

# Tourbière de Moltifao //



RAMSAR SITE  
NUMBER  
**1994**



FRANCE

Area :  
**34 ha**

Date of designation :  
**October 27<sup>th</sup> 2011**

Coordinates :  
**42° 28'N 09° 09'E**

## Summary

Located on a low-altitude alluvial plain (250 m), barely a few dozen meters from Asco river, this atypical site is home to a young active high bog approximately 500 years old, covering 4 ha and surrounded by a more or less marshy alder grove.

The bog is fed both by resurgences of the underlying alluvial aquifer and by precipitation. It appears in the form of mounds of more or less vegetated sphagnum moss around which surface water circulates in depressions.

The peripheral alder forest locally presents an atypical facies of growth on touradons of royal fern.

## International importance

Priority habitat of the European Habitats/Fauna/Flora Directive (code EUR28 7110\*), the largest sphagnum surface in Corsica, this acid peat bog has no equivalent in the Mediterranean due to its geographical position (unique altitude and latitude). In fact, this type of formation is generally only found at altitude, in cold and humid climates. However, the general climate here is semi-arid with hot and very dry summers. But the constant supply of cold water via the resurgences allows the development of species normally exclusively mountainous or subalpine, close to typical species of the maquis. There are also very rare, even unique, plant species for Corsica, as well as other protected species.

## General location

The peat bog is located in the commune of Moltifao, in the valley of Asco, in High Corsica. The site extends from the right bank of the river Asco up to the road, at the place called Campo Longo.



Tourbière de Moltifao



## Services provided by wetlands

Apart from its major ecological value, this site acts as a shady and cool refuge for wildlife in summer, when the surroundings are scorched by heat and drought.

Since 2008, it has also been a place of environmental education, in particular during World Wetlands Day and outings with students from the Faculty of Corsica working in the field of water and the environment.

## Adverse factors

The increase in the regime and the power of the Asco floods, due to climatic changes, aggravates the erosion of the banks which could eventually reach the peat bog and drain it. The evolution of the peat bog towards a more closed environment is a factor in the disappearance of heliophilous species.

In the peripheral alder forest, grazing and deer limit hardwood regeneration. The barking of holly and ivy, which seems to be intensifying, is leading to the gradual disappearance of these species.





## Four species representative of the site



**BOG PONDWEED**  
(*Potamogeton polygonifolius*)

The two bogs in the municipality of Moltifao are the only ones to host this species in Corsica.

This aquatic perennial lines the channels of the peat bog and the peripheral alder grove.

It is a refuge for aquatic fauna which hides under its foliage or uses its flower stalks as an observation post.



**FEN ORCHID**  
(*Liparis loeselii*)

It is one of the flagship species of the site because its location is unique in Corsica (with the exception of another peat bog located about 3km from the site). The distribution of this very discreet orchid is usually more northern.

There are between 50 and 100 feet here (interannual variations) which grow at the edge of the sphagnum mounds in search of light. The natural closure of the environment is an unfavorable factor in maintaining this exceptional population.



**SPHAGNUM MOSS**  
(*Sphagnum sp.*)

Three species of sphagnum are present on the site (*Sphagnum papillosum*, *S.subnitens*, *S.centrale*).

In Corsica, they are only found at altitude, hence the originality of their presence on this site.

These continuously growing mosses form characteristic mounds, very sensitive to trampling, and cause acidification of the environment.

With the other helophytes of the site, they are at the origin of the formation of peat.



**EUROPEAN POND TERRAPIN**  
(*Emys orbicularis*)

It is a diurnal and sedentary aquatic turtle. Carnivorous and partly scavenger, it contributes to the ecological balance of the wetland.

It hibernates from November to March, in water sheltered by vegetation or sometimes on the ground under leaf beds.

This species is more common on the coast where the main threat is habitat degradation.

The presence of this population in the center of Corsica is therefore rather original.



## Management & conservation

The site is the property of the municipality of Moltifao. It is located in a communal forest under the forest regime.

Its management is ensured by the Office National des Forêts which is based on the management plan of the directed biological reserve of Valdo, on the Document of objectives of the Natura 2000 site "Marshes and peat bogs of Valdo and Baglietto" and on the forest management of the communal forest of Moltifao. No operation other than scientific monitoring is carried out on the bog. Enclosures were installed in the peripheral alder forest to protect the seedlings from herbivores and allow the trees to regenerate.

Experiments are underway to try to curb the spread of the Japanese ailanthus, an invasive species in dry and open environments.



## Biodiversity

Out of more than 90 listed plant species (all environments combined), 28% are infrequent to very rare on the island, 10% are considered to be in an abyssal situation (mountain dwellers who have descended to the plain), 8% are protected or regulated, 3 are only present on the site (for Corsica).

Many of the animal species present on the site are protected. The dipper frequents the banks of Asco, the Cetti's warbler the wetlands. The two species of snake (green and yellow and ring-necked) and turtle (pond and Hermann's) represented in Corsica frequent the site. The Corso-Sardinian deer, recently reintroduced in the region, is a regular visitor.

Finally, there would be on the site, more than 200 species of fungi as well as many saproxylic beetles, which take advantage of the presence of dead wood in quantity.



### 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.