



The effects of land cover change on the Göksu Delta ecosystem

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The Göksu Delta is one of the five wetlands under the protection of Ramsar in Turkey. It is a wetland ecosystem located in southern Turkey in the Eastern Mediterranean Basin. The wetland is threatened by the antropogenic and naturals factors such as ugriculture, fishery, fluvial input by Göksu river and coastal currents. The Göksu region is clearly a very important area for a number of different parties who have interest in the area, and the struggle or conflict for land highlights this fact. Ecologically the area is of great importance for flora and fauna, and is essential to many migratory bird species. The sand dunes, saline water and marshes on the delta area is biologically rich in terms of plant and bird species. The wetland ecosystem has a diverse range of habitats including dunes, salt marsh and lakes and supports a vast biodiversity of both flora and fauna. The loss of sand dunes and wetlands in continuing, it has undergone very serious degradation in last 30 years due to natural factors and human activities locate on the delta. The balance between sediment yield and coastal dynamics has changed in 30 years. Coastal dunes have been displaced by the wind and sea currents due to degradation of the vegetation on sand dunes. Sustaining diverse populations of native species and their supporting ecosystem functions are important in the study area.. The Göksu delta is no exception to this and it is therefore essential that monitoring of ecological change is carried out to ensure that development in the area does not have detrimental effects on nature. Limited research has been undertaken on the vegetation of the delta by national bodies such as the Authority of the Protection of Special Areas and the Society for the Protection of Nature. The concept of vegetation zonation within the delta has not been studied.

This paper concerns the study of the natural factors that control of the delta ecosystem and factors affect the cause the change of the natural stability of the Göksu delta.

Key words: Göksu Delta, sand dunes, vegetation, salinity, coastal currents, wind.