

MedWet

• THE MEDITERRANEAN
WETLANDS INITIATIVE •

Working together
for wetlands conservation
and wise use since 1992



Under the aegis
of the Ramsar
Convention
on Wetlands
www.ramsar.org

Looking into the future

2014 is a transition year for MedWet, with the change of its Secretariat location and almost a complete change of its staff. The priorities of the new Secretariat for the period 2015-2017 are:

- To revitalize the capacity of MedWet to assist countries in the full implementation of the Ramsar Convention, including synergies between Ramsar and other biodiversity related treaties and the UNFCCC, in collaboration with the Mediterranean Wetlands Observatory and other partners;
- To actively participate in the drafting of the new Ramsar Strategic Plan and ensure a significant MedWet presence at the 12th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to Ramsar (Uruguay, June 2015);
- To give a high priority to MedWet communications outreach, especially through electronic means;
- To make the best possible use of the outputs of the Agadir Symposium;
- To hold the 12th Meeting of the Mediterranean Wetlands Committee (MedWet/Com) after Ramsar COP12 in order to adopt a MedWet Work Plan in line with the new Ramsar Strategic Plan;
- To renew and consolidate the MedWet partnerships with other actors in the Mediterranean and establish new ones, with a view to developing and implementing significant regional and sub-regional projects;
- To actively participate in the process related to the new Sustainable Development Goals for the period post-2015;
- To arrive at the 13th Meeting of MedWet/Com in 2016 with a renewed commitment of its members to continue supporting and actively engage in the work of the MedWet Initiative.

The Secretariat will devote all its energies to make this possible, for the benefit of Mediterranean wetlands and people, contributing in this way to sustainable development, cooperation, and renewed understanding and solidarity in the region.

DELMAR ALBERTO BLASCO BELLOMARÍA

MedWet Coordinator

(Secretary General of the Ramsar Convention 1995-2003)



Members of the Mediterranean Wetlands Committee (MedWet/Com)

The following 26 countries (in English alphabetical order) and the Palestinian Authority constitute the core of the MedWet Initiative:

Shqipëria (Albania) - الجزائر (Algeria)
Bosna i Hercegovina / Босна и Херцеговина (Bosnia & Herzegovina) - България (Bulgaria) - Hrvatska (Croatia)
Kıbrıs - Κύπρος (Cyprus) - مصر (Egypt) - France (France) - Ελλάς (Greece) - ישראל (Israel) - Italia (Italy)
الأردن (Jordan) - لبنان (Lebanon) - ليبيا (Libya) - Malta (Malta) - Monaco (Monaco) - Црна Гора (Montenegro) - المغرب (Morocco)
Portugal (Portugal) - Србија (Serbia) - Slovenija (Slovenia) - España (Spain) - الجمهورية العربية السورية (Syrian Arab Republic)
Поранешна Југословенска Република Македонија (The FYR of Macedonia) - تونس (Tunisia)
Türkiye (Turkey) - السلطة الوطنية الفلسطينية (The Palestinian Authority)

Other members of MedWet/Com

Intergovernmental bodies

- Barcelona Convention
- Bern Convention
- European Commission
- Ramsar Convention
- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

Wetland Centres

- Regional Agency for Environmental Protection in Tuscany (ARPAT), Italy
- Greek Biotope Wetland Centre (EKBY), Greece
- Institute for Nature Conservation and Forests (ICNF), Portugal
- Tour du Valat - Research Centre for the Conservation of Mediterranean Wetlands (TDV), France

International NGO Partners of the Ramsar Convention

- BirdLife International
- International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN)
- International Water Management Institute (IWMI)
- Wetlands International
- WWF International



Honorary members

- Dr. Luc Hoffmann
- Mr. Thymio Papayannis

MedWet structure and funding

Mediterranean Wetlands Committee (MedWet/Com)

The Committee involving the 26 countries, the Palestinian Authority and other members mentioned above, is the major decision-making body of the Initiative.

MedWet Steering Group (MedWet/SG)

It comprises three member countries, three alternate countries, and two representatives of NGOs and wetland centres, elected by MedWet/Com.

MedWet Secretariat

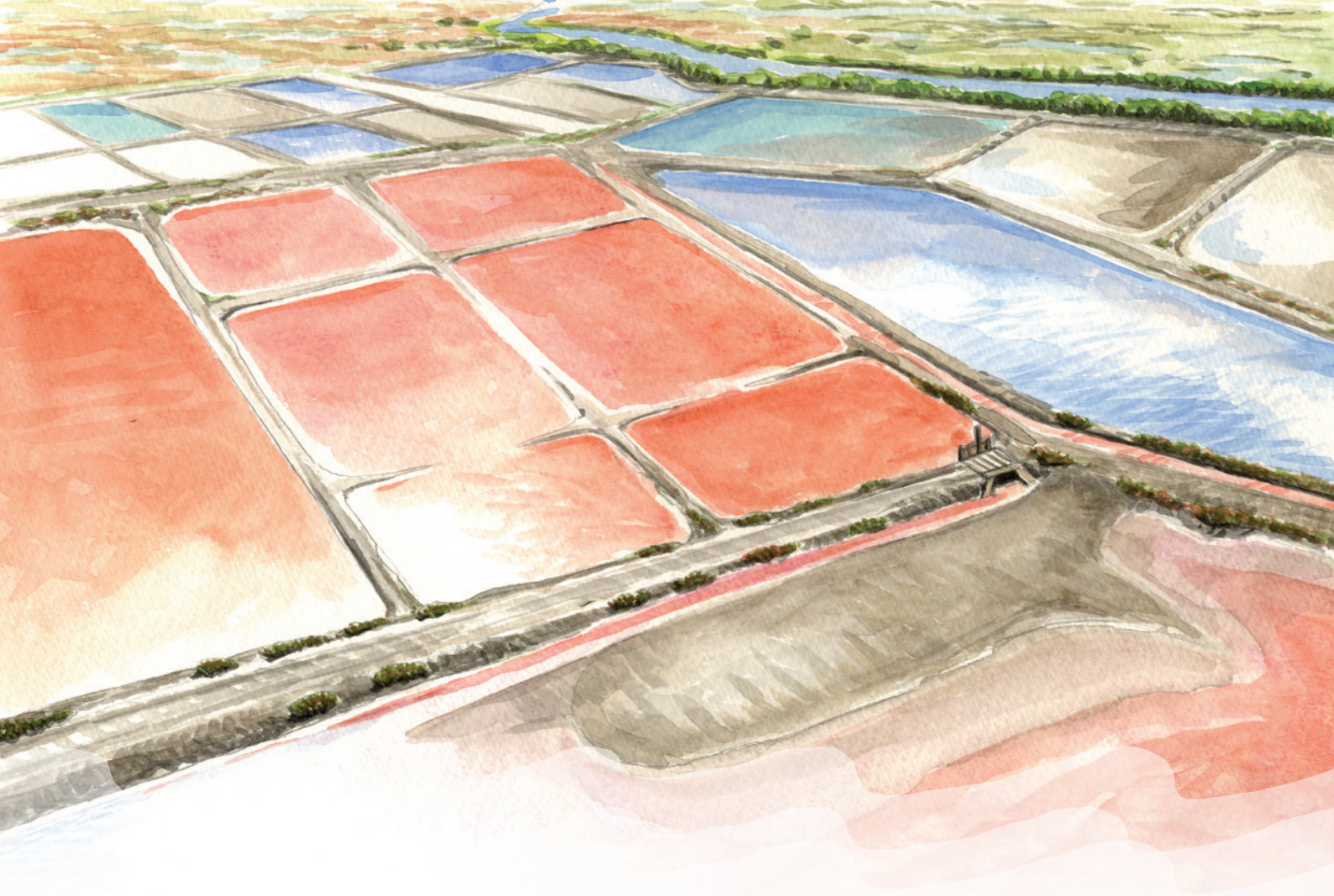
From 2002 to 2014 it was based in Athens, with substantial financial support from the Greek Government. Since May 2014, at the invitation of the French Government, it has been based in the Wetlands Research Centre of La Tour du Valat, in Arles, France, together with the Mediterranean Wetlands Observatory.

Finances

The MedWet Secretariat core costs are covered by annual contributions from the 26 MedWet countries. In addition, during the period 2014-17 MedWet is counting with a generous grant of the MAVA Foundation and a donation of the Water Agency Rhône Méditerranée Corse (France).



The designations employed and the presentation of material on this brochure do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Secretariat of MedWet concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.



Wetlands

MedWet follows the definition of wetlands as set out in the Convention on Wetlands (Ramsar, Iran, 1971):

“...wetlands are areas of marsh, fen, peatland or water, whether natural or artificial, permanent or temporary, with water that is static or flowing, fresh, brackish or salt, including areas of marine water the depth of which at low tide does not exceed six metres.”

In other words, in addition to rivers, lakes, marshes and bogs, Mediterranean wetlands also include sebkhas, chotts and oases, as well as underground water systems and all coastal areas of the member countries and entity.

Caring for wetlands

- Wetlands play a vital role in the functioning of Mediterranean ecosystems everywhere and especially in the dry areas.
- Wetlands act as natural infrastructures, providing a wide variety of services to human populations, including fresh water, food security, flood prevention, and adaptation to and mitigation of climate change.
- Wetlands are the habitat to many important species of flora and fauna.
- Wetlands can be an important element in a greener economy, for example through sustainable tourism and organic agriculture practices.
- Wetlands are often associated to traditional forms of life and are part of the cultural identity of many people.

Wetlands are under threat

Although wetlands provide valuable services, more than half of all wetlands around the Mediterranean Basin were lost during the 20th century. Awareness and political will are changing and many actions are being undertaken to protect, restore and use our wetland resources wisely.

MedWet has been a key instrument in this collective effort since 1992.



Wetlands of International Importance



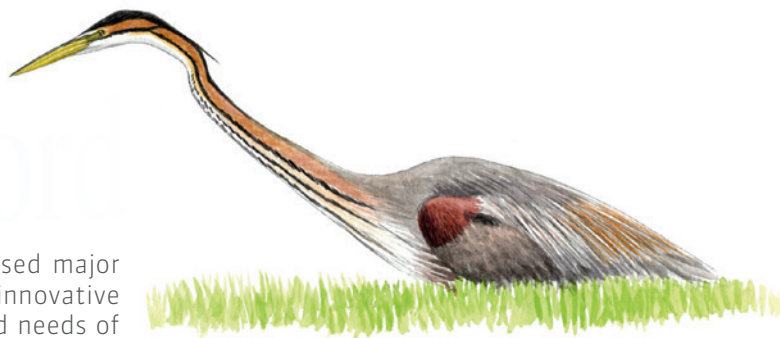
One of the major tools of the Ramsar Convention is its List of Wetlands of International Importance, since the Convention establishes that “The Contracting Parties shall formulate and implement their planning so as to promote the conservation of the wetlands included in the List...”

As of September 2014, the 26 MedWet countries have inscribed 396 sites in the List, encompassing more than 9 million hectares of highly diverse wetland types. (There are currently 2,186 Ramsar Sites in the 168 Parties to the Convention, covering more than 208 million ha.)

Summary of Ramsar Sites information in MedWet countries

COUNTRY	N° OF RAMSAR SITES	TOTAL HECTARES COVERED BY THE SITES	THE BIGGEST RAMSAR SITE IN EACH COUNTRY
ALBANIA	4	98,181	Lake Shkodra and River Buna, 49,562 ha. The eastern side of the largest lake in the Balkan Peninsula, shared with Montenegro (Skadarsko Jezero), and the River Buna.
ALGERIA	50	2,991,013	Chott Ech Chergui, 855,500 ha. The 2nd largest chott in N. Africa: an extensive closed depression with permanent and seasonal saline, brackish, and freshwater lakes, pools and hot springs.
BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA	3	56,779	Livanjsko Polje: Livno karst field, 45,868 ha. The largest depression in the Dinaric karst and perhaps the largest periodically flooded in the world.
BULGARIA	11	49,873	Belene Islands Complex, 18,330 ha. A complex of one large and nine smaller islands in the Danube, with marshes, seasonally-flooded forests, and agricultural and semi-natural land cut by channels.
CROATIA	5	94,358	Lonjsko polje and Mokro polje including Krapje Dol, 51,218 ha. A vast floodplain on the Sava River, with oak alluvial forest, alder swamp forests, wet meadows and pastures.
CYPRUS	1	1,107	Larnaca Salt Lake. A highly saline seasonal lake and habitat of large numbers of wintering waterbirds.
	1	2,171	Akrotiri, designated by the United Kingdom on its Western Sovereign Base Area.
EGYPT	4	415,532	Wadi El Rayan Protected Area, 175,790 ha. Two lakes connected by a swampy channel: the most important habitat for bird species of national, regional and world importance.
FRANCE (including over-seas territories)	43	3,557,820	Etangs de la Champagne humide, 255,800 ha (the largest in mainland France). A vast lowland complex of rivers, reservoir lakes, ponds, canals, gravel pits, reedbeds, meadows and alluvial forests.
GREECE	10	163,501	Messolonghi lagoons, 33,687 ha. An extensive complex of brackish coastal lagoons, mudflats, saltmarsh, freshwater marsh, reedbeds, dune systems and patches of riparian forest.
ISRAEL	2	366	Hula Nature Reserve, 300 ha. A human-made wetland from restoration of the drained Hula Lake and swamps.
ITALY	52	60,223	Valli residue del comprensorio di Comacchio (Po river delta), 13,500 ha. The remnants of a complex of coastal lagoons and marshes drained in 1850.
JORDAN	1	7,372	Azraq Oasis. A spring-fed wetland and extensive seasonally-flooded mudflat.
LEBANON	4	1,075	Palm Islands Nature Reserve, 415 ha. A group of three flat islands with associated outcrops and surrounding waters.
LIBYA	2	83	Ain Elzarga, 50 ha. A small natural ‘sebkha’ or depression with at least one natural connection to the sea, wet all year round but with increasing salinity during summer.
MALTA	2	16	Ghadira, 11 ha. A brackish coastal pool of varying water level and salinity, bordered by dunes.
MONACO	1	23	Réserve sous-marine du Larvotto. Rocky coastal zone to a depth of 10m in the western part; in the eastern part, beaches and artificial protective works, and important seagrass beds.
MONTENEGRO	2	20,150	Skadarsko Jezero, 20,000 ha. A freshwater lake supporting a lush vegetation of various reed, sedge and willow species, shared with Albania.
MOROCCO	24	272,010	Oasis du Tafilalet, 65,000 ha. Comprises a series of oases, the reservoir of the Hassan Ad-Dakhil dam, small rivers, irrigation channels, and lacustrine and marsh areas.
PORTUGAL	31	132,487	Estuário do Sado, 25,588 ha. An estuarine area separated from the sea by dunes, with sand and mudflats exposed at low tide, and vast saltmarshes and reedbeds.
SERBIA	10	63,919	Gornje Podunavlje, 22,480 ha. A marsh complex along 36km of the Danube River, forming a natural unity with the Gemenc (Hungary) and Kopacki Rit (Croatia) Ramsar Sites.
SLOVENIA	3	8,205	Lake Cerknica & its environs, 7,250ha. The largest and most typical intermittent karst lake in its region.
SPAIN	74	303,090	Doñana, 111,646 ha. A vast coastal marshland complex, separated from the ocean by a dune system, subject to seasonal variations in water level and salinity.
SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC	1	10,000	Sabkhat al-Jabbul Nature Reserve. A large saline lake in a semi-arid steppe, and an important staging, wintering and breeding area for large numbers of waterbirds.
THE FYR OF MACEDONIA	2	21,616	Lake Prespa, 18,920 ha. A pliocene lake, important feeding area for Pelicans. The site includes cultivated land, meadows, pastures, reedbeds, and forests.
TUNISIA	40	837,753	Chott El Jerid, 586,187 ha. A vast saline depression characteristic of the northern Sahara. Of special interest are the fossil water aquifers that nourish the oases and some oil reservoirs.
TURKEY	14	184,487	Lake Burdur, 24,800 ha. A closed tectonic lake, one of the deepest in Turkey. The site includes a delta and salt marshes.

Our track record



Over more than 20 years, MedWet has mobilised major partnerships and substantial funds to develop innovative methods and tools tailored to the realities and needs of the Mediterranean wetlands. It has also pioneered activities looking at wetlands in their wider context: cultural values, socio-economic aspects and land use planning. It also catalysed the establishment of the Mediterranean Wetland Observatory.

MedWet's greatest achievement has been to establish a community of highly committed institutions and individuals who are dedicated to wetlands: scientists, decision-makers, technicians, academics, public servants and conservationists from all countries. This is an intangible but critical gain to be strengthened in the years to come.

The International Symposium on Water and Wetlands in the Mediterranean, held in Agadir, Morocco, on 6-8 February 2012, marked the 20th Anniversary of MedWet. *The Agadir Commitments* and *The Agadir Guidelines* were the key outputs of this event (www.medwet.org).

Most significant projects in which MedWet has played a key role

- **Creation of a wetland inventory system and database and a framework for planning monitoring programmes**, with tools tested in five countries: *France, Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain*, including components of management, training, public awareness and dissemination of results.
- **Application of these tools in five non-EU countries:** *Albania, Algeria, Croatia, Morocco and Tunisia*, with consideration of the socioeconomic aspects of wetlands.
- **Conservation of wetland and coastal biodiversity in five countries:** *Albania, Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco, Tunisia and the territory of the Palestinian Authority*. It emphasized capacity building and relied on local expertise, which resulted in management plans for the sites in question.
- **Extension of the MedWet Inventory System to nine regions in five countries:** *France, Italy, Morocco, Portugal and Spain*.
- **Updating the MedWet inventory methodology**, including the use of GIS. The project resulted in a database and had a public awareness component.
- **A capacity building project related to the socio-economic assets of wetlands.** It resulted in management plans, environmental education centres, training and exchanges among the countries: *Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia*.
- **Water governance at the local level, with a participative approach** as a means of resolving conflicts related to shared water resource in *Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia*.
- **Updating the MedWet Inventory system** in line with new EU regulations www.wetlandwis.net.
- **Capacity building for two national NGOs** to increase knowledge and capacities to work with stakeholders: *Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature in Jordan, and Society for the Protection of Nature in Lebanon*.

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