

Transitional waters in transitional societies

Transitional aquatic ecosystems as river Mouth Ecosystems, Wetlands and Lagoons, are crucial ecosystems for both ecological processes, such as the maintenance of biosphere's atmosphere and structures, particularly as regards bird and fish biodiversity conservation, with an exceptional high value as natural heritage patches in the coastal landscapes. Moreover, these fragile environments along which coasts most of civilization and early development of human societies occurred in the past, supported for centuries food and shelter to human societies, enabled movement and trades and determined locally development of cities as melting-pots of cultures, traditions, religions and simply people. The impressive development of human activities in the last few centuries changed these relationships and the original ecosystem co-adaptive management was simply reduced to resource exploitation to sustain a geometric economic growth. This dramatic change in the approach to ecosystem management had its most significant effects on the coastal areas, determining threaten to ecosystem health of transitional and coastal waters and arising the problem of sustainability. Transitional water patches then suffered from spatial fragmentation, which also become a fragmentation of interests, administrative competencies, knowledge and expertise determining such a loss of value of these ecosystems for most of their potential end-users, which represents a conceptual and fundamental threat to their conservation and sustainable development.

As a group of scientists, administrators, managers and environmentalists with a specific interest in the transitional waters in the CADSES area we thought that this fragmentation and the resulting low value of these spectacular ecosystems in the concept of people is a stronger threat to their conservation than any source of urban and industrial pollution. The project TWReferenceNET (see project presentation herein) was designed specifically to address these weakness points and this Newsletter is one of the tool that TWReferenceNET is developing to reach its major aims.

Transitional Waters Bulletin in the CADSES area wants to be an open space of discussion on most of the major topics, events, achievements, proposal and attempts of managements dealing with transitional waters in the EcoRegional area. It is open to all stakeholders and end-users and publishing is allowed to any contributor through the dedicated website link. To facilitate readings, the Newsletter publish contribution in two languages (English and the Author language) with abstracts in all the project languages. The success of this initiative is linked to the interest and collaboration of all stakeholders; therefore I encourage all of you to contribute actively to the Newsletter, reporting particular cases of threat to ecosystem health, of pilot action of conservation and management, suggesting particularly valuable environments, enlarging our mailing list, publicizing local, national or international events and so on. Probably more than for other journals, the Newsletter has to be owned by its readership and I can ensure you that as a project editorial group. We will put all our energy to reach this goal.