

**1st Mediterranean Plant Conservation Week**  
**“Building a regional network to conserve plants and cultural diversity”**  
**Ulcinj (Montenegro) – 24-29 October 2016**



**Valencian Plant Micro-Reserves:  
25 years of a pioneer experience to conserve  
Important Plant Areas**

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# The first idea

The first paper where the 'Plant Micro-Reserves (PMR)' were proposed, was a planning document of the regional government of the Valencian Community (called Generalitat Valenciana), Spain, published in 1991. The PMRs should be small-size, legally protected sites based on several facts:

- The rare plants use to live on rare sites, often on small surfaces.
- The microhabitats often hold dominant rare, endemic or endangered species.
- Small sites can be easier to protect and manage than large sites.
- Small sites often give more facilities to landowners to become protagonists of plant conservation in their own properties.
- There are lots of endangered species depending on the conservation of traditional activities, so they should not be forbidden into the protected area (but regulated if needed).
- On the contrary of traditional, natural protected areas (NPA), and due to their small size, each PMR should not be managed as a isolated nature reserve, but as a complementary piece into a network. In sum, the whole network of PMRs could be managed as an unique, multi-scattered and continuously growing protected area, formed by dozens or hundreds of pieces (PMRs taken one by one), saving costs in direction and management staff.

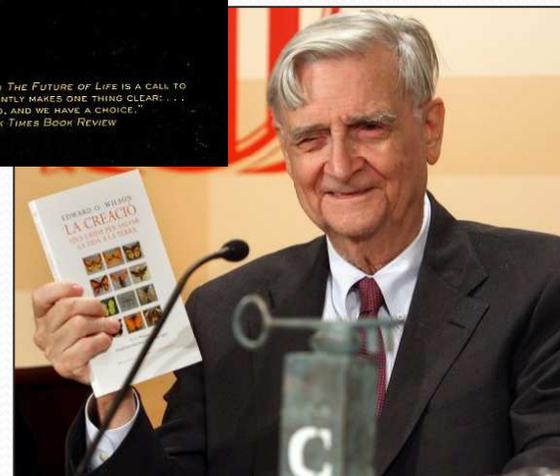
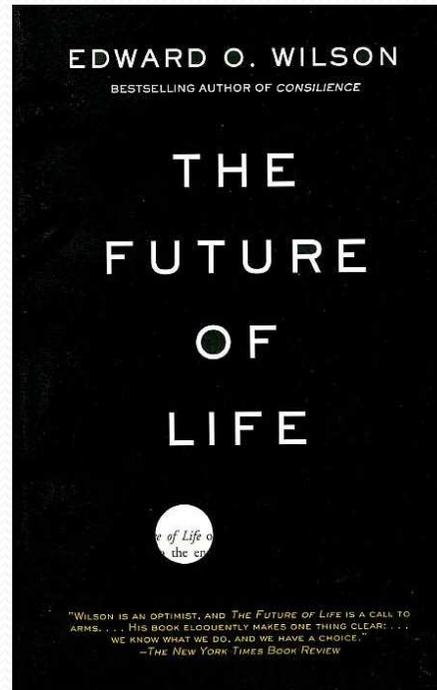


# The first idea

PMR was a new and popular word, but nor a new idea.

Formerly, by 1981, Dr. César Gómez-Campo (main pioneer of plant conservation in Spain) had proposed that one relevant site found in the neighbouring region of Castilla-La Mancha, should be protected as a 'mini-reserve'.

In addition some relevant researchers and conservationists such as Edward O. Wilson proposed the creation of very small reserves – even measuring a few m<sup>2</sup> – for small species of animals, plants, fungi, etc.



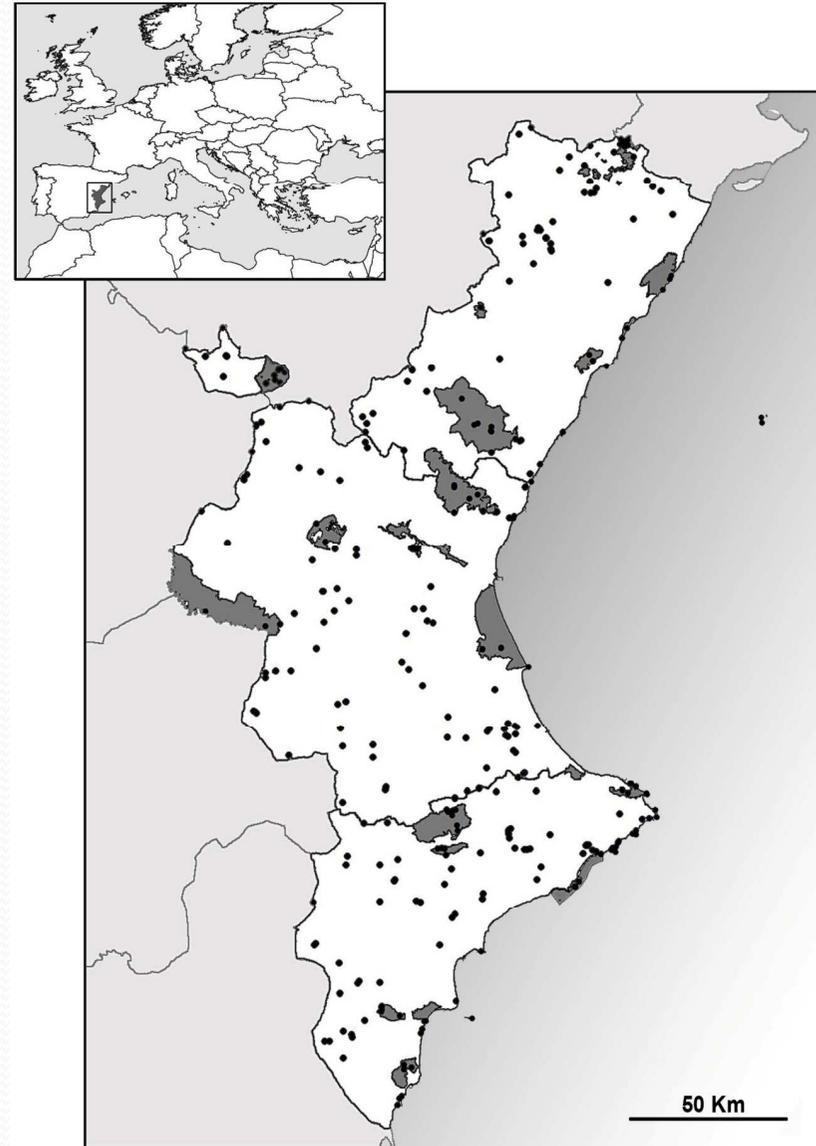
# The proposal

The idea was proposed into the technical document on Valencian long-term global planning published in 1991 and proposed to be co-financed by the European Commission (EC) through the LIFE-Nature funds in their first call of proposals in 1992.

In 1992 the proposal was approved for the EC's LIFE funds for the period 1992-95, furtherly rebewed for 1996-1998. Afterwards, more PMRs and their management have been co-funded by the EC through LUHE and other financial instruments.

In 1994 the Generalitat Valenciana passed a Decree to create the legal figure of PMR.

In 1998, the first PMR was declared. In 2016, there are 300 PMRs legally protected in the Valencian Community.



# Legal provisions on technical requirements

For the Valencian Community a PMR should join the following characteristics (which could be different if adapted to other territories):

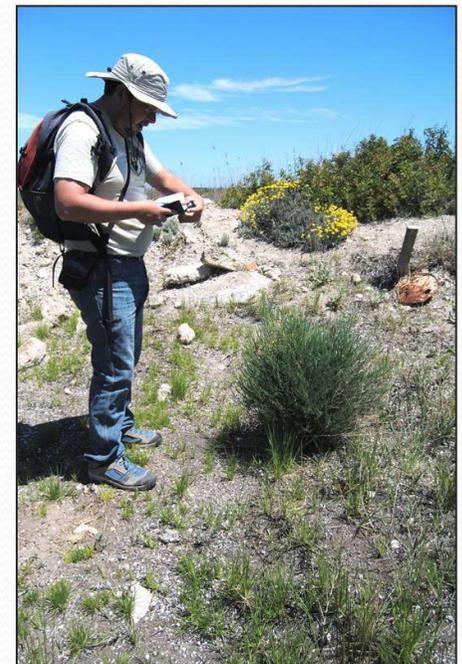
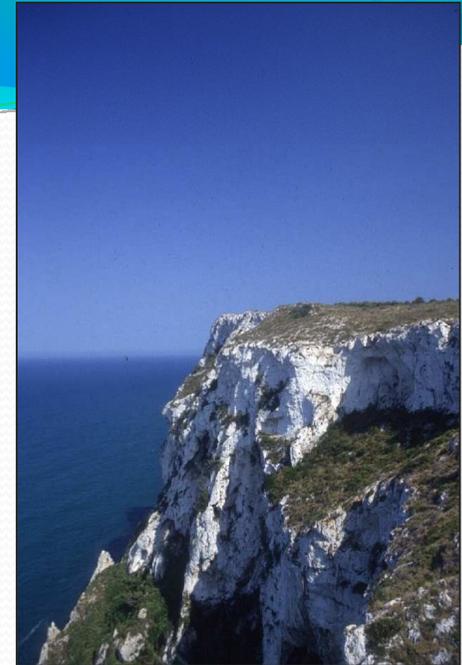
- Maximum surface: 20 ha.
- A good content in rare, endemic or threatened species.
- Public property managed by the regional government; or private/municipal\* if the site is fully offered by their owners, and they should be the protagonists to manage their own lands under scientific or technical advice.

The legal rule (Valencian Decree 218/1994) remarks that:

- Traditional activities, including hunting or grazing can continue onwards on the site (but they can be regulated if needed).
- The public declaration of a new PMR must include its management plan, a very short , synthetic list of activities to be done to manage and conserve the PMR and their relevant species (i.e. germplasm of main species must be picked up from all the PMRs, and maintained in the Valencian Germplasm Bank of Wild Flora).

\*The private model is compound by:

- Private sites owned by individuals, families or collectives (i.e. NGOs)
- Municipal public sites not included in the list of Public Utility Forests, so really managed by the local City Council, but managed as if it was a private site , without intervention of the regional government.

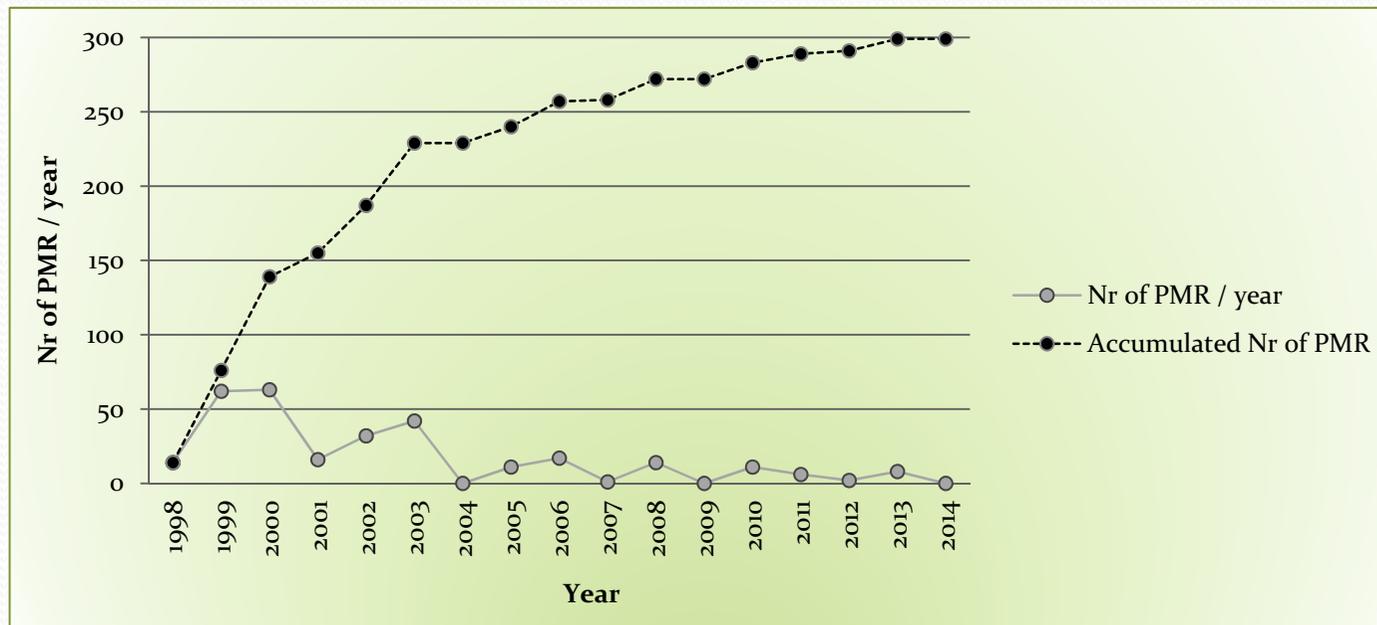


# Evolution of the Valencian PMR network

Phases:

1998-2009 (before the new Decree 70/2009 on plant conservation): Establishment of a representative network of the diversity of relevant plant species, mainly focused on endemics.

2009 onwards (Decree 70/2009): Priority to new sites giving protection to endangered species.



## Current status: PMR sizes

Approx. 50% of PMRs only have up to 5 ha

Close to 1/3 of PMRs only have up to 2 ha

Size (ha)	Nr of MRF	Surface sum (ha)
0,1-5,0	158	296,1
5,1-10,0	47	332,1
10,1-15,0	26	333,1
15,1-20,0	69	1.311,7
<b>SUM</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>2.273,0</b>

Size (ha)	Nr of MRF	Surface sum (ha)
0,1-1,0	62	35,6
1,1-2,0	36	51,1
2,1-3,0	22	54,7
3,1-4,0	20	73,1
4,1-5,0	18	81,6
<b>SUM</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>296,1</b>

## Current status: Success in technical targets

<b>Parameters</b>	<b>Valencian Community</b>	<b>PMR network</b>
Terrestrial surface (ha)	2,3 x 10 <sup>6</sup>	2.273 (0.10%)
Nr of species	3,197	1,817 (56.83%)
Nr of endangered/protected species	390	224 (57.44%)
Nr of Spanish endemic species	399	311 (79.74%)
Nr of rare species	1,746	865 (49.54%)

### **Nr of species for the more relevant groups for conservation**

Upper levels of protected species	85	56 (65.88%)
-In danger of extinction (IUCN CR)	35	21 (60.00%)
-Vulnerable (IUCN EN close to CR)	50	35 (70.00%)

### **Endemic species**

-Exclusive Valencian endemics	70	66 (94.29%)
-Close to exclusive Valencian endemics	93	85 (91.40%)

### **Rare species**

-Extremely rare species	793	308 (38.84%)
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Current status:

## The Private model

Nr. of PMRs: 300

Total surface: 2.273,0 ha

Mean surface per PMR: 7,58 ha

Size of the smallest PMR: 0.061 ha

Nr. of municipalities holding PMRs: 145



<b>Model</b>	<b>Nr of PMR</b>	<b>Surface</b>	<b>Nr of municipalities</b>
Public (managed by GV)	232 (77.33%)	1,603.2	120
Mixed (GV + Municipality)	2 (0.07%)	40.0	1
<b>Private-Municipal model</b>			
Private (landowners)	19 (6.33%)	110.3	15
Conservation NGOs	10 (3.33%)	45.6	5
<u>Municipalities</u>	<u>37 (12.33%)</u>	<u>473.9</u>	<u>24</u>
SUM PRIVATE-MUNICIPAL	66 (22.00%)	629.8	38

# Grants for PMR owners

Not available since 6 years ago, due to economic crisis. Formerly there were 2 kinds of grants:

-A symbolic grant (approx, less than 10-15% of the land value) to join the network. A time received the grant the site enter a condition of pre-PMR before the legal declaration (the owner can back out of the deal, coming back the grant and its equivalent bank interests). The owner signs a public declaration of engagement to preserve the site, to monitor it, and to care that third persons or entities will know that the site is under a protection regime.

This grant ensure that 'subsidy hunters' will stay away, prevented by the lack of benefits.

-Up to 70-100% (depending on years) of the budgeted cost, effectively invested –demonstrated with invoices- of conservation actions made in the site. The project must be drafted by professionals or institutions specialists in botany or plant conservation (i.e. Botanic Gardens).

This grant add to ensure that the landowner will be the protagonist of conservation in its own land.



# Local and popular involvement

Lots of PMRs host activities of plant conservation involving local people, educational centres, volunteers and conservation NGOs. Most of the private and municipal PMRs are managed through custodianship engagements with conservation NGOs.



In addition they perform some ex situ activities to maintain the PMRs (ie. maintenance of seed orchards to reintroduce or reinforce wild plant populations into the PMRs)

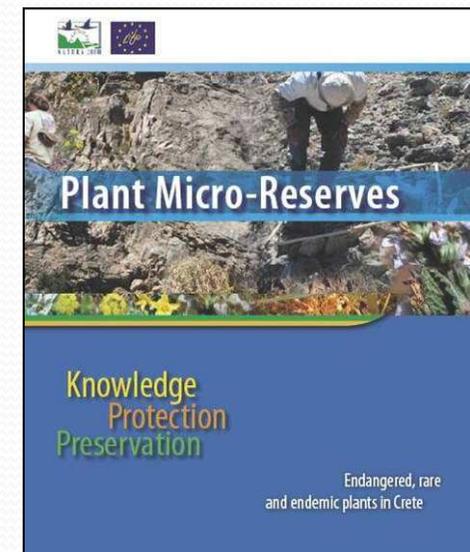
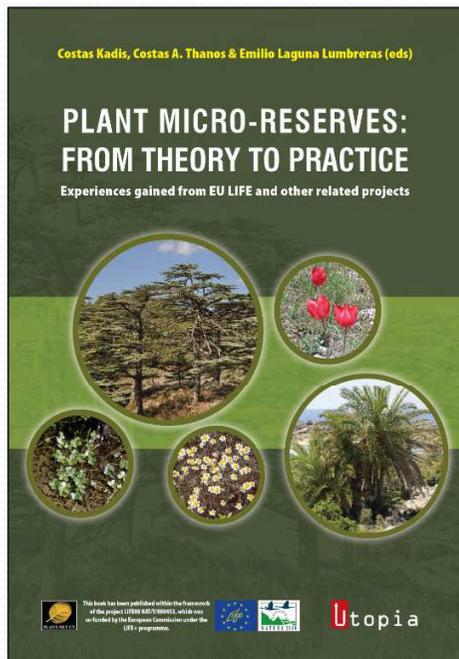


# Enlargement of the PMR philosophy

Several LIFE projects have promoted adaptations of the PMR model to the concrete requirements of some European regions or countries (Western Crete, Cyprus, Bulgaria, etc.).

PMRs, or simply Micro-reserves (both for flora and fauna) have been established as legal figures of land protection in some countries (Latvia) or regions (i.e. Castilla-La Mancha or Balearic Islands in Spain).

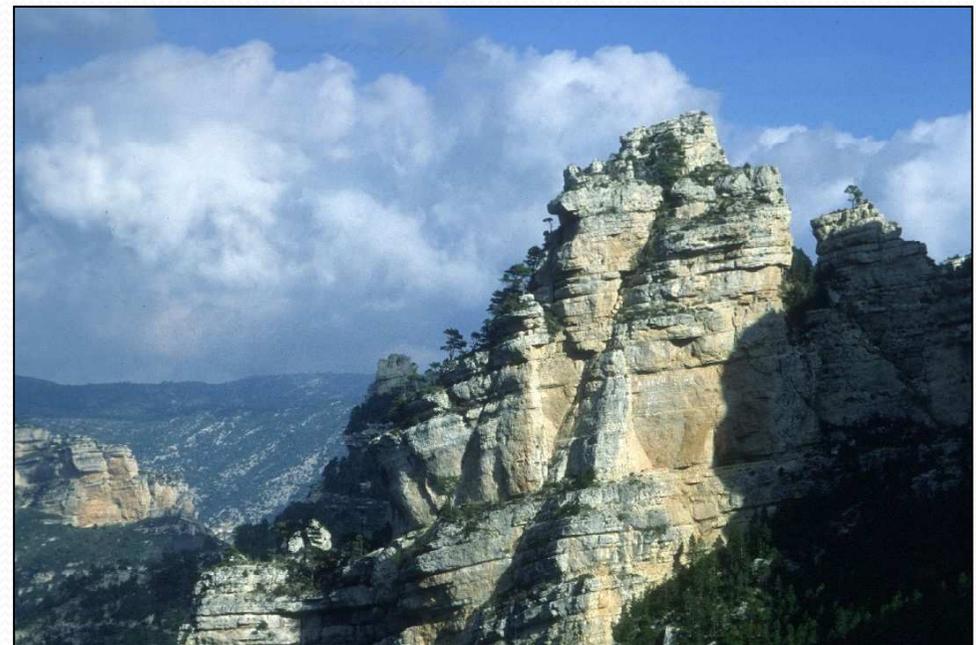
Two PMR conferences have been made in Chania (Crete, Greece, 2005) and Nicosia (Cyprus, 2011), and a book on PMR (Plant micro-reserves: From theory to practice) joining experiences from several countries is freely available on the website : <http://www.plantnet.org.cy>



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**MANY THANKS  
FOR YOUR ATTENTION**



**GENERALITAT VALENCIANA**

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