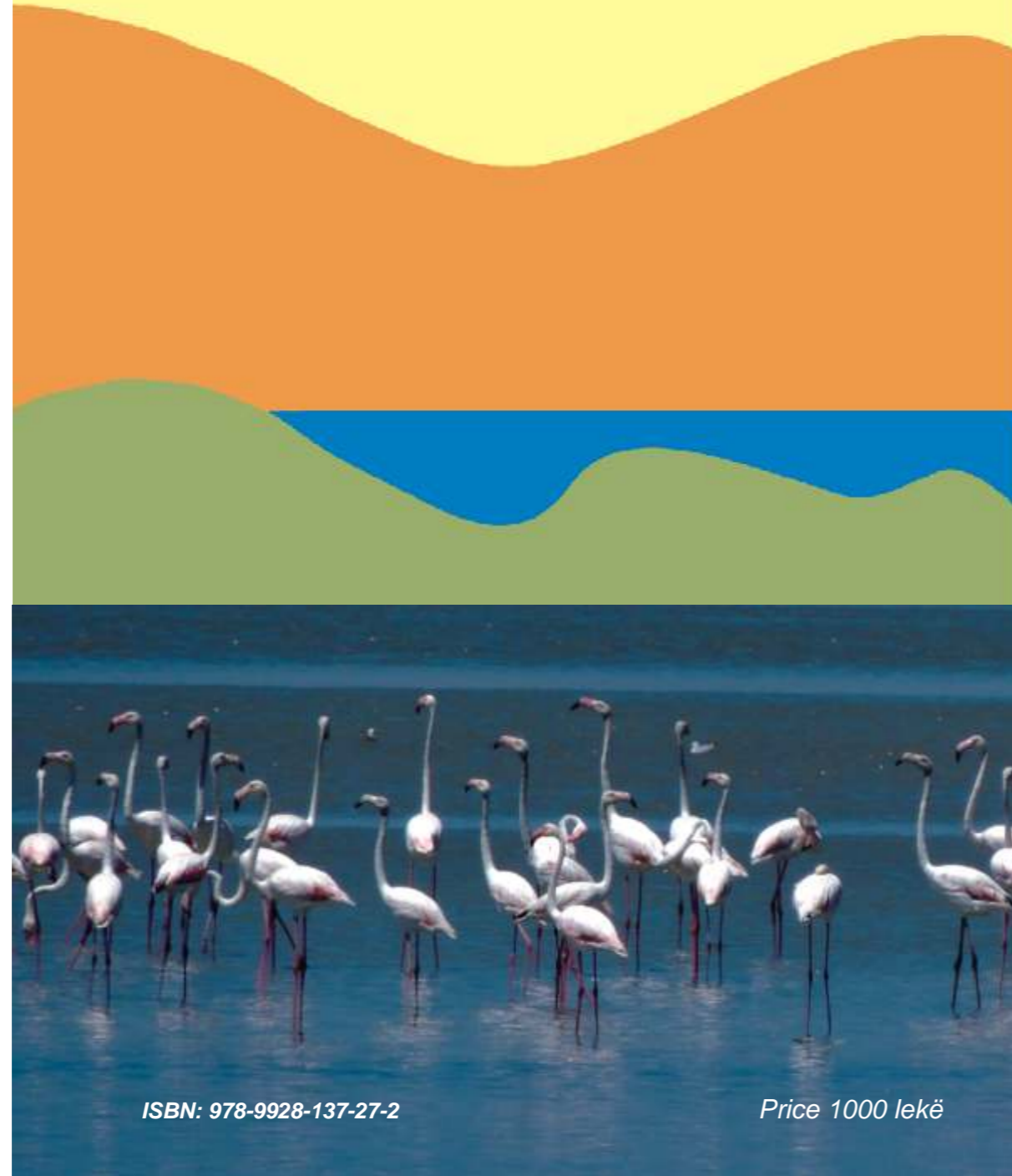


About 30% of the surface of the Albanian protected areas belong to the coastal zone. Despite reclamation for agricultural purposes during the past few decades, Albania still has about 950 km² transitional or related areas, where about 400 km² are wetlands and lagoons. All these habitats are distinguished by their wealth of breeding and refuge habitats for flora and fauna, especially for fish and wintering or migratory aquatic birds, some of them globally endangered. Three large RAMSAR areas: Butrinti-Çuka-Stillo, Karavasta-Divjaka and Lake Shkodra-River Buna-Velipoja, represent distinct transitional values. Furthermore the Butrinti and the Divjaka-Karavasta complexes are National Parks. Five sites have been denoted as Managed Nature Reserves: Kune-Vaini-Tale, Pishe Poro (Fieri), Rreza-Karaburuni Peninsula, Patogu-Fushe Kuqe-Ishmi and Rrushkulli. The River Buna-Velipoja and the delta of the River Vjosa-Narta lagoon have been declared as Protected Landscape Areas.

This publication aims for a better knowledge of the transitional habitats along the whole Albanian coast, brings together the most important physico-geographical, hydrological and biological data. It illustrates past and present changes, and also the human impact. More than 600 photos, from the macroscopic world to the hidden microscopic biota, most of them original and new, make the Guide easy and pleasant to use. Additional information is given for the most important habitats, including the possibility of visits.

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