



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 MT0000003
SITENAME Il-Ballut tal-Wardija

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- [1. SITE IDENTIFICATION](#)
- [2. SITE LOCATION](#)
- [3. ECOLOGICAL INFORMATION](#)
- [4. SITE DESCRIPTION](#)
- [6. SITE MANAGEMENT](#)
- [7. MAP OF THE SITE](#)

1. SITE IDENTIFICATION

1.1 Type B	1.2 Site code MT0000003	Back to top
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1.3 Site name

Il-Ballut tal-Wardija

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

2.1 Site-centre location [decimal degrees]:

[Back to top](#)

Longitude 14.3863 **Latitude** 35.9406

2.2 Area [ha]:

20.37

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

[Back to top](#)

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
3170B			0.02		M	B	C	B	B
5330B			1.79		G	B	C	B	B
9320B			0.88		G	B	B	B	B
9340B			1.11		G	B	A	B	B
9540B			5.52		G	B	A	A	A

- **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

Species					Population in the site						Site assessment			
G	Code	Scientific Name	S	NP	T	Size		Unit	Cat.	D. qual.	A B C D	A B C		
						Min	Max				Pop.	Con.	Iso.	Glo.
P	4102	Anacamptis urvilleana			p				R	P	C	B	A	B
P	4092	Elatine gussonei			p				P	DD	C	B	A	C
P	4105	Ophrys melitensis			p				P	DD	C	B	A	C

- **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

[Back to top](#)

Habitat class	% Cover
N23	0.1
N27	39.42
N18	5.45
N17	27.88
N08	27.05
N06	0.1
Total Habitat Cover	100

Other Site Characteristics

The area is characterised by a Holm Oak forest remnant dominated by *Quercus ilex*, (Maltese: il-balluta), from which the place derives its name. It supports the oldest known population of such trees, some of which are very old; of an estimated age of 500 - 900 years old, possibly older. They are amongst the oldest trees in the Maltese Islands. A self-regenerating coniferous woodland, based on planted Aleppo pine trees, *Pinus halepensis*, (Maltese: iż-żnuber), is also present. Labiate garrigue or ericaceous heath dominates in other areas. Certain parts are under active cultivation. The locality benefits from a continual supply of freshwater from permanent springs in the Għajn Astas area, especially the Għajn Ballut spring.

4.2 Quality and importance

The area, being characterised by a very old long-established Holm Oak forest remnant, in itself a very rare and valuable community, houses a number of threatened and endemic species. Also present are fungi, xylophilous species, saproxylic species and cryptofauna. The forest remnant is typified by various trees, which include a number of rare, threatened and/or protected species, such as: *Quercus ilex*, *Rhamnus alaternus*, *Myrtus communis*. *Ceratonia siliqua*, *Olea europaea*, *Pistacia lentiscus*, *Punica granatum* and *Crataegus monogyna* are among the important components of the forest remnants and undergrowth of the area. Also present at the site is a stand of pine trees that were originally planted but are now naturalised. Among these are *Pinus halepensis* trees. The site is known to be rich in mycoflora, most of which are either exclusive to the forest remnant, or else confined to this and other forest remnants, thereby being equally rare and vulnerable and with a restricted distribution in the Maltese Islands. Amongst the important macrofungi are: *Amanita ovoidea*, *Calvatia excipuliforme*, *Cantharellus cibarius*, *Hygrocybe ovina*, *Russula xerampelina*, which are only known from this site; the following are known from this and another site: *Helvella crispa*, *Helvella lacunose*; other examples are: *Inonotus indicus* (= *Aurificaria indica*) (has a restricted distribution in the Maltese Islands and the Mediterranean, Malta being the only known European station), *Phaeolus schweinitzii* (has a restricted distribution in the Maltese Islands; record from this site possibly referable to *Inonotus indicus*), *Xerocomus chrysenteron* s.l. (has a restricted distribution in the Maltese Islands; the nominal form is found at this site and at Mtaħleb, var. *vesicolor* at Mgiebah and Wied Hażrun; different populations are distinguishable). A number of myxomycetes are also found in the area, most of which have been recorded on dead wood or dead leaves. Most of such species are known to have a restricted distribution across the Maltese Islands. The following are those that have been reported from this site: *Comatricha anomala*, *Craterium aureum*, *Diderma spumarioides*, *Didymium clavus*, *Lycogala epidendrum*, *Physarum leucopus*, *Physarum melleum*, *Trichia lutescens*, *Trichia persimilis* - which have a restricted distribution in the Maltese Islands and known only from this locality; *Arcyria minuta*, *Arcyria pomiformis*, *Badhamia foliicola*, *Didymium squamulosum* - which have a restricted distribution in the Maltese Islands and known from two localities; *Physarum nutans*, *Physarum viride* - reported as common from all localities visited. A number of lichens have also been recorded from this site, with a number of them having a restricted distribution across the Maltese Islands, some having been recorded from one locality only. Amongst the species recorded from site are: *Arthonia didyma*, *Graphina sophistica* var. *melitensis*, *Opegrapha lilacina* and *Urceolaria scruposa* var. *bryophylla*. The area as a whole is characterised by a mixed heath and labiate garrigue with *Erica multiflora*, *Teucrium fruticans* and *Thymbra capitata* (dominant species). The said garrigue is very important for a number of rare, threatened and/or endemic flora, as well as plants with a restricted distribution in the Mediterranean. A selection of these follows: *Anacamptis urvilleana*, *Asphodelus fistulosus*, *Carlina involucrate*, *Chiliadenus bocconeii*, *Clematis cirrhosa*, *Convolvulus tricolor*, *Juniperus phoenicea*, *Orobanche muteliforma melitensis*, *Ranunculus bulbosus*, *Satureja microphylla* (= *Micromeria microphylla*), *Senecio bicolor*. The fauna of the forest remnant is also peculiar, and mostly exceedingly vulnerable once it is dependant on the constant forest cover. It is mostly comprised of invertebrates, most of which live embedded in the soil, leaf litter, in dead branches of trees, under the bark of trees or damp stones. A number of endemic and sub-endemic species are known from the area, including two soil-dwelling coleoptera known only from deep soils typical of forest and maquis remnants, namely *Torneuma maltense* and *Torneuma strictum*; the latter insect has been described from Il-Ballut tal-Wardija, which therefore is to be considered its type locality. A selected list of important fauna associated with this forest remnant follows: *Aleurotrachelus rhamnocola*, *Anthaxia scutellaris*, *Anthaxia thalassophila* (= *Buprestis grammica* = *Anthaxia scutellaris*

auct.), Bathytropa scombrii, Chamaeleo chamaeleon, Glomeris distichella, Lauria cylindrical, Porcellio obsoletus, Tillioidea unifasciata (= Clerus fasciatus = Tillus unifasciatus = Attelabus serraticornis = Attelabus formicarius minor), Torneuma maltense, Torneuma strictum, Tycomorphus integer (= Tychus integer). From the general area, a number of other important fauna have also been reported, such as: Bactra furfurana, Discoglossus pictus, Eptesicus serotinus (= Vespertilio serotinus), Podarcis filfolensis maltensis, Rhipiphorus subdipterus.

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	I01		i
M	A08		b
M	A07		b

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:

[Back to top](#)

5.2 Relation of the described site with other sites:

5.3 Site designation (optional)

6. SITE MANAGEMENT

6.1 Body(ies) responsible for the site management:

[Back to top](#)

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 tal-Wardija 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

[Back to top](#)

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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