Noteworthy fauna:** (indicating, e.g., which species are unique, rare, endangered, abundant or biogeographically important; include count data, etc.)

High primary productivity is the point of departure for multiple trophic chains which induce substantial fish and shellfish production. The highly diversified aquatic environments with greatly differing salinity levels are the reason for the presence of many algae and invertebrate species, which in turn is the reason for the variety and wealth of birds species present.

Nesting birds: little egret (200 nesting pairs), sheld duck, marsh harrier, oyster catcher, red shank, black-winged stilt, avocet, Kentish plover, common tern, blue throat.

Feeding ground and resting place for migratory and wintering species, particularly important for waders, gulls and terns, and ducks and geese. Since port facilities have been built along much of the length of the Loire estuary, the Le Croisic and Rostu traicts and the Pont-Mahé bay have become extremely important as havens rich in invertebrates for avocet and various duck species (shelduck, northern spoonbill, pintail, teal....).

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**19. Social and cultural values:** (e.g. fisheries production, forestry, religious importance, archaeological site etc.)

- The area has a remarkable ethnological and sociological history.
  - The development of salt pans dating back to Gallo-Roman times has fostered the establishment of a culture based on the history of salt and the seas (fishing out of Le Croisic, La Turballe, Batz, Le Pouliguen, Piriac). These traditions are still strong and are highlighted in the remarkable museums of Saillé, Batz, Le Croisic, Guérande and La Turballe.
  - The aforementioned activities are richly reflected in the local architecture which shows the importance of Breton culture in the region.
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**20. Land tenure/ownership of:**

(a) site: private holdings, and State marine area for the traicts and Pont-Mahé bay

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**21. Current land use:**

(a) site: salt production;

hunting ;

fish farming;

shellfish hatcheries;

(b) surroundings/catchment: multicrop farming and extensive grazing, urban development, market gardening.

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

(a) at the site: reduction of surface area through land reclamation; strong pressure from hunting; unregulated visits; mass tourism; degradation of certain abandoned areas; various forms of pollution, possibly exacerbated in the future by planned market gardens around the perimeter, and by urban sprawl; increase in freshwater volumes in the surrounding areas.

(b) around the site: urban development; market gardens; intensive farming (maize, sunflowers, battery livestock); extension of fallow land and subsequent forest grow back as farms disappear.

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**23. Conservation measures taken:** (national category and legal status of protected areas - including any boundary changes which have been made: management practices; whether an officially approved management plan exists and whether it has been implemented)

- law of 1930: Site in the Guérande marshes currently being classified (project to create a National Site) -Notice of intent submitted for Marais du Més - Notification of marine game reserve and ZPS (Specially Protected Area) on the Le Croisic traicts.
  - Free reserves: Grand-Rufiste, Mirebelle and Leniviguel salt pans under the SEPNB (Brittany Nature Study and Protection Society); Paroisse salt pan under the SNOFF (West France Natural Science Society); areas managed by the Conservatoire du Littoral -Coastal Conservation Authority (Pen-Bron dunes, Mesquer marshes); Property acquired within the TDENS (Departmental Levy on Sensitive Natural Areas) by the Conseil Général (Département Council).
  - ZNIEFF (Natural Areas of Ecological, Floristic and Faunic Interest) Inventory types I and II -“Bird” Directive inventory ZICO (Important Bird Area) PL 01 - “Habitats” Directive inventory - Territory subject of an ACNAT/LIFE and OGAF/Environment - Territory classified in Zone 2 (industrial rehabilitation centre) under the Structural Fund (FEDER).
  - “Coast” law: L 146.6
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**24. Conservation measures proposed but not yet implemented:** (e.g. management plan in preparation; officially proposed as a protected area etc.)  
Project for a nature reserve and biotope decrees  
TDENS and Coastal Conservation Authority acquisitions  
Extension of the ZPS.

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**25. Current scientific research and facilities:** (e.g. details of current projects; existence of field station etc.)  
There is no research station on site, but there is a small infrastructure under the SNOFF (Grande Paroisse-Guérande salt pan).

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**26. Current conservation education:** (e.g. visitors centre, hides, information booklet, facilities for school visits etc.)  
Information and education in the local tourist centres: La Baule, Guérande, Le Croisic, Batz.

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**27. Current recreation and tourism:** (state if wetland is used for recreation/tourism; indicate type and frequency/intensity)  
The Guérande and Més salt marshes, lying close to very popular resorts (La Baule, Le Pouliguen, Batz, Le Croisic, Assérac, Mesquer, Pénestin), suffer from the problems posed by excessive numbers of tourists: solutions to reduce their impact are under study.  
The Més estuary is a busy pleasureboat area.

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**28. Jurisdiction:** (territorial e.g. state/region and functional e.g. Dept of Agriculture/Dept. of Environment etc.)  
Ministry of the Sea  
Ministry of the Environment (for the game reserve - ONC - and classified site)

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**29. Management authority:** (name and address of local body directly responsible for managing the wetland)  
SIVOM de la région Bauloise, Hôtel de Ville, La Baule  
Syndicat des Paludiers, Pradel-Guérande  
Dike management Board  
Interdepartmental Mosquito Eradication Body (EID - Entente Interdépartementale de Démoustication)

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**30. Bibliographical references:** (scientific/technical only)  
Cf. French original section 29

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