

**THE MEDITERRANEAN DISTURBANCE WETLANDS MANAGEMENT IN  
ALGERIA: A CASE STUDY ON CHOTT ECH CHERGUI**

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The Chott Ech Chergui, the second largest Chott (the depression surrounding a salt marsh or lake) in North Africa, is an extensive closed depression containing permanent and seasonal saline, brackish, and freshwater lakes and pools, as well as hot springs. The Ramsar Office has approved 855,500 hectares of Saida (name of the wetland area) as wetlands of international importance in 2001. The site is representative of the Mediterranean region in the diversity of habitats which are included, from evergreen steppe areas to the surroundings of the Chott and the "Sebkhas" (salted lakes) which are completely without vegetation, such as purely aquatic lake and marsh vegetation. Many threatened and vulnerable plant species are present here, as well as at least two vulnerable species of Anatidae (biological family) and it is an important nesting and wintering site for several species of migratory waterbirds. The area is used by agriculture, including livestock production, particularly sheep and camels. The thermal springs offer possibilities for tourism. Overgrazing, poaching, desertification, and deforestation for firewood are seen as potential threats of this Ramsar site's biodiversity and ecosystems. The Mediterranean wetlands habitat is affected by human activities ranging from coastal protection and agricultural use to industrial, recreational and nature protection claims. Salt marsh grazing by livestock will play a key role for the maintenance of stop-over areas for migratory birds and is a significant management tool at restored salt marshes. The wetlands problems often originate from human ideas and values. So, sustainable natural resource management and local participation in policy making and management process would be the fundamental solution for wetland management and protection of its ecosystems.

The objective of this paper is to obtain understanding about Mediterranean wetlands characteristics and their importance in the local economy and ecology. The discussion will be limited within adequate management strategies and recommendations for future development of Chott Ech Chergui wetland in Algeria.