



PRESS RELEASE

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The Tour du Valat defends Mediterranean Wetlands at the IPBES Plenary Meeting

The Tour du Valat is an observer member of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES). We will be attending its 7th Plenary Meeting from 29th April to 4th May 2019 in Paris, and will take advantage of this opportunity to promote the cause of Mediterranean Wetlands and the Nature-based Solutions that they provide.

[IPBES](#) is an independent intergovernmental organisation created in 2012 by its Member-States. Like the IPCC with regard to climate change, IPBES acts as an interface between science and politics to foster the cause of ecosystem services and biodiversity, currently in the grip of a crisis of unprecedented scale and rapidity.

The [Tour du Valat](#), as a research institute for the conservation of Mediterranean Wetlands, will make good use of the [7th IPBES Plenary Meeting](#) from 29th April to 4th May 2019 in Paris to stress the crucial role played by Mediterranean wetlands (MWs), in terms of both biodiversity and the essential ecosystem services they provide for people in one of the most densely populated regions of the world.

To this end the Tour du Valat has just published a [strategic position statement](#). Its principal request is that the IPBES Member-States take advantage of the Platform's second work programme, which will be discussed in Paris, to obtain strategic reinforcement concerning the knowledge required and the really effective methods to be put in place to reverse the current loss of biodiversity, which is detrimental to its contributions to the future of humanity. One option consists in promoting the Nature-based Solutions provided by MWs.

Better use and management of MWs could contribute to several political objectives worldwide, in particular biodiversity conservation objectives (the Aichi Targets), Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and international climate change commitments (Paris Agreement).

Reminders:

- Whereas 35 % of wetlands worldwide have disappeared since 1970, the figure is a massive 48% in the Mediterranean Basin!

- 36 % of species dependent on MWs are now threatened, while the abundance of, reptiles, fish, and amphibians living there has fallen by 35 % since 1990
- There has been a dramatic reduction, ranging from – 25 % to – 40 %, in the flow rate of most Mediterranean watercourses during the last 40 years, mainly due to pumping for agriculture, correlated to a sharp degradation in water quality
- Climate change will only exacerbate these trends, at a time when the population of the Mediterranean Basin has increased by a third since 1990 (48 % in coastal areas)
- MWs can provide real, effective, sustainable, and relatively inexpensive “Nature-based Solutions” (NbS) to the benefit of local people and their well-being, including: flood mitigation, water purification, carbon storage, protection against marine erosion, the provision of fish, agricultural produce and construction materials, and leisure activities

Despite the worrying assessments already drawn up by IPBES, it is therefore still not too late to shift to a second phase in actions to safeguard biodiversity and ecosystem services. The NbS provided by Mediterranean wetlands are an essential avenue for the future, which will be promoted by the Tour du Valat and its partners at the next IPBES meeting in Paris.

Find out more:

- Report: [*Mediterranean Wetlands Outlook 2: Solutions for sustainable Mediterranean wetlands*](#). 2018. Tour du Valat
- Science & Management booklet: [*Nature-based Solutions*](#)
- Tour du Valat Newsletter [*Restoration of the Former Camargue Saltworks, a Nature-based Solution*](#)

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