

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:

3.11.98

For office use only.

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21/07/81 7IT028

Designation date

Site Reference Number

2. Country:

Italy

3. Name of wetland:

Torre Guaceto

4. Geographical coordinates:

40° 42' 50" North; 17° 47' 40" East

5. Altitude: (average and/or max. & min.), 0 – 19 m a.s.l.

6. Area: (in hectares)

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

Torre Guaceto lies to the north of the town of Brindisi on the Adriatic coast of Puglia. The area, which is of great scenic value for its jagged coastline, is an important wetland with extensive reed beds and coastal dunes. The area consists of patches of arboreal vegetation, formed by a holm-oak wood and planted Aleppo Pine trees.

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 - lb - lc - 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:

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

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

1(a) The area is representative of the biogeographical region within which it falls due to the presence of numerous typical and exclusive habitats, such as the coastal dunes with juniper (Dir. 92/43/CEE – 16.27), sub-steppe trails (Dir. 92/43/CEE – 34.5), dunes with *Crucianella* (Dir. 92/43/CEE – 16.223), the herbariums of posidonic (Dir. 92/43/CEE – 11.34), etc.

2(c) The area is the habitat of important flora and fauna and in particular the wetland permits many organisms to complete some critical phases of their life-cycle.

3(b) The area hosts the breeding of such species as *Acrocephalus melanopogon* *Ixobrychus minutus* and *Charadrius alexandrinus* and regularly hosts the wintering and migration of many species listed in Attachment I of EU Directive 79/409/CEE.

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

Torre Guaceto is on the coast of Puglia 15 km north of Brindisi. It is in the Province of Brindisi and within the Municipalities of Brindisi and Carovigno (BR).

14. Physical features: (e.g. geology, geomorphology; origins - natural or artificial; hydrology; soil type; water quality; water depth; water permanence; fluctuation in water level; tidal variations; catchment area; downstream area; climate)

Geologically, the area is formed by alluvions, recent coastal dunes and detrital-organogenic calcarenites of the Pleistocene era. The latter are generally less than 2 m thick, containing varying amounts of calcareous material depending on the weathering of the underlying calcareous strata. There is a typical Mediterranean climate with hot, dry summers and relatively mild, wet winters. The average temperature is 9°C in January and 24°C in July, with an annual average temperature of approximately 16.5°C. The average annual rainfall is 550-600 mm. A network of channels, constructed in the past, allows the waters from the wetland to flow into the sea.

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

No details are available.

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

There are many important habitats in the area: coastal dunes with juniper (Dir. 92/43/CEE – 16.27), sub-steppe trails (Dir. 92/43/CEE – 34.5), dunes with *Crucianella* (Dir. 92/43/CEE – 16.223), saline steppes (Dir. 92/43/CEE – 15.18), herbariums of posidonic (Dir. 92/43/CEE – 11.34). The less important habitats are: holm-oak woods (Dir. 92/43/CEE – 45.3), mobile dunes with *Ammophila* (Dir. 92/43/CEE – 16.211), etc.

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

The following species are present in the area: Lista Rossa of National Protected Species - *Orcis palustris*, endemic species - *Erodium nervulosum* and *Limonium apulum*, Lista Rossa of Regional Protected Species - *Cytinus ruber*, Rare Species - *Gladiolus bizantinus*, *Isolepis cernua* and *Convolvulus lineatus*, etc

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

The rare *Butaurus stellaris* is present in the area (priority species under Attachment I of EU Directive 79/409/EU) as well as numerous other interesting species such as: *Acrocephalus melanopogon*, *Alcedo niroca*, *Calidonia niger*, *Circus cyaneus*, *Circus pygargus*, *Circus macrorus*, *Circus aeruginosus*, *Egretta alba*, *Egretta garzetta*, *Himantopus himantopus*, *Ixobrychus minutus*, *Plegadis falcinellus*, *Platalea leucorodia*, *Testudo hermanni*, *Emys orbicularis*, *Elaphe situla*, *Vipera aspis*.

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

The area is of great archeological interest because of the presence of Roman and Messapian (an ancient population of Puglia) remains (a Messapian tomb was recently discovered containing new evidence of the cults practiced in that period).

20. Land tenure/ownership of: (a) site (b) surrounding area

The area is mostly privately-owned.

21. Current land use: (a) site (b) surroundings/catchment

Seasonal agricultural activities are carried out at the edges of the wetland.

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 (b) around the site

The anthropic activities which pose the greatest threat are agriculture and livestock grazing. In the past the natural environment was changed substantially by land reclamation activities. The natural aspect currently threatening the area is the proliferation of the reed beds which tends to silt up the wetland. The area is potentially under threat by the ever-increasing human presence for tourist-recreational activities, such as bathing.

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)

The fauna of the area is protected under Regional Council Presidential Decree No. 326 of 12.03.81. A management plan has been prepared for the Puglia Region by the Wildlife Institute of Bari University.

24. Conservation measures proposed but not yet implemented: (e.g. management plan in preparation; officially proposed as a protected area etc.)

Refer to projects financed within the P.O.P. Puglia 1994/1999

25. Current scientific research and facilities: (e.g. details of current projects; existence of field station etc.)

The Biology Department of Lecce University is carrying out research on the halophile vegetation and on the dynamics and ecology of the sub-steppe grassland (*Plantago albicans*)

26. Current conservation education: (e.g. visitors centre, hides, information booklet, facilities for school visits etc.)

The WWF organises guided tours of the wetland which are mainly for school groups.

27. Current recreation and tourism: (state if wetland is used for recreation/tourism; indicate type and frequency/intensity)
During the summer the area is used for bathing, however, exact numbers are not known.

28. Jurisdiction: (territorial e.g. state/region and functional e.g. Dept of Agriculture/Dept. of Environment etc.)
Brindisi Harbour Office for the Torre Guaceto Marine Reserve; Brindisi Province/Carovigno Municipality/Forestry Corp for the Land Reserve.

29. Management authority: (name and address of local body directly responsible for managing the wetland)
As for point 28 above with the addition of the Puglia WWF for the control and management.

30. Bibliographical references: (scientific/technical only)
Mariotti M.G., 1992: "*Contributo alla conoscenza della flora di Torre Guaceto (Puglia)*" (Contribution to the understanding of the flora of Torre Guaceto) *Annali del Museo Civico di Storia Naturale "G. Doria"*, 29:43-60, Genova
Mariotti M.G., Braggio Morucchio G., Cornara L., Placereani S., 1982: "*Studio fitosociologico e palinologico della vegetazione attuale e del passato a Torre Guaceto (Puglia, Italia meridionale)*" (Pytosociological and palynological of the present and past flora of Torre Guaceto) *Candollea*, 47:31-60.

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