



NATURA 2000 - STANDARD DATA FORM

For Special Protection Areas (SPA),
Proposed Sites for Community Importance (pSCI),
Sites of Community Importance (SCI) and
for Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)

SITE **MT0000004**
SITENAME **Il-Maqluba (limiti tal-Qrendi)**

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1. SITE IDENTIFICATION

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1.1 Type B	1.2 Site code MT0000004
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1.3 Site name

Il-Maqluba (limiti tal-Qrendi)

1.4 First Compilation date	1.5 Update date
2004-04	2018-05

1.6 Respondent:

Name/Organisation:	Environment and Resources Authority
Address:	Hexagon House, Spencer Hill, Marsa MRS 1441
Email:	natura.2000@era.org.mt

1.7 Site indication and designation / classification dates

Date site classified as SPA:	0000-00
National legal reference of SPA designation	No data
Date site proposed as SCI:	2004-04
Date site confirmed as SCI:	2008-03
Date site designated as SAC:	2016-12
National legal reference of SAC designation:	Government Notice No. 1379 of 2016, in accordance with the Flora, Fauna and Natural Habitats Protection Regulations, 2016 (S.L. 549.44)

2. SITE LOCATION

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2.1 Site-centre location [decimal degrees]:

Longitude

14.4585

Latitude

35.8318

2.2 Area [ha]:

2.62

2.3 Marine area [%]

0.0

2.4 Sitelength [km]:

0.0

2.5 Administrative region code and name

NUTS level 2 code

Region Name

MT00	Malta
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2.6 Biogeographical Region(s)

Mediterranean (100.0%)

3. ECOLOGICAL INFORMATION

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3.1 Habitat types present on the site and assessment for them

Annex I Habitat types						Site assessment			
Code	PF	NP	Cover [ha]	Cave [number]	Data quality	A B C D	A B C		
						Representativity	Relative Surface	Conservation	Global
5230 B			0.41		G	C	B	A	B
8210 B			0.15		G	D	C	B	C
9570 B			0.02		G	D	B	C	C

PF: for the habitat types that can have a non-priority as well as a priority form (6210, 7130, 9430) enter "X" in the column PF to indicate the priority form.

NP: in case that a habitat type no longer exists in the site enter: x (optional)

Cover: decimal values can be entered

Caves: for habitat types 8310, 8330 (caves) enter the number of caves if estimated surface is not available.

Data quality: G = 'Good' (e.g. based on surveys); M = 'Moderate' (e.g. based on partial data with some extrapolation); P = 'Poor' (e.g. rough estimation)

3.2 Species referred to in Article 4 of Directive 2009/147/EC and listed in Annex II of Directive 92/43/EEC and site evaluation for them

3.3 Other important species of flora and fauna (optional)

4. SITE DESCRIPTION

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4.1 General site character

Habitat class	% Cover
N21	14.49
N23	14.89
N27	47.71
N08	13.36
N10	3.82
N05	5.73
Total Habitat Cover	100

Other Site Characteristics

This site consists of a deep, large-scale inland collapsed solution structure. It is the best example within the Maltese Islands and it is probably a doline. It was caused by dissolution of limestone followed by cavern collapse. This may take place again due to the sink-hole present underneath. The geological structure of this site is of particular interest as in Malta it is the largest conspicuous doline completely isolated from the sea. (There are other large dolines isolated from the sea, but these are not as conspicuous as Il-Maqluba as they are filled with sediment). Thus, it potentially provides a habitat that is unique within the Maltese Islands. The doline is sufficiently large such that it is suitable for agriculture due to the fact that there is shelter from wind, a high extent of humidity and the presence of soil cover. In fact, the doline bed has been cultivated in the past, and a fruit orchard was possibly present. The remnants of rubble walls in the doline bed indicate agricultural practices. Although such practices were abandoned, the doline now supports an important population of *Laurus nobilis*. Then, the sides of the cavity constitute a mixed rupestral and maquis vegetation. This includes *Salsola melitensis* (= *Darniella melitensis*), *Tetraclinis articulata*, *Hedera helix*, *Capparis orientalis*, *Ficus carica* and *Opuntia ficus-indica*. The doline bed has a greater species richness than the vertical walls.

4.2 Quality and importance

This Natura 2000 site is important as the doline bed supports a dense maquis which is dominated by *Laurus nobilis*, this being locally rare, with a restricted distribution throughout the Maltese Islands (National Red Data Book). The Bay Laurel tree is a characteristic Mediterranean tree and a true Maltese native, as is confirmed by fossil evidence. The *Laurus nobilis* community present at this site is relatively important. It is undisturbed, and it is the only site in Malta where they are found that is humid (they grow better in such conditions). Otherwise, such a community is extremely rare across the Maltese Islands due to a lack of humid areas. Also, only a few communities reach the height of the trees found at this site. The immediate area around the dense maquis that is dominated by *Laurus nobilis* (i.e. the collapsed area), also supports a maquis that is dominated by *Ceratonia siliqua* and *Crataegus monogyna*. Other maquis species present in the area include *Pistacia lentiscus*, *Rhamnus oleoides*, *Punica granatum*, *Asparagus aphyllus*, *Lonicera implexa* and *Smilax aspera*, as well as *Arundo donax*. Most of the trees in the area are legally protected. The undergrowth consists of *Acanthus mollis*, *Smyrniolus satrum* and saplings of *Laurus nobilis*. Then, the most important sciaphilo-nitrophilus undergrowth vascular plant species is *Arum italicum*. Il-Maqluba itself, particularly the maquis and its trees, are important for macrofungi and myxomycetes, which include many species that are confined to this area or with a restricted distribution in the Maltese Islands. The wall and crevices in the rock house an interesting community of species requiring shady humid conditions. These include the ferns *Adiantum capillus-veneris* and *Anogramma leptophylla*, as well as the rare Mediterranean *Pellitory Parietaria lusitanica* (which is scarce in the area and is overall locally rare, occurring in small numbers in a few valleys of Malta and Gozo). Crevices in more 'exposed' parts include a small population of the very rare *Tetraclinis articulata*, a species known from Malta and Spain only in the Mediterranean. The few *Tetraclinis articulata* trees present are definitely not a forest, and hence, the community present at this site does not compare very well to the *Tetraclinis articulata* forest habitat described in the Interpretation Manual for the Habitats in the Habitats Directive. This *Arbor-vitae* or *Xerothermophile* assemblage is only made up of about 4 or 5 specimens that occur on the upper vertical walls of the doline. In the more exposed crevices and fissures, *Salsola melitensis* (= *Darniella melitensis*), with *Capparis orientalis*, the alien *Opuntia ficus-indica* and *Chiliadenus bocconei* are present. *Salsola melitensis* (= *Darniella melitensis*) is endemic to the Maltese Islands and is the only European representative of the genus *Darniella*. At Il-Maqluba, it is mainly found on the vertical doline walls, forming only a fringe of vegetation along the doline. Being an endemic species and the only species of *Darniella* across Europe, the community at this site is definitely unique and also far from the description given for this type of habitat in the Interpretation Manual. *Chiliadenus bocconei* is possibly the commonest of our endemic plants. *Salsola melitensis* (= *Darniella melitensis*) and *Chiliadenus bocconei* are both palaeoendemics of North African / Saharan affinities. On the other hand, *Tetraclinis articulata* is of Maghrebian affinity. Another interesting point is the fact that the rare Siculo-Maltese endemic *Iris sicula* is also reported from Il-Maqluba. This is considered to be locally vulnerable and it has a restricted distribution. Other plant communities present at the site include the following: Reedbeds: stands of *Arundo donax* (within the doline); Carob scrub: based

upon *Cerantia siliqua* (within the doline and also in the surrounding area); this is probably of secondary origin; Ruderal assemblage: large tract of 'disturbed ground' with weedy species (within the doline); Mediterranean subnitrophilous grass communities: based upon *Stipa capensis* and *Avena* spp. (in the area outside the doline); Ermes: this is based upon *Urginea pancration* and *Ferula communis* and Cultivated areas: a number of cultivated fields, mainly bearing seasonal crops, occur around the upper rim of the doline structure. With respect to fauna, some interesting species occur. These include: *Strumigenys lewisi*: this ant is only found at Il-Maqluba when considering the Maltese Islands and it is considered to be a tramp species; *Deroceras golcheri*: this is an endemic slug (National RDB) and Il-Maqluba is a type locality for this mollusc; it was first described from Il-Maqluba but it is quite widespread throughout the Maltese Islands; it may also be possibly found on the Italian island of Montecristo; *Bathytropa schembrii*: this woodlouse is possibly endemic to Malta (not as yet found on any of the other Maltese Islands) and possibly it is also very rare (National RDB); it is only known from Attard, Buskett (type locality) and Il-Maqluba, it being common in these three localities; *Leptothorax rabaudi* and *Paratrechina longicornis*: rare ants and *Lepismachilis* sp.: a silverfish species. The doline bed is also particularly important for cryptofauna, particularly those that require deep layers of leaf litter in shady and humid conditions. Furthermore, a number of soil-inhabiting species have been found in soil at 10-30cm depth, often under trees, many of which have been recently described as new species to science, endemic to the Maltese Islands. These include the endogean beetles: *Amaurops mifsudii*: an endemic beetle known from Il-Buskett and Il-Maqluba (Poggi, 1999) and *Torneuma maltense*: an endemic beetle known from Il-Ballut l/o Wardija, Il-Buskett, Il-Maqluba, L-Imtaħleb, San Blas and Wied Babu (Magnano & Mifsud, 2001).

4.3 Threats, pressures and activities with impacts on the site

The most important impacts and activities with high effect on the site

Negative Impacts			
Rank	Threats and pressures [code]	Pollution (optional) [code]	inside/outside [i o b]
M	A01		b
M	A08		o
M	G05		o
L	E03.01		i
M	A07		o
L	D05		i
L	I01		i
M	B01.02		i

Positive Impacts			
Rank	Activities, management [code]	Pollution (optional) [code]	inside/outside [i o b]

Rank: H = high, M = medium, L = low

Pollution: N = Nitrogen input, P = Phosphor/Phosphate input, A = Acid input/acidification,

T = toxic inorganic chemicals, O = toxic organic chemicals, X = Mixed pollutions

i = inside, o = outside, b = both

4.4 Ownership (optional)

4.5 Documentation

5. SITE PROTECTION STATUS (optional)

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5.1 Designation types at national and regional level:

5.2 Relation of the described site with other sites:

5.3 Site designation (optional)

6. SITE MANAGEMENT

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6.1 Body(ies) responsible for the site management:

Organisation:	Environment and Resources Authority
Address:	
Email:	natura.2000@era.org.mt

6.2 Management Plan(s):

An actual management plan does exist:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	Name: Il-Maqluba Link: https://era.org.mt/en/Pages/Natura-2000-Management-Planning.aspx
<input type="checkbox"/> No, but in preparation	
<input type="checkbox"/> No	

6.3 Conservation measures (optional)

7. MAP OF THE SITES

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INSPIRE ID:

MT.ERA.MT0000004

Map delivered as PDF in electronic format (optional)

Yes No

Reference(s) to the original map used for the digitalisation of the electronic boundaries (optional).

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