Osprey in the Mistras Lagoon
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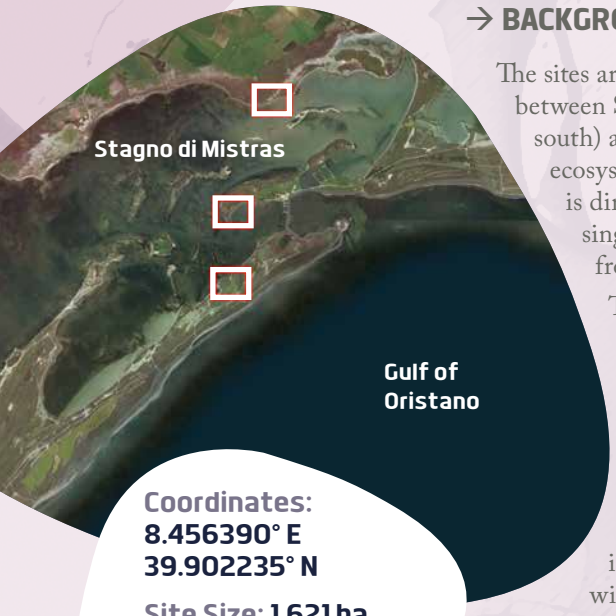
ARTIFICIAL NEST FOR OSPREY

MISTRAS LAGOON - CABRAS, SARDINIA, ITALY



Coordinates:
8.456390° E
39.902235° N

Site Size: 1.621 ha

Point / Punctual Interventions in: 40 ha

→ BACKGROUND

The sites are located in the Mistras Lagoon, between San Giovanni di Sinis (to the south) and Torregrande (to the east). This ecosystem extends for about 600 hectares, is directly connected with the sea by a single opening, and does not benefit from significant freshwater inputs.

The higher salinity of the pond, caused by evaporation, is reflected both by the aquatic vegetation, which is limited to a few species, as well as the vegetation of halophilic wet meadows, which is adapted to high salinity. The Mistras Lagoon is recognized as a site of international importance for wetland wildlife, and it is listed under the Ramsar Convention.

The species which the restoration activity aims to support is the osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*). In the 1960s the osprey was extinct in Sardinia, mainly due to the massive doses of DDT used to fight malaria, along with direct persecution. According to the latest monitoring carried out by the Osprey Research Group of Sardinia, the population now numbers 22 individuals, but they are only present during the winter. Artificial nesting structures could help a few individuals to stay on to nest in the spring and summer.

Wetland Type:

H – Intertidal marshes; includes salt marshes, salt meadows, saltings, raised salt marshes; includes tidal brackish and freshwater marshes

J – Coastal brackish/saline lagoons; brackish to saline lagoons with at least one relatively narrow connection to the sea

R – Seasonal/intermittent saline/ brackish/alkaline lakes and flats

E – Sand, shingle or pebble shores; includes sand bars, spits and sandy islets; includes dune systems and humid dune slacks

Protection Status:

Protected at international level (Ramsar site, Natura 2000 site): ITB030034 (SCI); ITB034006 (SPA); IT233 (RAMSAR); IT218 (IBA)

WETLAND BASED SOLUTIONS

→ BEFORE RESTORATION

→ THREATS AND PRESSURES

Critical areas of focus for the intervention include:

- An absence of natural elements for roosting and potential nesting (the area does not have widespread tree species)
- The level of disturbance appears limited in winter but increases in summer, mainly because of recreational activities – hiking and, to a lesser extent, tourism. The lack of (natural or artificial) elements on the site above a certain height means it's easy for individual ospreys to be disturbed.

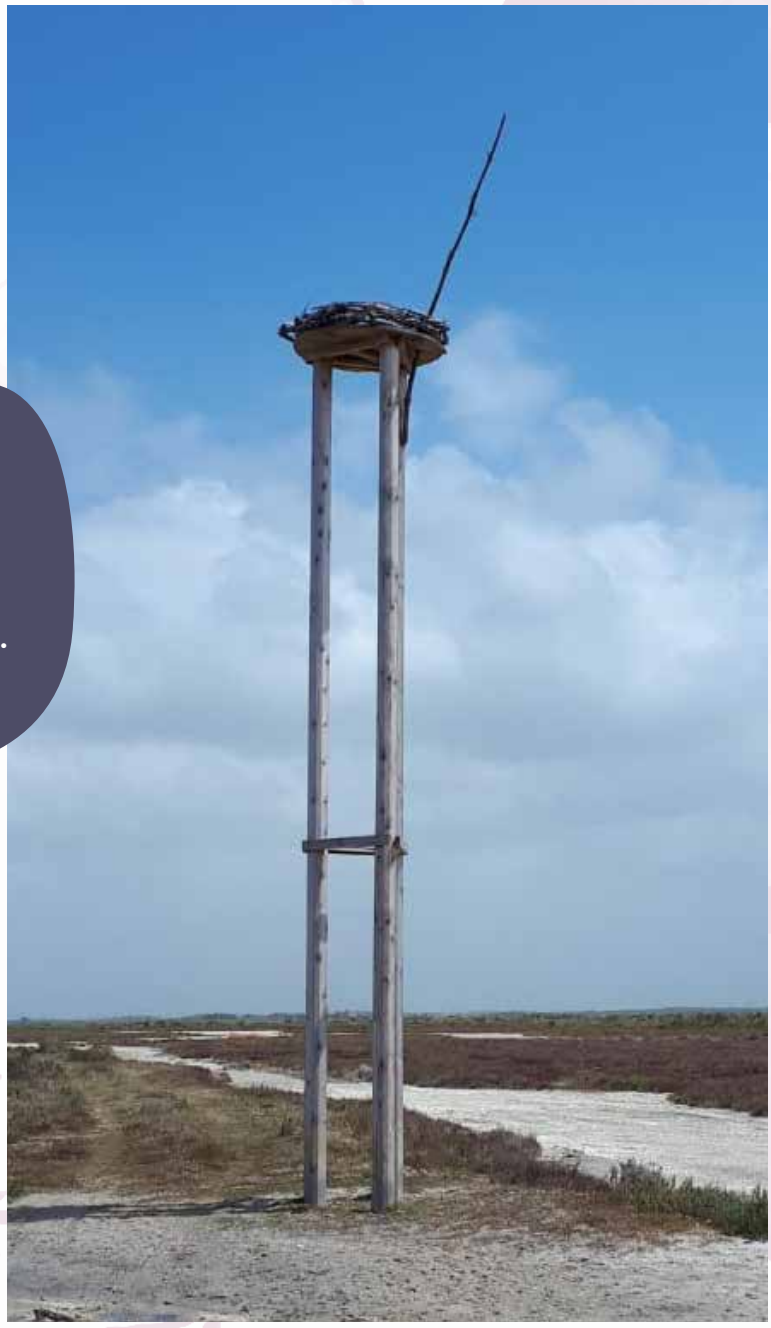
The restoration targets three particular spots.

→ OBJECTIVES

The goal of the action is to support birds, in particular ospreys, in the Gulf of Oristano.

As part of the Maristanis project, the aim is to create and place artificial osprey nests in SCIs/SPAs in order to attract nesting individuals, particularly around the Mistras Lagoon. The idea is that ospreys will arrive during their pre-reproductive migration and be encouraged to stop and stay.

The osprey is a species whose management, protection and preservation is provided for by EU legislation (Birds Directive 2009/147/EC, Annex I) and international agreements (Bonn Convention, Annex II). The location is recognised as a strictly protected area by the Bern Convention, all. II.



One of the artificial nests installed in the Mistras Lagoon

→ IMPACT

While the last census confirmed the presence of an encouraging 17 individual ospreys at Mistras Lagoon, none has yet nested there.

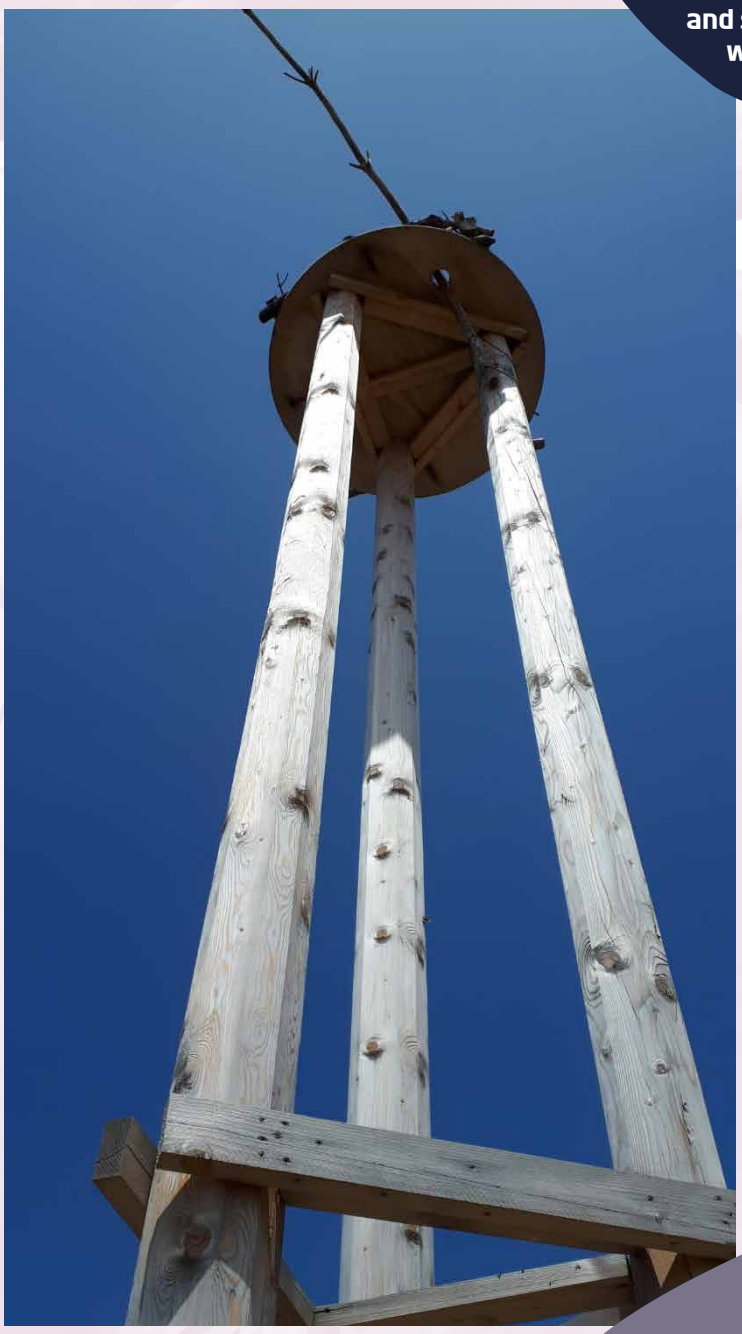
→ WHO BENEFITS?

The presence of ospreys during winter continues to attract birdwatchers both regionally and internationally.

The interventions generate benefits for the entire Mistras Lagoon and surrounding wetlands.

→ AFTER RESTORATION

PROJECT DATES:
2018 START



→ RESTORATION ACTIONS & METHODOLOGY

Three artificial osprey nests were created and carefully positioned. These consist of 9-metre poles, at the apex of which is a circular base with a metal structure covered with long, flexible branches intertwined to create a nest. Osprey silhouettes were also installed. In addition, the project includes information panels and video monitoring.

→ BUDGET & SOURCE OF FINANCE

Total costs were €7,000, funded under the Maristanis project (MAVA Foundation, MEDSEA Foundation and MPA Sinis).

→ STAKEHOLDERS

Fishers, birdwatchers, scientists, environmental associations.

→ SOCIAL SUPPORT

The restoration work benefited from long-term relationships with local actors built up over the years by MEDSEA staff. All the main local environmental associations took part in a technical roundtable to help plan the project.

→ AUTHORITIES SUPPORT

Municipality of Cabras.

→ OTHER PARTNERS

LIPU (Italian Bird Protection League).

"The Oristano region is crossed by water. Where there is water there is life, a life that constantly changes with the seasons."

ALBERTO CHERCHI, BIRDWATCHER AND PHOTOGRAPHER

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→ LESSONS LEARNT

The artificial nests are easily removable structures. This is an action that may work, but its outcome depends on external conditions that are not directly linked to the intervention. Constant monitoring is necessary to adapt nesting support actions as required.

→ REFERENCES

1. www.maristanis.org/index.php/news/natura-e-cultura/il-mondo-negli-occhi-del-falco-la-fotografia-di-alberto-cherchi.htmlnetpdf?fbclid=IwAR3rKj39G-zDMSwzoud3_uDuyAB72EIAN-J4TqA1Wx2vyauA5NuzQXs1DnBC4

→ CONTACT DETAILS

Vania Statzu
vaniastatzu@medseafoundation.org
MEDSEA Foundation

Giorgio Massaro
giorgiomassaro@medseafoundation.org
MEDSEA Foundation

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