**Pools:**
- Form on karstified terrain on plateaux and slopes of Coralline Limestone (Oligo-Miocene).
- Alternate between a wet phase (October-April) and a dry phase (May-September).
- Relatively small basins. Primary axis: 28 cm to 330 cm; secondary axis: 42 cm to 306 cm; maximum morphological depth: 90 cm; maximum sediment depth: 52 cm.
- Sediment layer provides a repository for propagules and acts as a last reserve for water at the end of the wet season.

**Plants:**
- Pools colonised by species-poor assemblages of specialised aquatic hydrophytes, amphiphytes, and aquatic macroalgae (Charophytes) during the wet phase and by opportunistic terrestrial plants during the dry phase. Most specialist species are rare or endangered.
- Include endemic (*Zannichellia melitensis*) and sub-endemic species (*Elatine gussonei*).
- Relative balance of hydrophytes, amphiphytes, charophytes determined by hydroperiod characteristics and by sediment depth.

**People:**
- Highest population density in the European Union (1346 persons km$^{-2}$).
- Pool landscapes have several conflicting land uses: agriculture, rock quarrying, hunting, trapping, waste disposal.
- Remnant pool landscapes of the Maltese Islands are highly fragmented and subject to frequent disturbance or to deliberate destruction, particularly when they are perceived to represent an impediment to construction works or other land developments.

**Awareness and conservation:**
- Pools popularly perceived as ‘unimportant’ or ‘expendable’ habitats.
- Limited public awareness of ‘wet’ habitats in a ‘dry’ island is now progressively increasing through popular outreach and more academic research.
- Early research focused on biotic inventories; more recent research focuses on processes.
- Conservation of pool landscapes often integrated with conservation of terrestrial habitats and with preservation of archaeological remains.