



# Ramsar Sites Information Service

## Annotated List of Wetlands of International Importance

# Colombia

11 Ramsar Site(s) covering 936,442 ha

### Complejo Cenagoso de Ayapel

Site number: 2,499 | Country: Colombia | Administrative region: Departamento de Córdoba  
Area: 54,376.8 ha | Coordinates: 08°19'15"N 75°03'02"W | Designation dates: 23-06-2020  
[View Site details in RSIS](#)

The Site features a range of ecosystems such as streams, rivers, swamps, wetlands and terrestrial biotopes. It boasts wide biological diversity with 148 species of mammals, which represent 2.7% of the world's mammals. The Site hosts threatened species such as the brown-headed spider monkey (*Ateles fusciceps*), the giant otter (*Pteronura brasiliensis*), the giant anteater (*Myrmecophaga tridactyla*) and the critically endangered cotton-headed tamarin (*Saguinus oedipus*). In addition, 86 bird species have been recorded, with some of them considered endemic such as the blue-billed curassow (*Crax Alberti*) and the northern screamer (*Chauna Chavaria*), and others coming from North America, such as the little blue heron (*Egretta calerua*) and the laughing gull (*Larus Atricilla*). Also, 52 representative fish species support the livelihoods of many people who live inside and around the Site. Among the main threats to the Site are land use changes, forest felling, water pollution resulting from informal gold mining, and the use of pesticides in the agricultural areas of the wetland.

### Complejo Cenagoso de Zapatosa

Site number: 2,521 | Country: Colombia | Administrative region: Se encuentra ubicado en el departamento del Cesar y Magdalena.  
Area: 121,725 ha | Coordinates: 09°07'28"N 73°47'11"W | Designation dates: 23-06-2020  
[View Site details in RSIS](#)

The Site comprises approximately 1,900 swamps, making it the largest continental swamp complex in Colombia. It is also one of the primary centres of bird diversity in Colombia, supporting 202 species including 34 migrants such as the osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*), the brown-chested martin (*Progne tapera*) and the blackpoll warbler (*Setophaga striata*). The Site also harbours five birds of considerable conservation significance due to their limited distribution range, namely the chestnut-winged chachalaca (*Ortalis garrula*), the red-billed emerald *Chlorostilbon gibsoni*, the chestnut piculet *Picumnus cinnamomeus*, the white-whiskered spinetail *Synallaxis candei*, and the northern screamer *Chauna chavaria* which is categorized as vulnerable in Colombia due to the loss of its habitat and illegal hunting. The Site also hosts threatened species such as the critically endangered greater Martinique skink (*Mabuya mabouya*) and cotton-headed tamarin (*Saguinus oedipus*), and the endangered tapeti (*Sylvilagus brasiliensis*). Additionally, the Site's fish stocks are crucial to the livelihoods of local fishermen. The primary threats to the Site include oil and gas drilling, mining and the discharge of untreated wastewater.

## Complejo de Humedales de la Estrella Fluvial Inírida (EFI)

Site number: 2,217 | Country: Colombia | Administrative region: Guainía

Area: 250,158.9 ha | Coordinates: 03°49'18"N 67°51'29"W | Designation dates: 08-07-2014

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

This Ramsar Site is located in the Orinoco – Amazon transition zone. It comprises the confluence zones of the rivers Inírida- Guaviare, Guaviare-Atabapo and Guaviare-Ventuari which join the Orinoco River. This is a unique area as its flooded forests belong to the Amazon biome while its 'whitewater', 'blackwater' and 'clearwater' hydrological ecosystems are characteristic of the Orinoco River. Because of its unique location, the Site supports numerous species. Among these are threatened or endangered species such as the military macaw (*Ara militaris*), the giant otter (*Pteronura brasiliensis*) and the giant anteater (*Myrmecophaga tridactyla*) as well as endemic species of the Orinoco basin such as *Sorubim lima*, *Pseudoplatystoma metaense* and *P. orinocoense* among others. It also supports 476 fish species (50% of the fish species of the Orinoco Basin and 34% of the country's species), 200 species of mammals, 903 of plants and 324 species of birds. The Site also has important cultural values for the indigenous communities that live there and depend on it for their livelihoods. The threats to the Site include gold mining and the increase in the extent of land used for agriculture.

## Complejo de Humedales del Alto Rio Cauca Asociado a la Laguna de Sonso

Site number: 2,403 | Country: Colombia | Administrative region: Departamento del Valle del Cauca

Area: 5,525 ha | Coordinates: 03°55'52"N 76°19'49"W | Designation dates: 14-02-2017

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Consists of 24 wetlands. It is of great national and international importance because of its biological diversity. Thirty-nine plant species are identified, 25 of them on the IUCN Red List, and 162 bird species including the horned screamer (*Anhima cornuta*) whose populations are found only in Sonso and in the Ciénaga del Conchal, also in Colombia. The Site presents a high level of endemism with five endemic fish species; the boquiancha (*Genycharax tarpon*); the roño (*Callichthys fabricioi*); the micudo (*Pimelodella macrocephala*); and two sardines (*Hyphessobrycon poecilioides* and (*Gephyrocharax caucanus*). The complex has outstanding ecological values due to its landscape, its biodiversity, and its considerable tourism and recreational potential. It is a source of food and water for the locals, while also providing educational opportunities through an environmental education and research centre. Threats include the growth of the population and the increase in the extent of land used for agriculture, especially sugar cane cultivation.

## Complejo de humedales Lagos de Tarapoto

Site number: 2,336 | Country: Colombia | Administrative region: Municipios de Puerto Nariño y Leticia, departamento del Amazonas

Area: 45,464 ha | Coordinates: 03°46'35"S 70°32'23"W | Designation dates: 28-09-2017

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

The Site, located on the River Amazon in the far south of the country, consists of several lakes interconnected by rivers and creeks. The Lakes of Tarapoto sustain plant and animal species including the ceiba tree (*Ceiba pentandra*), black caiman (*Melanosuchus niger*), 136 species of fish including the largest known freshwater fish, the pirarucu (*Arapaima gigas*), and more than 153 bird species. Grey and pink dolphins (*Inia geoffrensis* and *Sotalia fluviatilis*) use the Site as a habitat to teach their calves to fish. It also hosts threatened mammals such as the tapir (*Tapirus terrestris*), the giant armadillo (*Priodontes maximus*), the Amazonian manatee (*Trichechus inunguis*), the giant otter (*Pteronura brasiliensis*) and the anteater (*Myrmecophaga tridactyla*). This great biodiversity, and in particular the fish resources, supports the 22 indigenous communities of the TICOYA (Ticuna, Cocama and Yagua) indigenous reservation. The ecosystem also provides important functions such as flood and erosion control, waterways for transportation, recreation and tourism. The designation of the Lagos de Tarapoto Wetlands Complex as a Wetland of International Importance was achieved after a consultation process was completed and indigenous, national and regional authorities agreed to protect the Site.

## Complejo de Humedales Laguna del Otún

Site number: 1,781 | Country: Colombia | Administrative region: Risaralda

Area: 6,579 ha | Coordinates: 04°45'N 75°25'W | Designation dates: 25-06-2008

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Complejo de Humedales Laguna del Otún. 25/06/08; Risaralda; 6,579 ha; 04°45'N 075°25'W. National Park. A complex of wetlands located within the Los Nevados National Natural Park in the Central Andes of Colombia. It includes lagoons, swamps, peatlands interconnected or functionally related with one another and influenced by glaciers and páramo vegetation. The site is home to 52 species of birds, of which the most vulnerable are the aquatic species *Oxyura jamaicensis andina* and *Podiceps occipitalis juninensis*, with reduced populations and very localized distribution in Colombia this makes them more susceptible to the degradation of their habitats, generated mainly by agricultural and livestock expansion. Other endangered bird species include *Vultur gryphus*, *Hapalopsittaca fuertesi* and *Ognorhynchus icteriotis*. Among the important flora species found in the site are *Espeletia hartwegiana centroandina*, *Podocarpus oleifolius* and *Polylepis sericea*, which are also found under special protection. In July 2006, the site suffered a fire that damaged more than 3,000 ha. A restoration plan is ongoing. Ramsar site no. 1781. Most recent RIS information: 2008.

## Complejo de Humedales Urbanos del Distrito Capital de Bogotá

Site number: 2,404 | Country: Colombia | Administrative region: Bogotá Distrito Capital, Colombia

Area: 667.4 ha | Coordinates: 04°43'07"N 74°06'40"W | Designation dates: 06-08-2018

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Consists of 11 urban wetlands designated as District Ecological Parks. These permanent freshwater marshes provide shelter and habitat to endemic species from the High Andean region of Colombia, such as the Bogotá rail (*Rallus semiplumbeus*) and the Apolinar's wren (*Cistothorus apolinari*). There are also records of 196 bird species, 42 of them aquatic and 65 migrant. This wetland complex regulates the supply of water from the rivers of the Bogotá savannah, providing flood control in the rainy season and in summer allowing for conservation of groundwater levels. It is a crucial ecological connector between the rural and urban territories of the Bogotá River basin, crossing the city of Bogotá from east to west. In addition, it is the first urban complex of High Andean wetlands in Latin America to be added to the List. The site has also been designated as an Important Bird Area (IBA). Among the main threats to the site are rainfall and climate variability associated with El Niño and La Niña events.

## Delta del Río Baudó

Site number: 1,387 | Country: Colombia | Administrative region: Chocó

Area: 8,888 ha | Coordinates: 04°52'59"N 77°22'W | Designation dates: 05-06-2004

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Delta del Río Baudó. 05/06/04; Chocó; 8,888 ha; 04°53'N 077°22'W. The estuary of the Baudó river on the Pacific coast, comprising flood banks, sand beaches, shrub-swamps and swamp forests. Outstanding vegetation includes nato mangroves (*Mora oleifera*, *Mora megistosperma*), with trees reaching 35 m or more in height; mangrove forests (*Pelliciera rhizophorae*, *Avicennia germinans*), and giant reeds. Noteworthy fauna include the Spotted Paca (*Agouti paca*), the peccaries (*Tayassu pecari* and *Tayassu tajacu*), Jaguar (*Panthera onca*) and Neotropical Otter (*Lontra longicaudis*). The wetland is habitat and reproduction site of numerous species of fish such as the cichlid *Cichlasoma kraussii*, the Trahira (*Hoplias malabaricus*) and the Flathead mullet (*Mugil cephalus*). Uses of the site by human communities include forest exploitation, fishing, subsistence agriculture, hunting and basket-making. Potential threats include mangrove felling, overfishing, uncontrolled hunting, boat transportation with off-board engines, and clearing for rice cultivation. Surrounding areas are the collective property of black communities. Ramsar site no. 1387. Most recent RIS information: 2004.

## Laguna de la Cocha

Site number: 1,047 | Country: Colombia | Administrative region: Nariño

Area: 39,000 ha | Coordinates: 01°03'N 77°12'W | Designation dates: 08-01-2001

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Laguna de la Cocha. 08/01/01; Nariño; 39,000 hectares; 01°03'N 077°12'W. Wildlife sanctuary. Largely made up of a volcanic lake and the surrounding highland Andean peatlands and forest, the site support a diverse range of associated flora and fauna, mammals such as the endangered tapir (*Tapirus pinchaque*), near-threatened Northern pudu (*Pudu mephistotels*), and the endangered spectacled bear (*Tremarctos ornatus*). Important bird species such as Grebe (*Podiceps occidentalis*), the golden peck duck (*Anas georgica spicauda*), several species of snipes (*Gallinago gallinago paraguaiiae*, *Gallinago nobilis*, *Gallinago gallinago delicata*) and the endemic ducks (*Anas cyanoptera borreroi*, *Oxyura jamaicensis ferruginea*). Regarding plants there are two important endemic species of frailejon (*Espeletia cochensis*, *Espeletia schultesiana*) and *Totora* (*Scirpus californicus*, *Juncus bogotensis*). Human uses include agriculture and aquaculture. The breeding of "cuyes" (*Cavia porcelus*) generates about 23% of the agricultural product in the Department. The site also has an important cultural value as the indigenous groups of the area, which consider it sacred, use it for purification and fertility. The archaeological values of the site are also considerable, as it was inhabited by Precolombian communities. Ramsar site no. 1047. Most recent RIS information: 2001.

## Sistema Delta Estuarino del Río Magdalena, Ciénaga Grande de Santa Marta

Site number: 951 | Country: Colombia | Administrative region: Magdalena

Area: 400,000 ha | Coordinates: 10°45'N 74°28'59"W | Designation dates: 18-06-1998

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Sistema Delta Estuarino del Río Magdalena, Ciénaga Grande de Santa Marta. 18/06/98; Magdalena; 400,000 ha; 10°45'N 074°29'W. The site is a coastal estuarine system with 20 lagoons of varying salinity, with several rivers running through the area and extensive zones of mangroves. The site is important for its mangrove ecosystem, which is the largest on the Caribbean coast of Colombia. It also serves as habitat and winter breeding ground for several bird species, has at least two endemic bird species, and is also a spawning ground for many fish species. Part of the site is state-owned, while a large area is privately-owned and commercial fishing is important for the community around it. Shellfish and crayfish are also harvested in the area, while the higher zones are used for agriculture. Ecotourism is being developed in the protected area. Ramsar site no. 951. Most recent RIS information: 1998.

## Sistema Lacustre de Chingaza

Site number: 1,782 | Country: Colombia | Administrative region: Cundinamarca

Area: 4,058 ha | Coordinates: 04°30'N 73°45'W | Designation dates: 25-06-2008

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Sistema Lacustre de Chingaza. 25/06/08; Cundinamarca; 4,058 ha; 04°30'N 073°45'W. Parque Nacional. A complex of lagoons and wetlands that supply water to the capital city, Bogotá. Located in the Northern Colombian Andes between 3,050 and 3,950m a.s.l., this region supports one of the dampest páramos of the country and is a center of particular endemism which has been the refuge for more than 400 flora species and 500 fauna species, some of them endangered and others which have not yet been totally identified. The complex is formed by 20 lagoons and is of great importance for migratory birds. Among the species found under special protection, at national as well as international levels, the following mammals are noteworthy: *Tremactus ornatus*, *Mazama rufina bricenni*, *Tapirus pinchaque* and *Tapirus terrestris*, and among the flora: *Espeletia grandiflora*, *Podocarpus oleifolius*, and the palm genus *Xeroxylum*. The site is within the boundaries of the Chingaza National Natural Park, designated in 1977. The high andean lakes also have great pre-colombian ceremonial significance. Ramsar site no. 1782. Most recent RIS information: 2008.