

Natural Park or Waste Disposal Site?

My investigation...

Ta' Cenc (Sannat, Gozo) is a multi-heritage Natural Park. This is a real treasure due to its archaeological sites; remains of a megalithic temple; cart ruts¹; dolmens; the cliffs; the garigue; the important nesting site for shearwaters, and so much more.

Furthermore, according to the Plant Health Directorate², Rupestral³ communities can be observed in very few places on the Maltese islands and among them one finds the beautiful Ta' Cenc Natural Park.

Sadly, on Sunday 18th March 2018, I discovered that this site has turned into a rubbish dump for many. Here are just a couple of photos I took for documentation in order to alert the authorities of the alarming current situation of this site.

Recommendations

- CCTV cameras like the CVA system in Valletta should be installed in order to discourage further littering and discipline the offenders.
- Limited entry by vehicles as i) clearly heavy litter is being disposed of in this way ii) birdlife is often disrupted by traffic.
- An intensive clean-up needs to be organised by the authorities.
- An educational campaign for the well-being, appreciation and correct upkeep of such sites needs to be organised on a National level.

¹<https://www.facebook.com/1903179906633917/photos/a.2004131356538771.1073741828.1903179906633917/2065155317103041/?type=3&theater>

²<https://agriculture.gov.mt/en/phd/Documents/2016/EAFRD%20Project%20Leaflets/English%20Version/Garri-gue%20Leaflet.pdf>

³ Rupestral communities are formations of shrubs which grow on vertical coastal cliffs or inland escarpments. This habitat hosts many of our endemic species, particularly the Maltese rock centaury (*Cheirolophus crassifolius*), the Maltese cliff orache (*Cremnophyton lanfrancoi*), the Maltese salt tree (*Salsola melitensis*), the Maltese everlasting (*Helichrysum melitense*) and the Maltese hyoseris (*Hyoseris frutescens*).



Conclusion

This is a place that belongs to the nation and needs a greater appreciation. The authorities should protect the public interest, and the natural environment since it is part of our natural habitat which is to be enjoyed by all. Wild plants and the habitats they form constitute essential elements of the local biodiversity and our natural heritage. Thus, we need to do more to conserve and protect such species, particularly those characterized by small and isolated populations, in order to safeguard them against the risks of human induced impacts.

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