



# 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 **MT0000016**  
SITENAME **Filfla u l-Gzejjer ta' Madwarha**

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## 1. SITE IDENTIFICATION

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<b>1.1 Type</b> C	<b>1.2 Site code</b> MT0000016
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### 1.3 Site name

Filfla u l-Gzejjer ta' Madwarha
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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>	natura2000@mepa.org.mt

### 1.7 Site indication and designation / classification dates

<b>Date site classified as SPA:</b>	2004-04
<b>National legal reference of SPA designation</b>	Government Notice No. 112 of 2007, in accordance with the Flora, Fauna and Natural Habitats Protection Regulations, 2016 (S.L. 549.44)
<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)



						Min	Max				Pop.	Con.	Iso.	Glo.
B	A010	<a href="#">Calonectris diomedea</a>			r	100	200	p		G	B	B	C	B
B	A014	<a href="#">Hydrobates pelagicus</a>			r	5000	8000	p		G	A	B	C	B
I	4060	<a href="#">Lampedusa imitatrix</a>	Yes		p				P	P	C	B	A	B
B	A464	<a href="#">Puffinus yelkouan</a>			r					P	C	B	C	B

**Group:** A = Amphibians, B = Birds, F = Fish, I = Invertebrates, M = Mammals, P = Plants, R = Reptiles

**S:** in case that the data on species are sensitive and therefore have to be blocked for any public access enter: yes

**NP:** in case that a species is no longer present in the site enter: x (optional)

**Type:** p = permanent, r = reproducing, c = concentration, w = wintering (for plant and non-migratory species use permanent)

**Unit:** i = individuals, p = pairs or other units according to the Standard list of population units and codes in accordance with Article 12 and 17 reporting (see [reference portal](#))

**Abundance categories (Cat.):** C = common, R = rare, V = very rare, P = present - to fill if data are deficient (DD) or in addition to population size information

**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); VP = 'Very poor' (use this category only, if not even a rough estimation of the population size can be made, in this case the fields for population size can remain empty, but the field "Abundance categories" has to be filled in)

### 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
N05	78.57
N03	21.43
<b>Total Habitat Cover</b>	<b>100</b>

### Other Site Characteristics

Filfla is an offshore rocky islet consisting mainly of calcareous rock, although some clay is also present. It consists of an elevated Upper Coralline Limestone plateau, which is bounded by steep escarpments and screes. Blue Clay is found at the base of the Upper Coralline Limestone. This layer acts as a Perched Aquifer, which allows for the formation of freshwater springs. The screes of loose boulders and rock debris which surround the base of the cliff are mainly due to military bombing and target practise. This practice stopped in 1971. This island was formerly part of the mainland, but geological faulting resulted in the formation of the islet. Through its isolation, Filfla supports a unique and very important ecosystem, including a number of endemic species. The plateau is colonised by garrigue / steppe vegetation as well as some halophylic species, particularly shrubs. The dominant permanently visible feature is the low shrub Suaeda vera. During spring, the surface would also have a very dense cover of large plants such as Allium commutatum. A valley-like depression found to the east of the plateau is characterised by a heavy Lavatera arborea cover.

### 4.2 Quality and importance

The dominant permanently visible feature on the Filfla plateau is the low shrub Suaeda vera, determining the habitat as a Mediterranean and thermo-Atlantic halophilous scrub (Sarcocornetea fruticosi). During spring, there is also a very dense cover of Allium commutatum, whose specimens flower is much larger than most mainland specimens. In most publications on Maltese flora this plant appears as A. ampeloprasum, a species which is absent from Malta. The Filfla population might be a new undescribed entity. Such large leeks similar to the ones on Filfla can be found on Haġret il-Ġeneral and nearby Dwejra area (Gozo), another Natura 2000 site. Other plants on the plateau include Daucus sp., Cynara cardunculus, Limbarda crithmoides, and Capparis orientalis. A species of Tulostoma (a gasteromycete fungus, not determined to species level) is also found in the area. A number of important fauna are present on the plateau. These include a number of snails. Lampedusa imitatrix gattoi, which is unique to Filfla, for example, is an important protected endemic species listed in Annex II of the Habitats Directive which is endangered due to it being confined solely to Filfla and Miġra Ferħa (Malta). The population of Filfla is

distinguished from the Maltese door snails due to its distinct conchological characters; hence why it is known as *Lampedusa imitatrix gattoi*. *Trochoidea spratti despotti*, which is also endemic to Filfla, is a snail that occurs as a distinct conchological form and is protected through national law. Other species include: *Akis subterranea*, which has been given a near threatened status, is an Italo-Maltese endemic and is known from solely from the island of Filfla apart from a few other localities; *Cyclodinus debilis*, a species of biogeographical interest, which, from the very limited data available, is probably very rare and has a restricted distribution across the Maltese Islands; and *Mogoplistes squamiger*: a very rare cricket, limited to coastal areas and which has been recorded from Xemxija (Malta) and observed on Filfla. The habitat considered as Calcareous rocky slopes with chasmophytic vegetation are covered with a selection of species. These include the rare annual *Senecio leucanthemifolius*, which occurs mainly in the western tip of the plateau. This species is locally rare, with a restricted distribution across the Mediterranean and within the Maltese Islands themselves. It is a very variable species. The systematic value of its characteristic "ability" of producing distinct localised races remains uncertain. The Maltese populations still need to be studied further. *Senecio bicolor* is also present. This is known to be sub-endemic to the Maltese Islands. The screes of the islet of Filfla have proved to be ideal breeding sites for certain sea-bird species, in particular *Hydrobates pelagicus*. By far the largest colony of this species is restricted to the islet of Filfla. It is locally vulnerable and restricted in range and it is important to note that Filfla supports one of the largest known breeding colonies of the Storm Petrel in the Mediterranean (5000-8000 pairs). The seabirds *Calonectris diomedea* and *Larus cachinnas (michahellis)* also breed at this site, with Filfla serving as a good breeding station for the former. The breeding success of this species, however, seems to be declining across the Maltese Islands. It is possible that *Puffinus yelkouan* also breeds on Filfla. *Hydrobates pelagicus* and *Calonectris diomedea* are protected through national legislation. Internationally, they are protected through the SPABIM - Annex II, Bern - Appendix II, in Resolution No. 6 of 1998 of the Standing Committee of the Bern Convention and under the Birds Directive (79/409/EEC) - Annex I. *Larus cachinnas (michahellis)* is locally vulnerable, particularly as it only breeds in a few colonies at the southwestern coast of Malta and Gozo, and on Filfla. It is also the main predator of *Hydrobates pelagicus*. Several tens of pairs breed below the cliffs of the islet. In view of the above-mentioned bird species, Filfla has been classified as an 'Important Bird Area of EU importance' by BirdLife Malta and as an 'Important Bird Area' by BirdLife International - hence it is a Global Important Bird Area. Other important fauna on Filfla include *Podarcis filfolensis filfolensis*, which is endemic to Filfla, protected nationally and internationally (Bern Appendix II). The populations of *Podarcis filfolensis filfolensis* on the various Maltese Islands show differences between each other, with *Podarcis filfolensis filfolensis* being the largest of the *Podarcis filfolensis* lizards. In addition, the two gecko species found across the Maltese Islands, both locally vulnerable, have also been reported from Filfla. These are *Tarentola mauritanica* and *Hemidactylus turcicus turcicus*. These are listed in Appendix III (protected fauna) of the Bern Convention (1979).

#### 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]
L	K01.01		i
M	K04.01		i
M	F06		i
M	K05.01		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)

#### 5.1 Designation types at national and regional level:

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#### 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: Filfla u l-Gzejjer ta' Madwarha 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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