

WIED IL-MIZIEB

PROTECTED SITE



Did you know?

This valley was once used as a quarry. After having extracted the limestone, the holes were filled with soil and used as agricultural land, making it an important agricultural area.

Description

- Wied il-Mizieb, located within the limits of the town of il-Mellieħa, is a small dry valley hewn in coralline limestone, characterised by a seasonal watercourse.
- The valley sides are characterised by garrigue and steppic communities which cover about 60% of the area.
- The largest native population of the Sandarac Gum Tree (*Tetraclinis articulata*) is found in this site.

Ecology and importance

- Various rare, threatened and endemic plant and animal species are known from the area, endemic species being those that are found only in the Maltese Islands.



Maltese Spurge - *Euphorbia melitensis*



Mediterranean Thyme - *Thymbra capitata*



Sandarac Gum Tree - *Tetraclinis articulata*

- Animal species include the Maghrebian Mouse-eared Bat (*Myotis punicus*), the Soprano Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*) and the endemic Swallowtail Butterfly (*Papilio machaon melitensis*).
- Animals associated with the Sandarac Gum Tree community include the endemic and endangered beetle *Torneuma strictum* which is found in soil at 10-30cm depth under the Sandarac Gum Tree and the endemic beetle *Microptinus melitensis* found in leaf litter under the Sandarac Gum Trees.
- The most important plant species of the valley are the Sandarac Gum Tree, the Mediterranean Thyme (*Thymbra capitata*) and the Mediterranean Heath (*Erica multiflora*) as well as the Maltese Shrubby Kidney-Vetch (*Anthyllis hermanniae* subsp. *melitensis*) and the Maltese Spurge (*Euphorbia melitensis*), both of which are endemic shrubs.

Threats

- The main threat is the introduction of species incompatible with the Sandarac Gum Tree.
- Another threat is illegal dumping in the area.



Maghrebian Mouse-eared Bat - *Myotis punicus*

