

# Étang d'Urbino //



RAMSAR SITE NUMBER  
**1831**



Area :  
**790 ha**

Date of designation :  
**September 15<sup>th</sup> 2008**

Coordinates :  
**42° 02'N 09° 29'E**

## Summary

The pond of Urbino extends on 790 hectares for a 9 meters maximum depth.

It is the second largest and deepest pond in Corsica. It is separated from the Tyrrhenian Sea by a sandy lido, communicating with it only by an artificial grau, located at the northern end. It is fed in fresh water by a rather reduced catchment area of 31 km<sup>2</sup>. Located in a very little urbanized area, it is part of a succession of ponds that are scattered along the eastern coast of Corsica. The variety of biotopes: beaches and dunes, marly cliffs, sansouires, rushes, phragmites, coastal pine forests,... gives the site an undeniable landscape originality.

## International importance

The pond of Urbino shelters numerous species and remarkable habitats of fauna and flora. There is the 5-fruit hibiscus, a protected, vulnerable and rare plant species, and the priority habitats "dune forest with maritime pines" and "coastal juniper thicket", which give the Urbino pond a great heritage value. Essential Corsican site for the reception of the avifauna, one can observe there remarkable breeding birds such as the tadorne of Belon, or migratory birds of passage, in particular in winter. The water level also shelters important aquatic species such as the aphanis of Corsica, the eel and the big mother-of-pearl.

## General location

The pond of Urbino is located on the eastern coast of Corsica, in the commune of Ghisonaccia (Haute-Corse) at about 75 km south of Bastia, in the hollow of the valleys of Vadina and Casabianda.



Étang d'Urbino

## Services provided by wetlands

High place of biodiversity, the pond of Urbino is a natural site exploited by the man since the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC. A traditional fishing is practiced on the water level by means of capéchades with fyke nets and trammel nets and a "fishing with bordigue" was laid out with the right of the grau. The species commonly fished are eel, bass, sea bream, sar, mullet and red mullet. A restaurant is present on the peninsula. The pond of Urbino constitutes moreover a receptacle of the waters of the catchment area and takes part in the conservation of a hydric capital. Finally, it constitutes a place of human activities for the breeding, the agriculture or the hunting as well as an ideal support for the scientific research and the education in the environment.



## Adverse factors

The artificial grau is the keystone of the lagoon. Its maintenance is necessary to guarantee the exchanges between the lagoon and the sea and to ensure the quality of the ecosystem and the fishing activity. The quality and the biodiversity of the environment are also sensitive to the wastewater discharges of the developments present on the peninsula, to the fires, to the passage of all-terrain vehicles as well as to the invasion of the barrier beach by the witches' claws.



## Four species representative of the site



**LITTLE NEPTUNE GRASS**  
(*Cymodocea nodosa*)

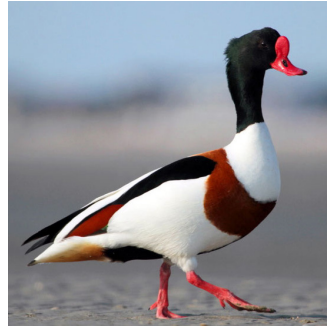
The little neptune grass, a submerged marine flowering plant, is a protected species in France.

It is generally found in open sea in sheltered sites and more rarely in coastal lagoons when the salinity is sufficient as in the ponds of Diana and Urbinu in Corsica. The meadows with *Cymodocea nodosa* are present on all the circumference of the pond of Urbinu with a significant cover locally.



**MEDITERRANEAN KILLIFISH**  
(*Aphanius fasciatus*)

Small endemic fish of the north of the Mediterranean, the mediterranean killifish is a rare species, absent from continental France, which is in Corsica at the north-western limit of its range. It is listed in Annex II of the European Directive "Habitats". It is mainly observed in the large lagoons and small coastal ponds of the eastern coast of Corsica: Biguglia, Palu, Urbinu, Osu delta ...



**COMMON SHELDUCK**  
(*Tadorna tadorna*)

The common shelduck, a large duck that looks like a small goose, is a protected heritage species. It is present every winter on the pond of Urbinu with a maximum of ten individuals. Since 2007, the site hosts two breeding pairs with about ten chicks each, constituting the first cases of reproduction for Corsica.



**LARGE-FRUITED JUNIPER**  
(*Juniperus oxycedrus*  
subsp. *macrocarpa*)

The large-fruited juniper is a species of bushy shrub protected at the regional level. Together with the Phoenician juniper, it constitutes the habitat "coastal juniper thicket", a priority habitat in decline throughout its range. The juniper colonizes the lido of the pond of Urbinu. It is a very rare formation on the eastern plain of Corsica.



## Biodiversity

The pond of Urbinu is an exceptional site for the reception and the reproduction of the avifauna. 113 species are present, 37 of which are nesting, including many rare and threatened species of birds. The diversity of wintering water birds is among the most important in Corsica with more than 50 species for an annual number of less than 5000 individuals. The most represented species are the great cormorant, the coot and the great crested grebe.

The richness of the pond is also linked to the presence of aquatic herbariums sheltering a rich and diversified fauna of invertebrates and fish and favoring the reproduction and the parking of water birds. The terrestrial flora is also quite rich and one finds in particular: the bristly kochia, the threadlike althemia and the 5-fruit hibiscus.

## Management and conservation



The pond of Urbinu benefits from several conservation statuses : Ramsar site, ZNIEFF, Natura 2000 site, prefectural order of protection of biotope on the dune cordon.

Property of the Conservatoire du littoral, its management is entrusted by agreement to the Collectivité de Corse.

The guards of the Collectivité de Corse assure the missions of surveillance, information of the public, maintenance of the site and the installations and scientific follow-ups.

These actions meet the management objectives: protection and conservation of the richness of the biological diversity; maintenance of the ecological quality of the water body, of the traditional, viable and respectful exploitation of the fishing resources of the pond; permanent organization of the management of the site and of the reception of the public; and improvement of the landscape quality.



### 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.