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CONTENTS

Foreword	16
I Proceedings	19
<i>Temporary ponds: Global views</i>	21
Pretus, J.L.L. <i>Mediterranean temporary ponds: life histories for unwarranted offbeat environments.</i>	23
Holland, R.F. <i>Glimmerings from the hogwallows</i>	37
Alonso, M. <i>Temporary lakes in Mongolia</i>	61
<i>Hydrochemistry and hydrodynamics</i>	71
Sánchez-Carrillo, S. <i>Hydrology and biogeochemistry of Mediterranean temporary ponds.</i>	73
Florencio, M., Gómez-Rodríguez, C., Gómez, A., Reina, M., Gutierrez, E., Siljeström, P., Serrano, L. and Díaz-Paniagua, C. <i>Towards a quantitative classification of temporary ponds in Doñana (SW Spain).</i>	83
<i>Phytoplankton</i>	93
Moyà, G. and Conforti, V. <i>Cyanobacteria and microalgae communities in temporary ponds.</i>	95
<i>Flora</i>	107
Grillas, P., Rhazi, L. and Rhazi, M. <i>The vegetation of temporary pools: adaptation and opportunism.</i>	109
Bagella, S., Caria, M.C. and Zuccarello, V. <i>Small scale plant distribution in Mediterranean temporary ponds: implications for conservation.</i>	121



Iriondo, J.M., Pastor, J.M., Galeano, J., Fraga, P., Muñoz, L. and Marín, A. *Determinants of floristic richness in Minorcan temporary ponds: implications for management at the regional level.* 129

Triest, L. and Sierens, T. *Biogeographical patterns of Ruppia in the Mediterranean: new insights on diversity and dispersal.* 137

Invertebrates 149

Boix, D., Sala, J., Gascón, S., Ruhí, A. and Quintana, X.D. *Structure of invertebrate assemblages: contribution to the ecological functioning of the Mediterranean temporary ponds.* 151

Marrone, F., Castelli, G. and Naselli-Flores, L. *Sicilian temporary ponds: an overview of the composition and affinities of their crustacean biota.* 189

Mlambo, M.C., Reed, C.C. and Day, J.A. *Overview of temporary wetlands' macroinvertebrates assemblages in the Cape Floristic Region, South Africa.* . 203

Soler, E. and Méndez, M. *The dragonflies of temporary ponds in Menorca.* . . 215

Vertebrates 227

Porter, J. and Kingsford, R. *Monitoring change in temporary wetlands and waterbird communities with large scale aerials surveys.* 229

Díaz-Paniagua, C., Gómez-Rodríguez, C., Porthault, A. and Florencio, M. *Why a system of heterogenous temporary ponds favours amphibian communities? Amphibians in Doñana National Park, an example of preserved breeding habitats.* 245

Robledano, F., Zapata, V., Jiménez, M.V. and Farinós, P. *Temporary ponds as tools for improving amphibian conservation in Mediterranean mountain systems.* 255

Massana, M., Richter-Boix, A., Colliard, C. and Pretus, J.Ll. *A genetic isolation gradient of populations of the Balearic green toad (Bufo balearicus) follows rising eastward fragmentation of the rural landscapes of the island of Menorca.* 267



Ecology	279
Collinge, S.K. and Ray, C. <i>Ecology and restoration of vernal pools: a ten-year study of plant community dynamics.</i>	281
Pinya, S. and Gil, Ll. <i>Primary results on biodiversity analysis of the temporary ponds in the Natural Park of Mondragó, Mallorca.</i>	291
Management and conservation	297
Angeler, D.G. <i>Management and conservation of temporary ponds: opportunities and challenges in the new millenium</i>	299
Muntaner, J., Moragues, E., Ramos, I. and Mayol, J. <i>Inventory of temporary ponds in Mallorca.</i>	307
Dimitriou, E. <i>Conservation plan for the Mediterranean temporary pond habitat in W. Crete.</i>	315
Bird, M.S. and Day, J.A. <i>Investigating the use of aquatic macroinvertebrates as indicators of human impairment of seasonal wetlands in the Western Cape Province, South Africa.</i>	323
Muller, S.D., Daoud-Bouattour, A., Amami, B., Ferchichic-Ben Jamaa, H., Ferrandini, J., Ferrandini, M., Ghrabi-Gammar, Z., Grillas, P., Pozzo di Borgo, M.-L., Rhazi, L., Soulié-Märsche, I. and Ben Saad-Liman, S. <i>Interest of historical data for conservation of temporary ponds.</i>	339
Bejko, D. and Ziu, T. <i>Management plan developing toward quality protection and EU Water frame approach in Shkodra lake watershed.</i>	353
Social awareness	361
Brock, M.A. <i>Social Awareness of temporary wetlands: a southern hemisphere persptectiveon the past, present and future.</i>	363
II Abstracts	377
Hydrochemistry and hydrodynamics	379



de Vicente, I., Vidal, J., Green, A.J., Amores, V., Pozo, I., Morales, L., López, R. and Cruz-Pizarro, L. *Limnological and sedimentological characteristics of Media lake (southwestern Spain)*. 381

de Vicente, I., Gilbert, J.D. and Guerrero, F. *Biogeochemistry of temporary ponds: impact of periodic drying-reflooding cycles on phosphate exchange across sediment and water interface title*. 383

Siljeström, P., Gutiérrez, E., Díaz-Paniagua, C. and Cara, J.S. *Presence of fine-sediment discontinuity in soils of temporary ponds in Doñana National Park (SW Spain) - Influence on their hydroperiod evolution*. 384

Flora 385

del Pozo, R., Fernández-Aláez, C. and Fernández-Aláez, M. *Macrophyte community and driving variables in temporary Mediterranean ponds*. 387

Alonso-Guillén, J.L., Rubio, F., Regidor, M.C., Ferrer-Polo, J. and Rodrigo, M.A. *Naturally recovered submerged vegetation in three constructed Mediterranean ponds (Albufera de València Natural Park)*. 388

Doncel, M., Vilar, L. and Campos, M. *Cartography of the vegetation of the new ponds of Banyoles*. 389

Fernández-Zamudio, R., Garcia-Murillo, P. and Cirujano, S. *Hydrogeomorphic classification and habitat suitability for aquatic macrophyte species in a natural Mediterranean temporary pond system (Doñana National Park, SW Spain)*. 390

Ghrabi-Gammar, Z., Daoud-Bouattour, A., Ben Jamaa-Ferchichi, H., Gammar, A.M., Muller, S.D., Rhazi, L. and Limam-Ben Saad, S. *Floristic diversity of temporary freshwater wetlands of Tunisia*. 391

Ferchichi-Ben Jamaa, H., Muller, S.D., Daoud-Bouattour, A., Ghrabi-Gammar, Z., Rhazi, L., Soulié-Märsche, I. and Limam-Ben Saad, S. *Temporary wetlands of Northern Tunisia: typology and diversity*. . . 392

Rhazi, L., Grillas, P., Saber, E. and Rhazi, M. *The temporary pools of Western Morocco: issues of conservation and spatio-temporal dynamic by remote sensing*. 393



Pericàs, J., Rosselló, J.A., Mascaró, J. and Fraga, P. <i>The importance of bryophytes in the Mediterranean temporary ponds of Minorca.</i>	395
Benito, J.L., Conesa, J.A., Pedrol, J. and Sanz, V. <i>Temporary ponds on the map of habitats of Aragón: Las Amargas lakes system (Monegros, Spain) as an example of vegetation cartography, and its correspondence with European habitats.</i>	396
Invertebrates	397
Waterkeyn, A., Grillas, P. and Brendnock, L. <i>Combined impacts of salinisation and hydrological modification on permanent communities of Mediterranean temporary ponds: A long term mesocosm study.</i>	399
Anton-Pardo, M. and Armengol, X. <i>Comparison of zooplankton dynamics in several ponds from l'Albufera Natural Park (València, Spain).</i> . .	400
Escrivà, A., Mezquita, F., Armengol, X. and Rueda, J. <i>Invertebrate faunal diversity comparison between temporary and permanent bodies of water in a Mediterranean landscape.</i>	401
Lockwood, M. and Campos, M. <i>Dragonfly communities of the near-permanent pools at Can Morgat.</i>	402
Alonso, M. and Pretus, J. Ll. <i>Vicariance in the steppic temporary ponds from two palearctic extremes: crustaceans from the Iberian Peninsula and Mongolia.</i>	403
Sahuquillo, M., Miracle, R.M. and Vicente, E. <i>Distribution patterns of calanoid copepods in freshwater temporary ponds in Eastern Spain.</i>	405
Gascón, S., Machado, M., Sala, J., Cancela da Fonseca, L., Cristo, M. and Boix, D. <i>Importance of spatial patterns and habitat characteristics for large branchiopod (Crustacea: Anostraca, Notostraca and Spinicaudata).</i> . . .	406
Waterkeyn, A., Vanschoenwinkel, B., Grillas, P. and Brendonck, L. <i>Neglected dispersal vectors of aquatic invertebrates in a Mediterranean wetland area: mammals and humans.</i>	407



Vertebrates	409
García-Muñoz, E., Guerrero, F. and Parra, G. <i>Ponds approached from an ecotoxicological point of view: putting the “eco-” in toxicology.</i>	411
Ecology	413
Pinto-Cruz, C., Barbosa, A.M., Molina, J.A., Barbour, M. and Espírito-Santo, M.D. <i>Spatial patterns and environmental correlates of temporary pond flora: a case study in SW Portugal.</i>	415
Ruhí, A., Boix, D., Sala, J., Gascón, S. and Quintana, X.D. <i>Spatial and temporal patterns of pioneers macrofauna in recently created ponds: taxonomic and functional approaches.</i>	416
Trigal, C., Fernández,-Aláez, C., Becares, E., García-Criado, F. and Fernández-Aláez, M. <i>Community structure and environmental complexity in Mediterranean ponds.</i>	417
Florencio, M., Bilton, D.T., Serrano, L., Gómez-Rodríguez, C., Millán, A., Gómez, A. and Díaz-Paniagua, C. <i>Macroinvertebrate assemblages of temporary ponds in the Doñana National Park (SW Spain): The role of a heterogeneous pond network.</i>	419
Brandsen, A. and Slater, F.M. <i>Ephemeral pools of Eastern Wales: Ecology and conservation.</i>	420
Management and conservation	421
Mascia, F., Podda, L. and Bacchetta, G. <i>Alien flora in temporary ponds of Sardinia: preliminary data on invasive species and threatened flora.</i>	423
Sant Sebastián, O., Llorente, G.A., Richter-Boix, À., Franch, M. and Montori, A. <i>Evolution of amphibian community in recently created temporary ponds in a Mediterranean region.</i>	424
Mascaró, J., Cardona, E., Estaún, I., Juaneda, J., Canals, A., Torres, E. and Fraga, P. <i>Restoration of Mediterranean temporary ponds in Minorca.</i> ...	425



- Sancho, V. and Lacomba, I. *Conservation of temporary ponds within the Natura 2000 Network: Results of the project LIFE-AMPHIBIANS*. 426
- Amami, B., Muller, S.D., Rhazi, L., Grillas, P., Rhazi, M. and Bouahim, S. *Pollen record of local hydrophytic vegetation in a Mediterranean temporary pool (Western Morocco)*. 427
- Daoud-Boauttour, A., Muller, S.D., Ferchichi-Ben Jamaa, H., Ghrabi-Gammar, Z, Rhazi, L., Gammar, A.M. and Ben Saad-Limam, S. *Majen Chitane, a threatened acidic lake in Tunisia*. 429
- Minssieux, E., Reymond, A-S., Nicolet, P. and Oertli, B. *Proposition of a methodology for the identification of important areas for ponds (IAP) in Europe*. 430
- Sahib, N., Rhazi, L., Grillas, P. and Rhazi, M. *Experimental study of the effect of physical disturbance of soil and hydrology on plant communities in Mediterranean temporary pools (Western Morocco)*. 431
- Saber, E., Rhazi, L., Rhazi, M. Grillas, P. and Ballais, J.L. *Role of the remote sensig and the GIS in the inventory and the conservation of temporary ponds of the Settat (Western Morocco)*. 432
- Rhazi, M., Grillas, P., Médail, F. and Rhazi, L. *Ecological restoration of the rare species of the Mediterranean temporary pools: case of the populations of Isotes setacea*. 433
- Muntaner, J., Moragues, E., Ramos, I. and Mayol, J. *Temporary ponds inventory of the Island of Mallorca*. 434
- Trigal, C., Garcia-Criado, F. and Fernández-Aláez, C. *Ecological assessment of highly heterogeneous systems: the importance of habitat and taxonomic sufficiency*. 435
- Estaún, I., Cardona, E., Canals, A., Mascaró, J., Torres, E., Juaneda, J., Fraga, P. *Management plans for the Mediterranean temporary ponds of Minorca*. 437
- Torres, E., Estaún, I., Cardona, E., Canals, A., Mascaró, J., Juaneda, J. and Fraga, P. *Landowners and habitat conservation: perceptions, information, experiencies and results*. 438



Fraga, P., Torres, E., Estaún, I., Cardona, E., Canals, A., Mascaró, J. and Juaneda, J. *Inventory of Mediterranean temporary ponds in Minorca.* . . . 439

Gómez-Rodríguez, C., Bustamante, J. and Díaz-Paniagua, C. *Remote-sensing evidence of hydroperiod shortening in a system of temporary ponds.* 440

Guinart, D., Amat, F. and Solórzano, S. *Management of ponds and lentic systems in “El Montseny” Natural Park and Biosphere Reserve.* . . 441

Legal frame 443

Lacomba, I. and Sancho, V. *Faunal reserves: an strategy for the protection of small water bodies in València (Spain).* 445

Canals, A., Cardona, E., Allès, M., Mascaró, J., Torres, E. and Fraga, P. *The Mediterranean temporary ponds of Minorca in the Natura 2000 Network.* . . 446

Social awareness 447

Bouahim, S., Rhazi, L., Amami, B., Mathevet, R., Ernoul, L., Saber, E., Grillas, P. and Khattabi, A. *Perception of vernal pools by the local population in Western Morocco and an analysis of their vulnerability.* 449

Pérez, B., Sancho, V., Almeida, O., Díaz, E., Morenó, L. and Martínez, F.J. *LIFE ANFIBIOS: The evolution of its public awareness campaign.* 450

Cardona, E., Allès, M., Mascaró, J., Torres, E., Fraga, P. *The travelling exhibition on the LIFE BASSES project as a tool for social awareness on the conservation of Mediterranean temporary ponds in Minorca.* 451

Ramos, I. and Mayol, J. *Publications of the Balearic Government about temporary ponds and their fauna & flora.* 452

Attendants & contact list 455

Author index 469



FOREWORD

The high significance of Mediterranean temporary ponds for biodiversity conservation has been recognized by the Habitat's Directive since 1992. This represents an important step in increasing awareness of these particular ecosystems when human activities and land use changes are seriously threatening their conservation all around the Mediterranean shed.

Mediterranean temporary ponds are semi-aquatic habitats characterized by alternate dry and wet phases. They are found in different regions of the world, from tropical to temperate climates, where contrasting wet and dry seasons occur. Unique fauna and flora and fragility are among their common attributes, which are some of the reasons that justify any initiative to promote an exchange of knowledge and experiences concerning their management and conservation.

Conscious of the fragility of temporary ponds and putting forth evidence of regression of this habitat throughout the island of Menorca, the *Consell Insular de Menorca*, with the support of the *Conselleria de Medi Ambient del Govern de les Illes Balears*, has been working since 2005 for the long-term conservation of temporary ponds within the LIFE BASSES project (LIFE05NAT/ES/000058), co-financed by the EU LIFE program. Many useful reports and experiences have arisen from this project, and we are convinced that sharing them and trying to get an overview of the conservation issues and scientific understanding of temporary ponds around the world is the best way to maintain general concern for their value and to raise support for any conservation effort. With this in mind, the initiative of the *International conference on Mediterranean temporary ponds* was born with the aim of fostering an exchange of experiences and a forum for discussion on the study and conservation of this type of habitat.

Hopefully, the networking abilities of the acting bodies and researchers, together with increasing knowledge on ecology and functions of temporary ponds and how they interact with human activities will enhance and improve efforts for long term conservation of this unique habitat.

Maó, April 2009

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