



# 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 **MT0000014**  
SITENAME **Il-Ballut ta' Marsaxlokk**

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## 1. SITE IDENTIFICATION

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<b>1.1 Type</b> B	<b>1.2 Site code</b> MT0000014
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### 1.3 Site name

Il-Ballut ta' Marsaxlokk
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<b>1.4 First Compilation date</b>	<b>1.5 Update date</b>
2004-04	2018-05

### 1.6 Respondent:

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

### 1.7 Site indication and designation / classification dates

<b>Date site classified as SPA:</b>	0000-00
<b>National legal reference of SPA designation</b>	No data
<b>Date site proposed as SCI:</b>	2004-04
<b>Date site confirmed as SCI:</b>	2008-03
<b>Date site designated as SAC:</b>	2016-12
<b>National legal reference of SAC designation:</b>	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**

14.552

**Latitude**

35.8406

### 2.2 Area [ha]:

23.34

### 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
1310 <b>B</b>			0.02		G	B	C	C	C
1410 <b>B</b>			0.08		G	B	B	B	B
1420 <b>B</b>			0.78		G	B	B	B	B
92D0 <b>B</b>			0.12		G	B	C	B	B

**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

#### 4.1 General site character

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Habitat class	% Cover
N03	3.77
N27	82.16
N23	14.07
<b>Total Habitat Cover</b>	<b>99.99999999999999</b>

#### Other Site Characteristics

Il-Ballut ta' Marsaxlokk was originally a series of fishponds which were dredged to make way for a quay in the 1950s. It eventually developed into a marshland owing to the presence of a seasonal watercourse bringing fresh water into the marsh. It is now one of the few remaining salt marshes in the Maltese Islands. This site is also important since plant communities here show a remarkable difference to those found in the northern part of the island, suggesting a restricted distribution of the biota found at Il-Ballut.

#### 4.2 Quality and importance

The Il-Ballut marshland represents one of the best *Juncetalia maritimi* community of the Maltese Islands. A series of pools with brackish water are also found within the area. The vegetation in these pools is limited mostly to algal growth and partly submerged plants such as *Juncus maritimus*. Regenerating Tamarisk *africana* and *Phragmites australis* are found growing along the banks. A number of species with a restricted distribution in the Maltese Islands are known from the area, including the endangered *Carex extensa* and the small *Atriplex portulacoides* (=Halimione portulacoides). The latter was introduced in the area as a rescue measure. The saltmarsh is surrounded by an embankment consisting of material excavated during the construction of the Power Station some metres away from the marsh. The planted and regenerating Tamarisk *africana* trees together with *Atriplex halimus* stabilise the embankment. Part of the embankment is also colonised by *Phragmites australis* intermixed with Tamarisk *africana*. *Brachygluta globulicolis aubei* and *Brachygluta simplex hipponensis* are both listed as critically endangered in the Red Data Book. These beetles have a restricted distribution in the Maltese Islands and are associated with roots of halophytic plants in salt marshes. The endangered *Hydrobia acuta* is a brackish water mollusc confined to saline marshlands. The population found at Il-Ballut is the largest recorded population in the Maltese Islands. It is also Red Data Book listed. *Paludinella cf. littorina* is a brackish water mollusc which may be easily overlooked due to its small size and cryptic habit. It has a restricted distribution in the Maltese Islands. Il-Ballut is also the only reported locality for *Nemotelus brachystomus* which is very rare and highly restricted in distribution. *Armadilloniscus littoralis* is found under stones and under organic remains on sand in the area, which represents its only extant locality in the Maltese Islands. The protected, Siculo-Maltese endemic *Stenosis melitana* is also found under stones in the area. Very little is known about *Aphaniosoma grisescens* which is confined to coastal waters and saline marshlands. It is very rare and vulnerable in the Maltese Islands and is only reported from Il-Ballut. The Il-Ballut marsh is also very important for a number of invertebrates associated with saline marshlands, including beetles and gastropods, some of which have a restricted distribution in the Maltese Islands. The beetle *Brachygluta simplex hipponensis* is one such example. This beetle is recorded only from Il-Ballut and two other localities in the Maltese Islands. The marsh backs a small sandy beach, formerly colonised by an embryo dune community based on *Cakile maritima* and *Matthiola tricuspidata*. This beach is now eroding following some engineering works in connection with the construction of a breakwater. The marshland is connected to the sea by means of culverts. The contiguous marine area (although not part of this Natura 2000 site) is unique in that it houses an assemblage based on *Caulerpa prolifera*, common in this region but absent from other marine sites in the Maltese Islands, and the Lessepsian sea grass *Halophila stipulacea*. *Caulerpa racemosa* has been recorded and is invading the area.

#### 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	E02		b
L	B01.02		o
L	E03.03		i
M	E01		o
L	A07		i
M	J02.05.01		o
M	G05.01		i

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

L	G05.04		i
M	K01.02		i
M	K02.03		i
H	K01.01		b
M	E01.02		o

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-Ballut ta' Marsaxlokk Link: <a href="https://era.org.mt/en/Pages/Natura-2000-Management-Planning.aspx">https://era.org.mt/en/Pages/Natura-2000-Management-Planning.aspx</a>
<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:

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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