



Wet Zone- Sapal
de Castro Marim

Location, biotopes and weather

- This wetland is located in the Algarve region, near the mouth of the river Guadiana.
- This ecosystem is composed of salt marshes, mats and marshes which shelter and feed many species.
- The climate is Mediterranean - very sunny, hot and dry summers and mild winters.
- Therefore, there is a lot of biodiversity:



Producers:

- These plants are halophytes, withstand high salinity levels and long submerged periods.



Saltmarsh valley (*Suaeda vera*)



Salicorn (*Salicornia*)



Morrace (*Spartina Maritima*)

Crustaceans and mollusks:

- These animals, while taking organic matter out of the water to feed themselves, are able to purify the water and reduce the content of pollutants.



Crab digs earth (*Uca tangeri*)



White clam (*Spisula solida*)

Reptiles:



Water snake (*Natrix natrix*)



Striated carapace turtle (*Mauremys leprosa*)



Bush lizard (*Psammodamus algirus*)



Osga (*Tarentola mauritanica*)



Green frog (*Rana perezi*)



Snitch frog (*Bufu bufu*)



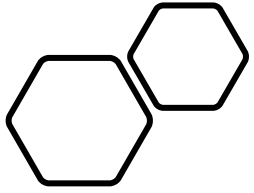
Midwife toad (*Alytes cisternai*)

Amphibians

- Amphibians are large consumers of insects that proliferate in the marsh.



Orange belly newt (*Triturus boscai*)



Fishes

- The fishes inhabit the marsh and the mats and feed on mollusks and bivalves.



Bass (*Centropomus undecimalis*)



Enxarroco (*Caulophryne jordani*)



Lamprey (*Petromyzontidae*)



Mullet (*Mugilidae*)



Mammals

- In the dry areas around the marsh there are some mammals:

Morce (*Corynorhinus townsendii*)



Coconut hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*)



Check tails (*Herpestes ichneumon*)

Water birds:





Flamingo (*Phoenicopterus*)



Red leg (*Tringa totanus*)



Torch (*Calidris pusilla*)

Limicolous birds:

- These birds are characterized by their long legs and their long beaks, which allow them to fish. They love mollusks and crustaceans.

Other birds:



The hoopoe smells very bad, which has led to the expression 'smell like a hoopoe' in some European countries.



Threats to this ecosystem:

- Some invasive species such as the green turtle (*Chelonia mydas*) and *Spartina densiflora* put this habitat in danger because they compete with native species.

- But human actions also put this habitat at risk:

The abandonment of traditional salt pans - causes a reduction in the space for birds to feed and breed;

The abandonment of the cultivated fields around the marsh-which reduces biodiversity;

The establishment of aquaculture ponds - which take up space for the birds to feed themselves.

