

COMPARISON OF WATERBIRDS COMMUNITIES IN A COASTAL WETLAND: THE IMPORTANCE OF SALINAS

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ABSTRACT

Coastal wetlands provide habitat for large numbers and different species of Waterbirds. In these regions, a man-modified habitat generally found is Salinas. As an step in attempting to understand the differences in bird communities between salinas (evaporated ponds, pre-basin) and saltmarshes, the number of waterbirds was counted in the wetland of Megalo Emvolo, Thessaloniki, Hellas. Bird counts took place during spring months of 1991 when Salinas were inactive and of years 1997 - 2001 when salinas were active. Counts in evaporation ponds were richer in species and bird abundance from pre-basin and saltmarsh in inactive period and from saltmarsh during the active period. Bird community of evaporation ponds in inactive period had low similarity with the communities of pre-basin and saltmarsh, in active period this was happen only for saltmarsh. Species showing clear preferences for evaporation ponds were Avocet (*Recurvirostra avosetta*) and oystercatcher (*Haemantopus ostralegus*) - for pre-basin was greater flamingo (*Phoenicopterus ruber*) - for saltmarch was garganey (*Anas querquedula*).