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# Ecological services in the Mediterranean wetlands

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## Abstract

Ecosystem services, a topic gaining global importance, is also becoming an effective approach on supporting the management of complex systems like wetlands. Many international agreements have started to place ecosystem services at the core of their goals. In fact one of the targets for sustainable development goals of the United Nations was identified recently as ensuring the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of inland freshwater ecosystems and their services, including wetlands, in line with obligations under international agreements by 2020. A high diversity of goods and services ranging from coastal protection, erosion control, flood protection, water supply, water purification, carbon sequestration, maintenance of fishing, tourism, recreation, culture to spiritual and religious benefits and bequest values are listed among the ecosystem goods and services provided by wetlands in the world. Until 2007, more than 360 studies were carried out at the global scale focusing on the valuation of provisioning, regulating, habitat and cultural services provided by different type of wetland ecosystems. Today, in parallel with economic assessments, mapping ecosystem services is becoming a common approach and there are increasing efforts to integrate spatial information about the goods and services provided by the wetland ecosystems into the management decisions. We will present case studies from the Mediterranean Region successfully integrating information on ecosystem services into the process of decision making and applying these decisions in wetland management.

**Keywords:** ecosystem services, wetlands, Mediterranean, management, decision support tool

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