

Étang de Biguglia //



RAMSAR
SITE NUMBER
520



FRANCE

Area :
1 790 ha

Date of designation :
April 8th 1991

Coordinates :
42° 36' N 09° 29' E

Summary

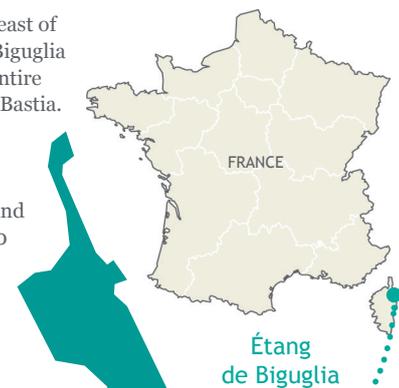
The largest wetland in Corsica, the pond of Biguglia, located at the gates of Bastia, represents a hot-spot of biodiversity combining diversity of species, environments and landscapes. Bordered on the east by the Mediterranean Sea and on the west by a large area of activities, the pond is a rich, fragile transitional zone subject to numerous pressures. Supporting economic and tourist activities, the pond allows a traditional fishing activity as well as the reception of various publics.

International importance

The pond of Biguglia is a site of international importance for many species, in particular for the avifauna. It is, among others, known as a wintering site. Situated on the eastern coast, the main migration route of the avifauna, the littoral wetland of Biguglia is also one of the sites of major importance allowing the birds to make a stopover to feed or drink during the migration period. The flora, made up of species characteristic of environments with variable salinity and flooding (reedbeds, salt meadows, sansouïres...), allows the expression of numerous facies and shelters in particular species registered in the international and community directives and texts.

General location

Located in the north-east of Corsica, the pond of Biguglia occupies almost the entire plain of Marana near Bastia. Extending over four communes (Furiani, Biguglia, Borgo and Lucciana), the pond and its banks occupy 1,790 hectares.



Adverse factors

Like many Mediterranean lagoons, and due to its proximity to agricultural and urban areas, and industrial and commercial zones, the water quality of the pond is a permanent concern.

Eutrophication, risks of proliferation of cyanobacteria or toxic species, potential metallic and organic pollution are all factors that are detrimental to the biodiversity and quality of the environment.

The presence of invasive species both on land (*Acacia* sp., *Cortaderia selloana*, *Trachemys scripta elegans*, *Pittosporum tobira*) and in water (*Mnemiopsis leidyi*, *Cyprinus carpio*) also contributes to endangering species and environments.

Services provided by wetlands

The lagoon of Biguglia is the support of economic activities like agriculture, in particular the cattle breeding, but also the professional fishing which exploits, among other things, the eels, mullets, atherines and sparidae present in the pond.

The proximity of the lagoon with the Grand Bastia also allows to take advantage of the landscapes that offers the diversity of the environments. Receptacle of the waters of the catchment area, the pond and its surroundings also play a role in the purification of water and the retention of floods.



Four species representative of the site



EURASIAN COOT
(*Fulica atra*)

Mainly wintering species on the pond of Biguglia, the coot is present there all year long. In wintering, the numbers are of the order of 6 000 to 8 000 individuals, numbers which could in the past exceed 10 000 individuals. During the breeding season, it is not uncommon to see nests on the surface of the water or hidden in the edges of reed beds with clutches of up to eleven eggs.



EUROPEAN POND TURTLE
(*Emys orbicularis*)

The European pond turtle is a freshwater aquatic turtle that is found mainly in the canals that delimit the nature reserve of the pond of Biguglia. The site welcomes one of the most important populations of Corsica. In spite of its discreet nature, it is not rare to surprise it warming itself in the sun in the beautiful season. The Florida turtle, an invasive introduced species, can enter in competition with it.



AMERICAN FLAMINGO
(*Phoenicopterus ruber*)

In France, the pink flamingo is found almost exclusively on the Mediterranean coast, from the Pyrénées-Orientales to the Var. It only nests in the Camargue on the Fangassier pond (Arles, Bouches-du-Rhône). If about twenty years ago the pink flamingo was rare in Corsica, today it can be seen by hundreds on the ponds of the eastern coast such as Urbino, Palo and of course Biguglia. In winter, nearly a thousand flamingos can be found on the pond but there are only a dozen or so in summer.



FIVE-FRUITED HIBISCUS
(*Kosteletzkya pentacarpos*)

On the French territory of Metropolitan France, this hibiscus is only present in Corsica, where it is considered rare because it is found only in some localities of the Eastern plain. This malvaceous plant finds in Biguglia an exceptional site for its development. The site shelters 90 % of the French population of the species which develops especially in low semi-halophilic reedbeds where it receives enough light. This protected species is listed in the "Habitats" directive.



Management and conservation

The site benefits from many conservation measures: Ramsar site, Natura 2000 sites and especially the status of Corsica nature reserve which constitutes one of the strongest elements of protection in French legislation. The land acquired by the Conservatoire du littoral and the Department of Haute-Corse (which became the Collectivité de Corse in 2018) within the perimeter, but also in its vicinity, increases the protection in the natural wetlands. For the whole site, but also for part of the spaces that adjoin it, planning and management documents are being implemented (management plan 2014-2018 of the nature reserve of the pond of Biguglia, Docob, etc.). The management is ensured by the Collectivity of Corsica since 1995 under the control of the Office of the Environment of Corsica and the State.



Biodiversity

Main wintering site for birds in Corsica, the pond of Biguglia is also distinguished by its richness in fish (more than 40 species, some of which are protected or of patrimonial interest: Corsican aphanus, European eel, freshwater blenny, etc.), in odonates (55% of the regional biodiversity) and in amphibians (57% of the regional biodiversity), but also by an important population of European pond terrapin. The vegetation, with more than 480 taxa, offers a unique landscape that combines an important systemic diversity (lagoon system, sandy coastal system and salt meadows, mesophilic system and edaphohydrophilic marshy system) composed of different vegetations and habitats with a limited geographical area in Corsica.



The Ramsar Convention

The Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, commonly known as the Ramsar Convention, is a global inter-governmental treaty that provides the frame-work for national action and international cooperation for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources. It is the only global treaty to focus on one single ecosystem.