

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:

11.11.98

For office use only.

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Designation date Site Reference Number

2. Country:

Italy

3. Name of wetland:

Ortazzo

4. Geographical coordinates:

44° 20' North; 12° 19' East

5. Altitude: average 1 m a.s.l. (max 3/min -2)

6. Area: (in hectares) 440 ha

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

Coastal area with considerable environmental variations. The Ortazzino is a coastal system of brackish ponds deriving from changes in the mouth of the Bevano torrent, with ox-bow lakes and depressions behind the dunes which are periodically flooded, with wet pastures and consolidated dunes with typical Mediterranean scrub. The mouth of the Bevano is free to evolve and continuous changes occur, with erosion and formation of sand banks; large active dunes with psammophile vegetation are present around the river mouth. The wetland of Ortazzo extends upstream of the confluence between Bevano and Fosso Ghiaia. The wetland is a brackish depression with shallow waters and interesting series of vegetation, linked to the gradual decrease in salinity towards the Pineta di Classe and the inflow of fresh water from the Acquara canal. Ortazzo is crossed by a series of dunes covered with *Pinus pinea* pines and typical Mediterranean scrub.

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:

J, H, E, A, F, G, M. 9

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

1a - lb - 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* X

(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:

Massimiliano Costa – Regional Park of the Po Delta.

Giuliana Venturi – Emilia-Romagna Region.

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)

The Bevano delta represents the best preserved and most representative estuary system of the entire Adriatic coast, showing all the aspects of the natural evolution of the river mouth. It has a fundamental role as a resting, breeding and wintering area for many rare species of the north Adriatic coastal lake system, due also to the close link with the Cervia Salt Flats. It is host to a large number of rare fauna and flora species, with representative populations at a national level and unilocular species at a regional level which find suitable environments for nesting, feeding and resting during migration. Several endemic species of the north Adriatic are present. There are more than 20,000 aquatic birds regularly present with important populations of Ciconiiformes, Anatidae, Accipitroiformes, Charadriidae, Sternidae. The secondary wet areas along the river are important for the growth of newborn and sub-adult euryhaline species, also of rare and threatened species.

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

The area is situated approximately 15 km from Ravenna (capital of the Province and Municipality) and in the vicinity of various coastal tourist resorts (Lido di Dante, Lido di Classe, Lido di Savio, Milano marittima).

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)

Ortazzino is a system of brackish ponds and river meanders with a close hydrological link with the sea (with consequent variations in water level due to the tides entering the river mouth), together with active and consolidated dunes and meadows with pools of aquifer waters or rainwater. The substrata is mainly sandy. Ortazzo originated from subsidance and the invasion of water from the salty aquifer in lagoons which were once used for rice growing (separated by straight embankments) with mainly muddy beds and low water levels maintained by the inflow of fresh water from the Acquara canal and brackish water from the Fosso Ghiaia and the aquifer.

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

The area has an important role in protecting the coastline from erosion, especially where the river mouth is left to freely evolve and form new sand banks by continuously depositing sand and silt.

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

There is a remarkable environmental diversity and range of vegetation associations. Ortazzino comprises all the vegetation series of active dunes, stretches of Mediterranean scrub with *Juniperus communis*, *Hippophae ramhnoides* and *Phillyrea angustifolia*, wet brackish meadows with *Puccinellia palustris*, *Arthrocnemum fruticosum*, *Halimione portlacoides*, *Limonium serotinum*, *Juncus maritimus*, and emerged sands with *Arthrocnemum glaucum*, meadows subject to tidal variations in water level with *Sparina maritima* (endemic), annual meadows of *Salicornia veneta*, fields of *Schoenus nigricans* and *Holoschoenus romanus*, with *Erianthus ravennae*. Ortazzo, on the other hand has open water with muddy expanses, flooded in the summer, covered with *Phragmites australis* and *Scirpus maritimus*, submerged fields of *Ruppia cirrhosa*, meadows of *Juncus maritimus*, copses of *Pinus pinea*.

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

Only one species contained in Attachment II of the EU Dir.92/43: *Salicornia veneta* (endemic on the north Adriatic coast). The following species threatened at a national level are present in the wetland ("Libro Rosso della Flora d'Italia"): *Bassia hirsuta*, *Limonium bellidifolium*, *Plantago cornuti*, *Trachomitium venetum*. The following species, protected in the Emilia-Romagna region, are also present: *Limonium sp.*, Orchidaceae.

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

Birds listed in Attachment 1 of the European Union Directive 79/409: important colonies of Charadriiformes, with *Himantopus himantopus* (16-60 pairs), *Recurvirostra avosetta* (40-65 pairs), *Gelochelidon nilotica* (0-24 pairs). A recent and very important colony of *Sterna albifrons* (80-250 pairs), *Sterna hiruno* (70-129 pairs). Furthermore, breeding sites on *Pinus sp.* of *Egretta garzetta* (50 pairs). The area is also important for the breeding of *Charadrius alexandrinus* (30-50 pairs) as well as, in general, for the migration and wintering of many species of Ciconiiformes, Anatidae, Accipitriformes, Charadriiformes.

Important populations of species contained in Attachments II and IV of the EU Dir.92/43: *Aphanius fasciatus*, *Knipowitschia panizzae* (endemic), *Lycaena dispar*. Finally, it is worth noting the presence of species of *Chalcides chalcides*, *Cicindela majalis*, *Scarabaeus semipunctatus*.

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

The area is dedicated to nature conservation and observation, and constitutes a well-known site for nature-lovers.

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

The area of the Bevano delta and part of the Ortazzino is state-owned. The remainder of the Ortazzino and the Ortazzo are owned by a private company and a Co-operative.

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

- a) cutting of grassland, illegal fishing activities and unauthorised bathing establishments;
- b) nature conservation and observation (Pineta di Classe), tourism, hunting, fishing, intense agriculture, sand quarries.

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

There are numerous adverse factors. First of all the coastal tourism which prevents colonisation by animal species typical of coastal environments which would find in this area suitable habitats for breeding and resting. Approximately fifty illegal huts are present in the area used for illicit purposes, and for which a court demolition order has been issued. Illegal fishing is frequent as is illegal harvesting of shellfish. Hunting activities also have a considerable impact along the banks of the Ortazzo and the recently restored flooded meadows along the southern border. The entry gate to the Ortazzo is broken and therefore illegal entry has increased and the breeding sites and many roosts of *Caradriformi* have been abandoned.

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)

Ramsar wetland, established with Ministerial Decree dated 13.07.81, published in the *Gazzetta Ufficiale* (official state journal) No. 203 dated 25.07.81. Part of the Ortazzino is subject to limitations as a natural reserve denominated "Coastal dunes of Ravenna and Bevano Delta", established by the State in accordance with law dated 05.06.79, published in the *Gazzetta Ufficiale* No.178 dated 30.06.79 and part as nature reserve "Pineta di Ravenna" - Ramazzotti Section, established by the State with law dated 13.07.77, published in the *Gazzetta Ufficiale* No.219 of 11.08.77. All the Ramsar wetland not included within the Nature Reserve is comprised within the perimeter of the regional park of the Po Delta (Pineta di Classe Station and Cervia Salina) established with regional law No.27 dated 02.07.88. The regulations of the territorial plan have been in force since 1991 and are followed by the Province of Ravenna (under approval by the Region). The plan foresees Ramsar site in zones A and B, in which hunting is forbidden, and to a lesser extent in a pre-park area in which hunting is regulated. The area is also subject to the limitations of Law 431/85 and Law 1497/39.

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

The Territorial Plan of the Park gives the general plan for the area and defines the structural framework. The plan indicates the general and sectorial objectives and the priorities, and specifies (by means of zoning, regulations, limitations, incentives and directives) the various uses to be made of the territory. The Plan also foresees conservation and re-naturalisation activities, partly under way and partly to be carried out in the next few years.

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

The management consortium of the regional Park signed a protocol of understanding with the Regional Agency for Prevention and Environment (ARPA), in 1997, to carry out annual programmes of control and monitoring activities of the quality of the environment over the entire park, the first results of which have already been published.

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

A considerable amount of documentation has been produced (prepared by local agencies, the Region, the Park and nature associations) for educational and teaching purposes which illustrates the natural characteristics and the recreational, cultural and tourist opportunities offered by the area.

27. Current recreation and tourism: (state if wetland is used for recreation/tourism; indicate type and frequency/intensity)

Guided tours of the Reserve are run by the Forestry Corps.

28. Jurisdiction: (territorial e.g. state/region and functional e.g. Dept of Agriculture/Dept. of Environment etc.)

Region: Emilia-Romagna; Province: Ravenna; Municipality: Ravenna.

29. Management authority: (name and address of local body directly responsible for managing the wetland)

Management of the Nature Reserves is carried out by the Forestry Corps in accordance with the regulations of the institutional decrees. Management of the remaining areas is carried out by the private owners, in accordance with the instructions established by the Territorial Plan of the Po Delta Regional Park.

30. Bibliographical references: (scientific/technical only)

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