

SALTWORKS:
Preserving Saline Coastal Ecosystems

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CONTENTS

SOLAR SALTWORKS PRODUCTION PROCESS EVOLUTION - WETLAND FUNCTION by Nicholas A. Korovessis, Themistokles D. Lekkas.....	11
SOLAR SALTWORKS-AN ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY INDUSTRY by Joseph S. Davis.....	31
CONSERVATION OF MEDITERRANEAN COASTAL SALINE ECOSYSTEMS: THE PRIVATE SECTOR ROLE IN MAINTAINING ECOLOGICAL FUNCTION by Thomas L. Crisman.....	39
THE APPROPRIATE SIZE OF SALTWORKS TO MEET ENVIRONMENTAL AND PRODUCTION REQUIREMENTS by Bernard Moinier.....	49
THE POSTMODERN SALINE LANDSCAPE IN GREECE AND THE EUROPEAN MEDITERRANEAN: SALINAS FOR SALT OR WHAT? by Theodora Petanidou	67
THE ECOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE OF MEDITERRANEAN SALINAS by John G. Walmsley	81

At a global level, the world's total wetland area is continually decreasing due to drainage, cultivation and habitation. It is unnecessary, therefore, to emphasise the importance of safeguarding the remaining wetland areas in the world.

Saltworks produce salt by solar evaporation of seawater since the dawn of human civilisation. Nevertheless, the development of a unique ecosystem in parallel with the salt production process is not well known and is frequently misunderstood. This integrated ecosystem comprises the characteristics of regular and hypersaline wetlands upon which hundreds of bird species are dependent to feed and/or nest. The uniqueness of saltworks consists in presenting that coexistence between development and environmental protection is indeed possible.

The objective of Samos Post Conference Symposium is to provide an overview of solar saltworks ecosystem and its relation to natural coastal saline and hypersaline ecosystems, (i.e. 'Alikí' lake on Lemnos island). The invited expert scientists from all over the world determine the importance and measure the contribution of solar saltworks in preserving wetlands.

It is well known that many international organisations are beginning to realise the ecological importance of modern saltworks and that it should be included in the same bracket as wetlands. I believe that Samos proceedings will be a step in the process of coding the ecological and environmental aspects of saltworks.



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