

The evolution of two great Mediterranean deltas: remote sensing to visualize the evolution of habitats and land use in the Gediz and Rhone deltas



Land cover and land cover change, both in time and space, were analyzed in the Gediz Delta (Turkey) and the Rhone Delta (Camargue, France) to determine the evolution of two great deltas in the Mediterranean basin. Geographical Information Systems and remote sensing were used to estimate the impact of land use changes on habitats over a 35 year period from 1975 to 2010.

The images were classified and then analyzed and laid out. This qualitative data on the evolution reveals that despite important conservation measures (including Ramsar site, National Park, and Natural Park status) both deltas have been subject to substantial changes over this time period. Important declines in natural habitats such as sansouires, beaches, dunes and reed beds have been replaced by increased areas of urbanization and annual agricultural crops. This analysis demonstrates the important pressures that continue to impact the delicate natural Mediterranean habitats and puts in evidence the need to enforce current legislation in order to conserve the deltas in the future.

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