

Fichas Técnicas de Humedales Mediterráneos/Mediterranean Wetlands Technical Data



Lac Oubeira (Algeria) *Lago Oubeira (Argelia)*

LOCATION

About 50 km east of the city of Annaba, and 15 km west of the border with Tunisia, in the Wilaya (province) of Et-Tarf, northeasternmost Algeria.
Coordinates: 36 °N, 8 °E

WETLAND TYPE

The site forms part of the extensive El Kala wetland complex. Includes a shallow, only a few metres deep, eutrophic, freshwater lake fed by runoff from the wooded hills which surround the wetland on three sides. The northern, seaward side of the site is formed by a major sand dune system.

HYDROLOGICAL NOTES

At times of exceptionally high flow in the Oued El Kebir, backflow into the lake may occur.

BIOLOGICAL /ECOLOGICAL NOTES

The site is linked with the Mediterranean Sea by the river Oued El Kebir, and supports extensive beds of *Potamogeton pectinatus* and *Trapa natans*, which are rare in Algeria. The lake may play a major role in the recharge of regional groundwater. Especially for the globally threatened species *Oxyura leucocephala* the area is of particular importance, but other wintering water birds rely on the site as well. Other species include *Anas penelope*, *A. strepera*, *Aythya ferina* and *A. fuligula*. Lac Oubeira supports an abundant fish fauna.

HUMAN USES

Local people use the area around the lake for grazing of livestock and agriculture. Surface and groundwater are extracted from the lake for domestic consumption and rural purposes.

CONSERVATION MEASURES

The site's conservation and management can be incorporated into a Regional Plan for wise use and conservation of land and water resources.

ADVERSE FACTORS

One of the problems was the introduction of carp fry. In 1985 and 1986 five to six million carp fry had been introduced to the site. But in the summer of 1990 the lake had dried out completely, owing to a combination of drought and water extraction. Although desiccation of the lake was a serious matter, it had at least served to kill the introduced carp, which were having an adverse impact on submerged vegetation. Other problems are degradation of fringing vegetation, water extraction for irrigation and domestic consumption, development of neighbouring land for agriculture and grazing and urban expansion put the site under pressure. The impact of the Mexenna Dam being built on the Oued El Kebir to supply the city of El Kala with drinking water should be considered. It was felt that the dam could have a serious impact on other wetlands in the El Kala region, but that Lac Oubeira would be relatively unaffected. The ongoing extraction of surface and groundwater to serve the needs of agriculture will be the most serious long-term threat to the site's ecological character.

From: A Directory of Wetlands of International Importance.
Ramsar Convention Bureau and Wetlands International, 1999