

Preliminary study of bryophytes from Azorean wetlands II: Bryophytes from “Paul da Pedreira do Cabo da Praia” (Praia da Vitória, Terceira Island, Azores)

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Bryophytes are able to occupy a large spectrum of ecological conditions - from the lowlands to the mountain tops, including wetlands and present many qualities associated with effective biological indicators. However, due to their small size, challenging taxonomy and lack of trained taxonomists, they are often overlooked in conservation projects. However the LIFE project “Ecological Restoration and Conservation of Praia da Vitória Coastal Wet Green Infrastructure”, includes bryophytes in its biodiversity inventory. Before the fieldwork of LIFE CWR, there were no species of bryophytes recorded for Paúl da Pedreira do Cabo da Praia. In February 2016, it was possible to analyse two 300 m² transects, resulting in a collection of 24 samples (microplots; 10 cm x 5 cm). This inventory included 13 bryophyte species: 10 mosses from seven families (three *Pottiaceae*, three *Bryaceae*, one *Brachytheciaceae*, one *Grimmiaceae*, one *Dicranaceae*, one *Ditrichaceae* and one *Fissidentaceae*) and three liverworts from three families (one *Ricciaceae*, one *Fossombroniaceae* and one *Frullaniaceae*). Concerning life strategies of the 13 bryophyte species, there are mainly colonists, such as *Bryum capillare* Hedw. and *Trichostomum brachydontium*, the two species with the highest frequency in Paul da Pedreira do Cabo da Praia, occurring in half of the collected samples. The moss *Trichostomum crispulum* was found for the first time in Terceira (although known from six other islands of the archipelago); besides, for two species, *Fissidens crispus* and *Riccia huebeneriana*, this was only the second record for Terceira Island, and the moss species had been observed by the Allorge couple in 1937! The diversity of bryophytes found in Paúl da Pedreira do Cabo da Praia is similar to diversity found in Paúl do Belo Jardim, and rather low, probably due to the high environmental disturbance that affects wetlands in the Azores and other places. However, the presence of rare species should be noted and further monitoring studies should proceed in the area.