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### Ecosystem alteration and pollution in Southern European coastal lagoons

Pierluigi Viaroli<sup>a</sup>; Gianmarco Giordani<sup>a</sup>; Julia Martinez<sup>b</sup>; Yves Collos<sup>c</sup>; José Manuel Zaldivar<sup>d</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Department of Environmental Sciences, Parma University, Italy <sup>b</sup> Department of Ecology and Hydrology, University of Murcia, Spain <sup>c</sup> ECOLAG, CNRS-Université Montpellier II, France <sup>d</sup> IES-JRC, European Commission, Ispra, Italy

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## Preface

# Ecosystem alteration and pollution in Southern European Coastal Lagoons

PIERLUIGI VIAROLI<sup>†\*</sup>, GIANMARCO GIORDANI<sup>‡</sup>, JULIA MARTINEZ<sup>‡</sup>, YVES COLLOS<sup>§</sup> and JOSÉ MANUEL ZALDIVAR<sup>¶</sup>

<sup>†</sup>Department of Environmental Sciences, Parma University, Italy

<sup>‡</sup>Department of Ecology and Hydrology, University of Murcia, Spain

<sup>§</sup>ECOLAG, CNRS-Université Montpellier II, France

<sup>¶</sup>IES-JRC, European Commission, Ispra, Italy

The Conference on “Southern European Coastal Lagoons: The Influence of River Basin–Coastal Zone interactions” was held in Ferrara, 10–12, November 2003. The conference aimed at debating on Southern European coastal lagoons as important ecosystems which are of considerable ecological and economical value, and are under great anthropogenic pressure. The conference themes were the Water Framework Directive and the integrated river basin and coastal zone management; structure, functions, natural value, and ecosystem alterations of Southern European coastal lagoons; modelling of watershed-coastal lagoons interactions; socio-economic implications with emphasis on aquaculture; the use of indicators for assessing ecosystem trends and health.

This special issue, which composes of eight papers, is dedicated to studies of water and sediment pollution. Spatial dependent and time-lagged processes of contamination by heavy metals and persistent organic pollutants are analysed in sediments and benthic macrofauna. Sediment contamination and ecosystem quality are then analysed with bioindicator tools and integrated biomonitoring techniques. Attention is also paid to geomorphological alterations, nutrient loadings, and eutrophication processes.

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\*Corresponding author. Email: pierluigi.viaroli@unipr.it

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**LaguNet**: Italian Network for Ecological Research in Coastal Zone and Transitional Areas, at the Department of Environmental Sciences, University of Parma, Italy.

**Servizio Ambiente, Province of Ferrara**, Ferrara, Italy.

**Department of Biology**, University of Ferrara, Italy.

**ELOISE**: European Commission, DG Research, Brussels, Belgium.

**LOICZ-IGBP**: LOICZ International Project Office, Texel, The Netherlands.

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