



Ramsar Sites Information Service

Annotated List of Wetlands of International Importance

France

53 Ramsar Site(s) covering 3,834,713 ha

Baie d'Audierne

Site number: 2,460 | Country: France | Administrative region: Bretagne

Area: 2,396 ha | Coordinates: 47°52'08"N 04°21'18"W | Designation dates: 04-09-2021

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Situated at the western tip of Brittany, Baie d'Audierne is an impressive coastal wetland featuring cliffs, pebble ridges, intertidal mudflats, freshwater lagoons, marshlands, ponds and vast beaches of fine sand bordered by more than ten kilometres of wind-shaped dunes. The Site includes the two largest natural ponds in the department of Finistère, at Kergalan and Trunvel. The variety of habitats favours biodiversity, and more than 1,000 animal species have been recorded, including about 320 birds. The Site is internationally important for providing nesting opportunities for over one percent of the ringed plover (*Charadrius hiaticula*), bearded reedling (*Panurus biarmicus*) and western marsh harrier (*Circus aeruginosus*), while up to ten percent of the global population of the aquatic warbler (*Acrocephalus paludicola*) pass through the Bay each year. The small coastal rivers which meet the sea here host European eel (*Anguilla anguilla*) migrating upstream to their spawning grounds. The Site provides habitats that are rich in plant diversity, and many protected plants such as the orchids *Spiranthes aestivalis* and *Liparis loeselii* can be found. The Bay is popular for recreation and nature observation; in addition the different wetland types regulate erosion and ensure water quality. Generally, the state of conservation is good: the main threats to the Site are increased nutrient inputs and possible impacts of growth of the tourism industry.

Baie de Somme

Site number: 925 | Country: France | Administrative region: Picardie

Area: 19,043 ha | Coordinates: 50°13'28"N 01°35'44"E | Designation dates: 23-01-1998

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

The Site represents the largest natural estuary in northern France composed of vast sand, mudflats, and grassy areas. The exceptional character of the Site is reflected by its avifauna diversity with 365 bird species identified. Located at the confluence of migratory routes, the Site is one of the most important European resting and feeding areas for migrating waterbirds. It also provides a refuge during cold weather events, especially for waders and ducks. During the wintering period, the Site sustains over 1% of the individuals of the biogeographic population of the Northern pintail, Northern shoveller and common shelduck. The Site also supports 275 species of plants, including various rare species such as the fen orchid *Liparis loeselii*. Human activities include cattle grazing, hunting, commercial fishing, shellfish farming, and tourism. The "Maison Ramsar de la baie de Somme" is one of two study centres at the Site. The main threats to the ecological character of the Site relate to drainage, hunting, invasive species, pollution, and recreational and tourism activities. Silting up of the estuary is accelerating and will alter the food web in the estuary which will in turn become less suitable for migrating and wintering waders. All protected areas on the Site have a management plan and a site-specific management plan covering the whole Ramsar Site is in place for the period of 2014-2022.

Baie du Mont Saint-Michel

Site number: 709 | Country: France | Administrative region: Basse-Normandie-Bretagne

Area: 62,000 ha | Coordinates: 48°39'42"N 01°36'50"W | Designation dates: 14-10-1994

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Baie du Mont Saint-Michel. 14/10/94; Basse-Normandie, Bretagne; 62,000 ha; 48°40'N 001°40'W. World Heritage site, Special Protection Area. The site represents large areas of saltmarshes with a very diverse morphology, and comprises sand/gravel beds of bivalves, reefs of *Sabellaria alveolata*, rocky islets, cliffs and dunes. It is ranked fifth in the world for its exceptional tidal range, and constitutes one of the best examples of Quaternary sedimentation in the world. The area features a great number of habitats with a high biological richness. It is the best French site for *Halimione pedunculata*, one of the most interesting and rare species of European saline grasslands. Up to 100,000 waders winter at the bay, including over 1% of the populations of *Haematopus ostralegus*, *Calidris canutus*, and *C. alpina*. Marine mammals such as dolphins *Tursiops truncatus* and seals *Phoca vitulina* also visit the site. Human activities include recreation, fishing, shellfish farming, waterfowl hunting, and sand extraction. In the terrestrial area there is intensive agriculture and semi-extensive herding of cattle. Ramsar site no. 709.

Basse-Mana

Site number: 643 | Country: France (outr-mer) | Administrative region: Guyane Française

Area: 59,000 ha | Coordinates: 05°40'09"N 53°47'21"W | Designation dates: 08-12-1993

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Basse-Mana. 08/12/93; Guyane Française; 59,000 ha; 05°40'N 053°54'W. Parc Naturel Régional (2001). A plain of sandy barrier beaches, freshwater and brackish swamps, marine clays, mudflats, unexploited mangrove forests, swampland forests and pinot palm (*Euterpe oleracea*) stands. The alternation between erosion and large mud deposits (mudflat formation), preceding future coastal growth, is noteworthy. The site provides important habitat for nesting turtles, wintering grounds for numerous species of waders and feeding, staging, nesting and breeding areas for waterbirds. Human activities include nature tourism, beach activities, fishing, hunting, farming, and conservation education. Most land is owned by the state but the Kalinas Amerindian people have right of usage. The site is an important turtle study and protection station and contains various archaeological or funerary sites. Consumption of marine turtle eggs has diminished but remains within the traditional rights of the Kalinas. Ramsar site no. 643. Most recent RIS information: 2007.

Basses Vallées Angevines

Site number: 715 | Country: France | Administrative region: Pays de la Loire

Area: 7,136 ha | Coordinates: 47°33'46"N 00°30'44"E | Designation dates: 19-01-1995

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The Site consists of a vast alluvial plain encompassing the confluence of four rivers and supporting grasslands dominated by various communities of wet-meadow plants and sparse rows of ash and willow. The wetland supports various threatened, endemic or rare plants. It is a stopover point of international importance for several ducks and geese and wading birds on the spring migration from their wintering grounds to their breeding grounds in northern and northeastern Europe, and it provides internationally important wintering and nesting habitat for several species of waterbirds. Some notable species as the corncrake (*Crex crex*) and spotted crake (*Porzana porzana*) breed in the Site. The Site has been home to the European beaver (*Castor fiber*) since 2004: the species appears to be well established, with three or four family units identified. The vulnerable alpine longhorn beetle (*Rosalia alpina*) is also present. Human activities include agriculture, forestry, boating, fishing and bird hunting; the Site has been used for extensive mowing and grazing, depending on the hydrological conditions.

Bassin d'Arcachon - Secteur du delta de la Leyre

Site number: 1,996 | Country: France | Administrative region: Aquitaine

Area: 5,175 ha | Coordinates: 44°39'51"N 01°01'50"W | Designation dates: 27-10-2011

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Bassin d'Arcachon - Secteur du delta de la Leyre. 27/10/11; Aquitaine; 5,175 ha; 44°39'52"N 001°01'51"W. Natura 2000 (SPA, SIC). Covering a substantial part of the delta, the site is important for many species dependent on the intertidal zone such as threatened fish species. The mosaic of habitats, also including seasonally flooded forests, meadows, salt marshes and fish ponds, acts as a stop-over and wintering site for migratory bird species, many of them protected on a European level. It offers habitat for numerous species of insects, reptiles and mammals, some of them threatened globally. *Luscinia svecica namnetum*, a species of Bluethroat endemic to the French Atlantic coast, also occurs here. The site is important in flood regulation and acts as a buffer zone between Arcachon Bay and its watershed. The Ornithological Park 'Le Teich' forms part of the site, contributing to its popularity as a tourist destination. Further human uses include aquaculture, salt production, agriculture and hunting. The abandonment of traditional management practices, the related overgrowth with invasive species, water pollution and siltation threaten the site. Ramsar Site no. 1996. Most recent RIS information: 2011.

Camargue

Site number: 346 | Country: France | Administrative region: Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur

Area: 100,788 ha | Coordinates: 43°30'17"N 04°35'23"E | Designation dates: 01-12-1986

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

The Site represents a group of wetlands characteristic of the Mediterranean coastline. Its habitats are large spatial units covering several thousand hectares. The Camargue is renowned for its birds, and boasts just over half of the species found in France, including ten species of heron (*ardeidae*), 27 ducks and geese (*anatidae*), 31 waders, 15 gulls and terns (*laridae*), and 28 other birds. A total of 356 bird species use the area, including more than 250 waterfowl (75% of the waterfowl species recorded in France). Camargue is home to a large population of European pond terrapin (*Emys orbicularis*), the only remaining core population on the Mediterranean coast and in France. As the wetlands in the Camargue are directly or indirectly linked to anthropogenic water management, particularly for agriculture, changes in practices linked to socio-economic issues are bound to have an impact, often negative, on their conservation status and management. Other human activities include tourism, hunting and fishing.

Estuaire du fleuve Sinnamary

Site number: 1,828 | Country: France (outre-mer) | Administrative region: Sinnamary, Iracoubo

Area: 28,400 ha | Coordinates: 05°27'36"N 53°04'16"W | Designation dates: 15-09-2008

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

This wetland complex stretches for some forty kilometres along the shores of Sinnamary, a commune located along the coast of French Guiana. It represents a combination of intertidal mudflats, active sand flats, mangroves, freshwater swamps and seasonally flooded areas that extend towards the delta of the Sinnamary river. Its habitats provide home for some globally vulnerable mammals such as white-lipped peccary (*Tayassu pecari*), Brazilian tapir (*Tapirus terrestris*), giant anteater (*Myrmecophaga tridactyla*) and red-faced spider monkey (*Ateles paniscus*). The Site also acts as a nursery for various species of fish, including the Atlantic tarpon (*Magalops atlanticus*) which is important for coastal fishing. It also hosts more than 1% of the global populations of semipalmated sandpiper (*Calidris pusilla*) and yellow-billed tern (*Sternula superciliaris*). It is the preferred habitat for the vulnerable American manatee (*Trichechus manatus*) and serves as nesting and foraging area for the endangered green turtle (*Chelonia mydas*). The mangroves play an important role in coastal protection and as spawning grounds. The complex also hosts an important archeological site from the pre-Columbian era. Ecotourism activities such as canoeing in the marsh take place, while the *Maison de la Nature* welcomes visitors to its eco-museum, which is largely dedicated to wetlands, but also showcases local crafts. Poaching is still taking place despite the national regulations. Large-scale agricultural projects present a threat to the wetlands.

Etang de Biguglia

Site number: 520 | Country: France | Administrative region: Haute-Corse
Area: 1,790 ha | Coordinates: 42°36'N 09°28'59"E | Designation dates: 05-04-1991

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Etang de Biguglia. 08/04/91; Corse; 1,790 ha; 42°36'00"N 09°29'00"E; Nature Reserve, Natura 2000 (SPA, SAC), Important Bird Area, Natural Area of Ecological Interest for Flora and Fauna. The Site is the largest coastal lagoon in Corsica, divided into two basins connected with the sea. It comprises shrub-dominated wetlands crossed by creeks within seasonally flooded agricultural land characterized by excavations and drainage channels. It is of international importance for the maintenance of biological diversity within the Mediterranean biogeographic region: it supports outstanding numbers of breeding and wintering waterbirds including grebes, cormorants, ducks, geese and swans as well as vulnerable reptile species such as *Testudo hermanni* and mammals such as *Myotis capaccinii*. Moreover, the coastal lagoon is an important spawning and nursery ground for critically endangered fish species such as *Anguilla anguilla*. The lagoon supports diverse and rare vegetation which varies from halophytic species and submerged vegetation fringed by reedbeds to maquis communities. The Site plays an important role in flood regulation and groundwater recharge. The main threats to its ecological character are illegal hunting and sedimentation. Human activities include tourism, fishing and agriculture. A management plan has been approved for the period 2014-2018. Ramsar Site no. 520. Most recent RIS information: 2014.

Etang de Palo

Site number: 1,829 | Country: France | Administrative region: Prunelli di Fiumorbu
Area: 212 ha | Coordinates: 41°55'59"N 09°24'E | Designation dates: 15-09-2008

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Etang de Palo. 15/09/08; Corse; 212 ha. 41°57'N 09°24'E. SPA, ZNIEFF (Zone Naturelle d'Intérêt Ecologique, Faunistique et Floristique). A very well preserved natural freshwater lagoon on the east coast of Corsica, temporarily connected with the sea through a seminatural narrow channel that gets timely opened to regulate the concentration of nutrients, thus avoiding eutrophication events. The lagoon is the fourth largest on the island; with its sandy beaches and surrounding vegetation, it constitutes an important ecosystem for its ecological, faunistic and floristic values. It hosts rare plant species such as *Kosteletkya pentacarpos* and supports five protected bat species, including *Barbastella barbastellus*, *Miniopterus schreibersii*, *Myotis capaccinii*, and *Myotis emarginatus*. The site has high hydrological value in helping the recharge of the aquifer, slowing down the water flow into the sea, and thus also reducing erosion phenomena. Agriculture and aquaculture are the main activities practiced in the surrounding area. Ramsar site no. 1829. Most recent RIS information: 2008.

Etang de Saint-Paul

Site number: 2,398 | Country: France (outr-mer) | Administrative region: Commune de Saint-Paul, Territoire de la Côte Ouest, Département de La Réunion
Area: 485 ha | Coordinates: 20°59'59"S 55°17'30"E | Designation dates: 15-07-2019

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

The Site covers 485 hectares in the western part of the island of Réunion. It lies in an alluvial plain, and saltwater intrusions from underground sources mix with fresh water, creating brackish waters in parts of the Site. This creates a diversity of habitats, which positively influences the biodiversity of the Site and of the Mascarene Archipelago as a whole. The Site particularly helps to support species that need salt and fresh water for their life cycle. 16 plant and 11 animal species found in Etang de Saint-Paul, including three birds, six fish, one crustacean and one insect, are categorized as threatened in the Mascarene Islands. The wetland is also a major habitat for various waterbirds, such as striated heron and common moorhen. Because of its proximity to the densely populated city of Saint-Paul, the Site is threatened by human activities such as the gathering of natural resources and unsustainable water uses. A management plan is implemented to preserve its hydrological and ecological characteristics against these threats.

Etang de Salses-Leucate

Site number: 2,307 | Country: France | Administrative region: Languedoc-Roussillon (Occitanie)

Area: 7,637 ha | Coordinates: 42°50'38"N 02°59'55"E | Designation dates: 30-06-2017

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

The Site consists of the Salses-Leucate coastal lagoon and its peripheral wetlands; it represents a typical Mediterranean coastal area. A wide range of habitats with different levels of salinity, depth and vegetation cover provide favourable conditions for a range of animal and plant species, most notably birds such as the locally-rare common snipe *Gallinago gallinago* and Eurasian curlew *Numenius arquata*, turtles such as the European pond turtle *Emys orbicularis*, bats such as the vulnerable long-fingered bat *Myotis capaccinii* and a large number of fish, including the critically endangered European eel *Anguilla anguilla*. The Site is also important for its fisheries, with traditional fishing techniques still practiced, and for its regulatory functions such as flood control, water purification and groundwater recharge and discharge. Special attention is paid to minimize the effect on the Site of the significant tourism and recreation. Visitor facilities include an interpretation centre and trails around the pond while various public awareness activities can be enjoyed in summer. Other potential issues include urbanisation, drainage, salinisation and invasive alien species. A management plan for the Site is being implemented and a restoration plan is being prepared.

Etang des Salines

Site number: 1,830 | Country: France (outre-mer) | Administrative region: Archipelago of petit Antilles

Area: 207 ha | Coordinates: 14°24'20"N 60°52'31"W | Designation dates: 15-09-2008

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

This coastal lagoon is in the south of Martinique in the Lesser Antilles archipelago, at the limit of the Saint Lucia Channel. The waters entering the lagoon from the Atlantic Ocean and Caribbean Sea create particular ecological characteristics which favour diversified and rich aquatic populations. The Site is the last stop for many birds coming from North America before crossing the Saint Lucia Channel. Mangroves provide feeding ground for many invertebrates and other marine species, including the endangered American eel (*Anguilla rostrata*) and the vulnerable Mozambique tilapia (*Oreochromis mossambicus*). The area used to be important for local livelihoods thanks to its salt production and exploitation between the 18th and 20th centuries, which gave the lagoon its name. Beyond several threats related to run-off of pesticide and other pollutants, tourism-related developments are becoming a problem as the Site includes one of the most popular beaches in Martinique. A restoration plan is being prepared as of 2023.

Etang d'Urbino

Site number: 1,831 | Country: France | Administrative region: commune de Ghisonaccia (Haute-Corse)

Area: 790 ha | Coordinates: 42°01'59"N 09°28'59"E | Designation dates: 15-09-2008

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Etang d'Urbino. 15/09/08; Corse; 790 ha ; 42°02'N 009°29' E. SPA, ZNIEFF (Zone Naturelle d'Intérêt Ecologique, Faunistique et Floristique). On the east coast of Corsica, the second largest lagoon on Corsica with a maximum depth of 9m. The site is separated from the sea through a narrow strip of sand where *Juniperus macrocarpa*, *J. phoenicea* and *Pinus pinaster* dunes are found. The lagoon plays an important role for avifauna, it is a stop-over for many migratory birds on their route towards the south, and it is also habitat for many birds during the reproduction and breeding season. Inventories reveal the presence of 113 different bird species, of which 37 breed here. *Netta rufina* and *Tadorna tadorna* are two species no longer common on Corsica but that still find good conditions for reproduction here. *Aphanius fasciatus* is an endemic fish species typical of the northern part of the Mediterranean. Ramsar site no. 1831. Most recent RIS information: 2008.

Etangs de la Champagne humide

Site number: 514 | Country: France | Administrative region: Grand Est (ex Champagne-Ardenne)

Area: 255,800 ha | Coordinates: 48°32'43"N 04°41'01"E | Designation dates: 05-04-1991

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

The Site is an important complex of rivers, lakes and alluvial forest, featuring more than 400 ponds, four reservoirs, streams, gravel pits and meadows. Abundant wildlife is found within this mosaic of habitats. Various migrant birds are found: the Site is an essential refuge for nearly 150,000 wintering waterbirds; nearly 150 black stork individuals have been recorded in summer, and up to 300,000 migrating common crane. In addition, it is one of the last breeding sites in the Grand Est region for purple heron, little bittern and great reed warbler. The wet meadows, reed beds and forests also support a very large number of plant species (including small fleabane *Pulicaria vulgaris* and greater spearwort *Ranunculus lingua*). The most significant threats are tourism, urbanization, invasive species, drainage and the use of grasslands for intensive farming. A management plan is implemented, which is frequently reviewed to preserve the Site's characteristics.

Etangs de la Petite Woëvre

Site number: 515 | Country: France | Administrative region: Lorraine

Area: 5,300 ha | Coordinates: 49°01'59"N 05°48'E | Designation dates: 05-04-1991

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Etangs de la Petite Woëvre. 08/04/91; Lorraine; 5,300 ha; 49°02'N 005°48'E. Special Protection Area EC Directive; Regional Natural Park. A clay depression consisting of a high density of lakes formed in the Middle Ages by draining the marsh to create fish rearing ponds. The lakes and ponds are interspersed by woodland, pasture, wet meadows, reedbeds and arable land. The complex supports a rich nesting avifauna, and is important for staging and wintering various species of migratory waterbirds. Human activities include fish farming, agriculture and hunting. Management measures include regular mowing, extensification of meadows (cutting hay late in the season), creation of mud flats, and restoration of a dry lake bed. Ramsar site no. 515. Most recent RIS information: 1995.

Etangs du Lindre, forêt du Romersberg et zones voisines

Site number: 1,267 | Country: France | Administrative region: Lorraine

Area: 5,308 ha | Coordinates: 48°46'59"N 06°48'E | Designation dates: 02-02-2003

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Etangs du Lindre, forêt du Romersberg et zones voisines. 02/02/03; Lorraine; 5,308 ha; 48°47'N 006°48'E. Regional Nature Park (in part), proposed Special Protection Area and Site of Community Importance EC Directives. A complex of shallow lakes, marshes, reedbeds, mires, small rivers and associated forests, pastures, hedgerows, and cultivated areas that provide a variety of habitats. Small continental salt grasslands are of particular biodiversity value. The forest contains many rare plant species and an important population of wild cat *Felis silvestris*. The lakes serve as important moulting areas for shoveler *Anas clypeata* and as breeding and wintering sites for many other waterbirds. Non-intensive fish farming, hunting and nature tourism are the main human uses besides agriculture and forestry. Each year, a popular event celebrates the annual fish harvest in the lakes. Ramsar site no. 1267. Most recent RIS information: 2002.

Etangs palavasiens

Site number: 1,832 | Country: France | Administrative region: Languedoc-Roussillon

Area: 5,797 ha | Coordinates: 43°30'N 03°51'E | Designation dates: 15-09-2008

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Etangs palavasiens. 15/09/08; Languedoc-Roussillon; 5,797 ha; 43°30'N 003°51'E. Natura 2000, Nature Reserve. A complex of seven main coastal brackish and saline lagoons typical of the Mediterranean biogeographic region, with dunes and sandy beaches that separate them from the sea. The site represents an important bird habitat during the migration period, in particular for the Caspian Tern (*Sterna caspia*) and the White Stork (*ciconia ciconia*), but it is also an important breeding site for Little Tern (*Sterna albifrons*), with more than 80% of the French breeding population, and the Greater Flamingo (*Phoenicopterus ruber roseus*). The high habitat diversity of the lagoons supports many Mediterranean amphibians, reptiles like *Emys orbicularis*, fishes such as *Anguilla Anguilla* and *Atherina lagunae* and the endemic and endangered insect species (*Metrioptera fedtschenkoi azami* and *Gryllotalpa septemdecimchromosomica*) In the site fishing and hunting are practiced, and it is also very popular for tourism and leisure activities. Ramsar site no. 1832. Most recent RIS information: 2008.

Golfe du Morbihan

Site number: 517 | Country: France | Administrative region: Département du Morbihan

Area: 23,000 ha | Coordinates: 47°34'18"N 02°47'08"W | Designation dates: 05-04-1991

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Golfe du Morbihan. 08/04/91; Bretagne; 23,000 ha; 47°35'N 002°47'W. Nature Reserve, Natural area of ecological, faunistic and floristic interest (ZNIEFF), Biotope Protection Order, Hunting Reserve, Natura 2000 (SPA, SCI), IBA. A large, almost enclosed, estuarine embayment and saltmarsh complex at the mouths of three rivers. Exposed at low tide, vast mudflats connect the bay with the Atlantic Ocean. Important in preventing coastal erosion, and the basis of the wetland's productivity, the intertidal flats support large areas of *Zostera* beds and an extremely high density of invertebrates. Up to 100,000 waterbirds winter annually at the site, and numerous species of migratory waterbirds stage and nest in the area. Many species of flora and fauna are protected under national and EU legislation. Oyster farming produces an annual harvest of more than 10,000 tonnes. Other human activities include commercial and sport fishing and tourism. Environmental education opportunities and several observatories exist. Ramsar Site no. 517. Most recent RIS information: 2012.

Grand Cul-de-Sac Marin de la Guadeloupe

Site number: 642 | Country: France (outre-mer) | Administrative region: Guadeloupe

Area: 29,500 ha | Coordinates: 16°20'45"N 61°37'02"W | Designation dates: 08-12-1993

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

The Site consists of coastal wetland ecosystems including brackish mangrove forests, freshwater swamp forests and wet marshes and meadows. The freshwater swamp forests are backed by marine phanerogam meadows and coral reefs, which feature the critically endangered staghorn coral (*Acropora cervicornis*). Some other threatened species are Guadeloupe big-eyed bat (*Chiroderma improvisum*) and green turtle (*Chelonia mydas*), both listed as globally endangered. 49 migrant bird species pass through the Site on their way to wintering grounds in South America, such as the brown pelican (*Pelecanus occidentalis*). Two endemic birds are found in the Site: the plumbeous warbler (*Setophaga plumbea*) and the Guadeloupe woodpecker (*Melanerpes herminieri*). 261 species of fish have been recorded, out of a total of 600 in the Caribbean. 14% of the species surveyed live in the mangroves on a sedentary basis, whereas 86% are of reef or pelagic origin and only stay there temporarily. The mangroves help to fix sediment, purify water, and contribute to coastal stability in the event of cyclonic swells or tsunamis. Human uses include traditional small-scale arable farming and fishing in mangrove areas, as well as tourism. Threats to the area include mangrove and coral reef destruction, illegal waste dumping, overfishing and increased tourist boat traffic.

Île Europa

Site number: 2,073 | Country: France (outre-mer) | Administrative region: Terres australes et antarctiques françaises (TAAF)

Area: 214,872 ha | Coordinates: 22°21'52"S 40°21'50"E | Designation dates: 27-10-2011

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

The Site is a low-lying island of coral origin in the Mozambique Channel with a central lagoon enclosed by mangroves. The island itself is surrounded by a "fringing reef", interrupted by sandy beaches, which constitute one of the world's most important breeding and nesting sites for the globally endangered green sea turtle *Chelonia mydas*. The Site offers habitat to the globally endangered Madagascar pond heron (*Ardeola idae*), the vulnerable fin whale (*Balaenoptera physalus*) and the critically endangered great hammerhead shark (*Sphyrna mokarran*). It supports a high number of nesting sea birds including two subspecies endemic to the Indian Ocean: Audubon's shearwater (*Puffinus lherminieri*) and sooty tern (*Onychoprion fuscatus*). Other animals found on the island include endemic nesting birds such as the Madagascar white-eye (*Zosterops maderaspatanus*), four species of reptiles of which two are endemic, and 103 arthropods with more than 20 endemic. The coastal waters host seven species of sea mammals, 390 fish, 141 cnidarians and 176 shellfish. More than 1,250 plant and animal species have been recorded in total. The mangrove and seagrass beds protect and stabilize the coastline, reducing erosion. 14 soldiers of the French Armed Forces in the Southern Indian Ocean Zone permanently occupy the island. Otherwise the only threatening factors relate to introduced species such as goats and plants such as the green choca. Nonetheless, the state of conservation of the island is probably extremely close to its original state. The Site serves as a laboratory for the study of the natural evolution of island ecosystems and global change, and more research is encouraged.

Impluvium d'Evian

Site number: 1,833 | Country: France | Administrative region: Haute- Savoie

Area: 3,275 ha | Coordinates: 46°21'55"N 06°36'23"E | Designation dates: 15-09-2008

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

The Site is composed of seasonal and permanent freshwater marshes, forested and non-forested peatlands, rivers and streams. It is in the heart of a plateau where the popular mineral waters of Evian have their origin as rainwater is absorbed in the soil. During the infiltration process it is purified and redistributed underground, feeding the aquifer. In addition, this network of wetlands contributes to the maintenance of an exceptional hydrological system, feeding the groundwater that gives rise to Evian's mineral waters. Although the Site does not support an outstanding number of species, it provides an important habitat for invertebrates, including the nationally endangered butterfly *Coenonympha tullia*. The extension of agricultural land and the construction of drainage systems have also led to occasional changes in hydrological functioning.

La Brenne

Site number: 518 | Country: France | Administrative region: Centre-Val de Loire

Area: 140,000 ha | Coordinates: 46°43'21"N 01°15'06"E | Designation dates: 05-04-1991

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

La Brenne consists of a plateau with moors, meadows, wasteland, woodland, dry grassland, and many lakes and ponds; in 2016 around 3,000 ponds were counted within its boundaries. This high variety of habitats supports great biodiversity, including several species of birds, dragonflies, amphibians, and reptiles such as the European pond turtle, one of the main symbols of the Site. The Site also supports more than 1% of the biogeographical populations of whiskered tern *Chlidonias hybrida* and the globally vulnerable common pochard *Aythya ferina*. It attracts more than 23,000 wintering birds during January. Human activities include agriculture, forestry, fish farming, game hunting and nature tourism. Fish farming and agriculture have long been of great importance for the Site, as the existing waterbodies were created during the Middle Ages for irrigation and fishing purposes. Livestock farming has an impact on the open environment, while development projects in surrounding areas and new construction within the Site are seen as potential threats.

Lac de Grand-Lieu

Site number: 714 | Country: France | Administrative region: Pays de la Loire

Area: 6,523 ha | Coordinates: 47°05'31"N 01°40'54"W | Designation dates: 01-02-1995

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

The Site is France's largest natural lowland lake, with a surface that in winter reaches 6,300 hectares, when its meadows and other flood-prone areas are flooded, while in summer it shrinks to less than 3,000 ha during the low-water period. The Site hosts more than 1% of the global populations of northern shoveler (*Anas clypeata*), gadwall (*Anas strepera*), purple heron (*Ardea purpurea*), common pochard (*Aythya ferina*), whiskered tern (*Chlidonias hybrida*) and black-crowned night heron (*Nycticorax nycticorax*). It also supports almost 500 important plant species, including many that are nationally or regionally threatened or protected. Human activities include fishing, hunting and tourism, and also education and scientific studies. It is also important for its archaeological, historical and ethnographic values. Some alien invasive animal species might pose a threat to the ecosystem.

Lac du Bourget - Marais de Chautagne

Site number: 1,268 | Country: France | Administrative region: Rhône-Alpes

Area: 5,500 ha | Coordinates: 45°44'N 05°51'E | Designation dates: 02-02-2003

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Lac du Bourget - Marais de Chautagne. 02/02/03; Rhône-Alpes; 5,500 ha; 45°44'N 005°51'E. Proposed Special Protection Area and Site of Community Importance EC Directives. One of the largest French Alpine lakes (4,500 ha). Apart from the lakeside town Aix-les-Bains, more than half of the lake shores remain natural, either rocky or covered with reedbeds (stretching along 11 km shoreline). Tourism and leisure activities are important, but restricted to specific lake areas only. Adjoining the lake outlet are the Chautagne marshes and peatbogs. The submerged lake vegetation and animal communities are very well developed and in good condition. During winter, and especially during cold spells, the lake harbours more than 20,000 waterbirds that also use the nearby part of the Rhône river, including up to 16,000 pochard *Aythya ferina* (Criterion 6). Bourget lake provides an important spawning area for the fish *Coregonus lavaretus* (one of the two French top sites), *Salvelinus alpinus* and *Lota lota*. Ramsar site no. 1268. Most recent RIS information: 2003.

La Dombes

Site number: 2,500 | Country: France | Administrative region: Région Auvergne Rhône-Alpes / Département de l'Ain

Area: 47,659 ha | Coordinates: 46°01'37"N 05°03'55"E | Designation dates: 22-03-2023

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

La Dombes features more than 1,200 ponds located on a flat plain north of Lyon. It is a stopover and refuge site for migratory birds, including wintering birds, particularly during cold spells in eastern and northern Europe. It is one of two major nesting sites of the red-crested pochard (*Netta rufina*) in western Europe. Other nesting bird species include the little egret (*Egretta garzetta*), the Eurasian spoonbill (*Platalea leucorodia*) and the white stilt (*Himantopus himantopus*). It is the only national site where the ferruginous duck (*Aythya nyroca*) breeds regularly, and since 2012 has been the only national breeding site of the whooper swan (*Cygnus cygnus*). Other species that make the Dombes internationally important are the common pochard (*Aythya ferina*), the lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*) and the curlew (*Numenius arquata*). La Dombes is known for its birds, but other characteristic species include the woodland brown butterfly (*Lopinga achine*) and the great capricorn beetle (*Cerambyx cerdo*), as well as bats such as the European barbastelle (*Barbastella barbastellus*) and Beichstein's bat (*Myotis bechsteinii*). The Site is used for long term monitoring and for recreational hunting and fishing. It faces four major challenges: the problem of recurrent droughts, the frequency of which has increased with climate change; the pursuit of water management based on traditional practices that respect the cycles of the ponds (alternating drying and flooding); the reduction of impacts related to the effects of intensive agricultural practices on soils that favour the diffusion of pollutants; and invasive alien species.

Lagon de Moorea

Site number: 1,834 | Country: France (outre-mer) | Administrative region: Polynésie française
Area: 5,000 ha | Coordinates: 17°30'S 149°50'W | Designation dates: 15-09-2008

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Lagon de Moorea. 15/09/08; Polynésie française; 5,000 ha; 17°30'S 149°50'W. A coral reef ecosystem developed in the tropical waters of Moorea island in the Archipel de la Société (Society Islands) west of Tahiti, also including beaches, permanent shallow marine waters, and saline lagoons. The coral reef system is one of the best known in the world – it provides habitat for many marine endangered species such as corals, sponges, mollusks, crustaceans, and is also spawning ground for fishes. A number of waterbirds such as *Pseudobulweria rostrata*, *Puffinus pacificus* and *Puffinus bailloni* regularly reproduce here. Many of the human activities on the island are linked to the resources and services provided by this ecosystem for tourism, pleasure, and construction. One of the main threats is the increasing urbanization of the coastal zone. Ramsar site no. 1834. Most recent RIS information: 2008.

La Petite Camargue

Site number: 786 | Country: France | Administrative region: Languedoc-Rousillon
Area: 42,156.5 ha | Coordinates: 43°34'44"N 04°14'27"E | Designation dates: 03-01-1996

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

The Site is characterized by a wide diversity of natural and anthropized environments, including dunes, lagoons and marshes, which support a wide range of plant and animal species. Among the most noteworthy protected plant species are the localized and highly significant coastal communities of orchid (*Spiranthes aestivalis*) and nationally significant communities of Loddon lily (*Leucojum aestivum*). The Site supports more than 1% of the global populations of bird species such as the slender-billed gull (*Chroicocephalus genei*), whiskered tern (*Chlidonias hybrida*), gull-billed tern (*Gelochelidon nilotica*) and the black-winged stilt (*Himantopus himantopus*). There is also a significant residual population of the European pond terrapin (*Emys orbicularis*) in the fluvio-lacustrine zone, while the critically endangered European eel (*Anguilla Anguilla*) and fan mussel (*Pinna nobilis*) are also present. As well as being a biodiversity reservoir, the wetlands of the Petite Camargue provide functions such as flood control and water purification, and support a wide range of traditional uses and activities, giving the Site a strong cultural identity that is unique in France. Industrial, agricultural and urban activities in the wetland's catchment put pressure on the Site's water resources and present the threat of pollution.

La Vasière des Badamiers

Site number: 2,002 | Country: France (outre-mer) | Administrative region: Mayotte
Area: 125 ha | Coordinates: 12°46'51"S 45°16'07"E | Designation dates: 27-10-2011

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

The site is a shallow mudflat with a high tidal range, regulated by the hydrological flows associated with the tides. It lies adjacent to a lagoon area which is unique in Mayotte, and has a strong heritage and ecological value: it is a highly productive, diversified ecosystem, serving as a refuge, breeding and feeding ground for numerous waterbirds and seabirds, as well as for juvenile fish, turtles and more. The critically endangered hawksbill turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata imbricata*) and the endangered green turtle (*Chelonia mydas*) are found. The Site is internationally important for the migration of the lesser crested tern (*Thalasseus bengalensis*), as well as for the presence of several species endemic to the Comoros Islands and Madagascar, such as the endangered Madagascar heron (*Ardea humbloti*) and the spider *Idiocris intertidalis* which lives in the intertidal zone. The mudflat is ecologically sensitive and plays an important role as a receptacle and purifier of terrestrial and urban effluents, filtering water before it reaches the lagoon and controlling the terrigenous sedimentation that can affect the lagoon. Siltation, coastal erosion and urban development threaten the Site.

Le Marais audomarois

Site number: 1,835 | Country: France | Administrative region: Hauts-de-France
Area: 3,726 ha | Coordinates: 50°46'53"N 02°15'38"E | Designation dates: 15-09-2008
[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Cultural and natural heritage have mixed for the past 13 centuries in this unique human-made Site, which supports high biodiversity within a very urbanized and densely populated area. People have been able to cultivate and live in the Site by building 700 kilometres of canals, drainage channels and hydraulic systems to control water levels. The Site hosts one third of the aquatic plant species found in France, and it also supports different life history stages of 26 fish species including the critically endangered globally European eel *Anguilla anguilla*. Among 13 bat species, *Myotis dasycneme*, the rarest bat in France, is regularly found here during the reproduction period. The Site is an important staging area for the globally vulnerable aquatic warbler *Acrocephalus paludicola* and threatened breeding birds such as the western marsh harrier *Circus aeruginosus*. The ecological character is influenced by the prevailing cultural traditions, with the rich biodiversity closely linked to the regular maintenance of the canals. The Site is important for flood control and fresh water supply as well for recreation and nature observation.

Le Pinail

Site number: 2,461 | Country: France | Administrative region: Nouvelle-Aquitaine
Area: 923 ha | Coordinates: 46°41'45"N 00°30'38"E | Designation dates: 22-10-2021
[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Situated at the north-eastern end of the Moulière forest, Le Pinail is a unique complex of ponds and peat bogs, moors and wet meadows, deciduous and coniferous woodlands straddling a 923-hectare plateau between the Vienne and Clain rivers. The Site is one of the most representative and best-preserved examples of the "Poitou heathlands" with their characteristic shrub *Erica scoparia*, and features more than 7,500 ponds resulting from the extraction of silica rocks between the ninth and the nineteenth centuries to manufacture millstones. This mosaic of land and water environments provides rare habitats for dragonflies and amphibians. Overall nearly 2,500 species can be found, and many are nationally or internationally threatened such as the orchid *Spiranthes aestivalis*, the splendid waxcap mushroom (*Hygrocybe splendidissima*) and the globally endangered white-clawed crayfish (*Austropotamobius pallipes*), which normally only lives in streams but can here be found in ponds. Le Pinail is important for the purification and storage of water, regulation of local climate, and flood reduction. Some 10,000 visitors visit the Site each year; local communities benefit from the exploitation of forest plantations, hunting and the use of heather for fencing. The most significant threat is climate change: as the ponds are fed by precipitation, they are vulnerable to rainfall shortages and droughts, but also to the acidification of water and soils by atmospheric deposition and the increase of atmospheric CO₂.

Les étangs de Villepey

Site number: 1,836 | Country: France | Administrative region: Provence - Alpes Cote d'Azur
Area: 270 ha | Coordinates: 43°24'22"N 06°43'23"E | Designation dates: 15-09-2008
[View Site details in RSIS](#)

The Site is located in the lower Argens valley, bordering the Petites Maures hills and the Gulf of Fréjus. One of the last remaining Mediterranean lagoons, its intertidal sand flats, shores, estuarine waters and dune systems, some of which have been created or altered by human activity (such as former gravel pits, cultivated and grazed areas), are home to an exceptional range of heritage flora and fauna. The globally vulnerable southern water vole (*Arvicola sapidus*) and long-fingered bat (*Myotis capaccinii*) are found. The agricultural activities taking place on the Site include cereal and rapeseed cultivation, sheep farming, eucalyptus foliage production, Provence cane farming and beekeeping. Potential factors that could adversely impact the ecological character of the Site are extractive activities, run-off of pollutants from industrial activities, and urban development.

Les Etangs littoraux de la Narbonnaise

Site number: 1,593 | Country: France | Administrative region: Languedoc-Roussillon

Area: 12,334 ha | Coordinates: 43°09'N 03°03'E | Designation dates: 02-02-2006

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Les étangs littoraux de la Narbonnaise. 02/02/06; Languedoc-Roussillon; 12,334 ha; 43°03'N 003°03'E; Site du Conservatoire de l'espace littoral et des rivages lacustres, Regional Nature Park. Five Mediterranean lagoons which, though fed by freshwater, are still connected to the sea, the last natural connections to the sea that are still functioning on the French Mediterranean coast. Large areas of lacustrine vegetation and the salt gradient characterize the ponds and create an ample diversity of habitats such as reedbeds, rush, salt marshes, salt steppes and fixed dunes. The proximity of wet and very dry habitats, especially on the calcareous islets, is a great particularity of the site. Since ancient times salt production has formed the site and maintained its outstanding biodiversity. The plant species and their habitats have high value as a wintering and breeding place for birds as well as staging and feeding site for migrating species. Threats are perceived from degradation of the water quality and of water circulation in the lagoons, acceleration of human pressures, and recession of reedbeds. Tourist development and especially water sport activities threaten the highly sensitive ecosystems such as dunes and salt steppes. Land uses include vineyards, rice paddies and pastures, as well as urban utilization, besides the salines and natural habitats. Ramsar site no. 1593. Most recent RIS information: 2006.

Les Lacs du Grand Sud Neo-Calédonien

Site number: 2,194 | Country: France (outre-mer) | Administrative region: Province Sud

Area: 43,970 ha | Coordinates: 22°09'19"S 166°46'06"E | Designation dates: 02-02-2014

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

The Site is the largest freshwater reserve of New Caledonia, situated in the Great Lakes Region (*Région des Grands Lacs*) in South Province of Grande Terre, the main island. It consists of tree-dominated wetlands, shrub-dominated marshes, and permanent and seasonal rivers, streams, creeks, and lakes including a reservoir. It is internationally important for the conservation of outstanding endemic plants and animals; it supports vulnerable and endangered species which are important for the maintenance of biological diversity within the New Caledonian Moist Forests biogeographic region. The Site, which includes an extensive underground karst system, plays an important role in flood regulation, water supply, maintenance of water quality and groundwater recharge. The artificial Yaté Lake at the centre of the Site provides 20% of the country's energy needs. The area is also used for research and tourism including camping, hiking and kayaking. The main threats to its ecological character derive from fires, forestry, invasive species, and mining in surrounding areas.

Marais Breton, Baie de Bourgneuf, Ile de Noirmoutier et Forêt de Monts

Site number: 2,283 | Country: France | Administrative region: Pays de la Loire

Area: 55,826 ha | Coordinates: 46°54'51"N 02°02'45"W | Designation dates: 02-02-2017

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

The Site covers one of the main areas of coastal marshes and tidal bays on the French Atlantic coast. Behind the muddy, sandy or rocky foreshore lie extensive salt meadows, brackish flooded grasslands, dune wetlands and ponds. The area is part of a chain of coastal wetlands that are essential for the conservation of halophytic (salt-tolerant) habitats and species and include 19 habitats of community interest listed in Annex I of the European Union Habitats Directive. The duration of flooding and the degree of salinity play major roles in the composition of the different plant communities. The Site is a biodiversity hotspot, as it supports over 60,000 waterbirds and is an important nesting site for several bird species. Some of the most notable are the northern lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*), the Eurasian curlew (*Numenius arquata*) and black-tailed godwit (*Limosa limosa*). It supports critical stages in the life cycle of several fish species, including the critically endangered European eel (*Anguilla Anguilla*). The Site is essential for the livelihoods of the local fishermen and salt producers. It is also a popular tourist destination and has appropriate regulations to limit their environmental impact. The area also provides important freshwater resources and plays a major role in flood control and mitigation, coastal stabilization and water purification.

Marais de Grande Briere

Site number: 713 | Country: France | Administrative region: Loire-Atlantique
Area: 17,355 ha | Coordinates: 47°22'29"N 02°12'19"W | Designation dates: 01-02-1995
[View Site details in RSIS](#)

The Site is composed of flat peatland, vast alluvial marshes, reedbeds, floodplains, stretches of open water and canals. It is the second-largest marsh in France after the Camargue, covering almost 20,000 hectares. The mosaic of natural habitats, ranging from aquatic environments to reedbeds, wet meadows and woodlands, is home to a wide variety of animal and plant species. Some notable waterbirds include the vulnerable aquatic warbler (*Acrocephalus paludicola*) and common pochard (*Aythya ferina*). The habitats support more than 1% of the global populations of the northern shoveler (*Anas clypeata*) and the Eurasian teal (*Anas crecca*). The Brière marshes are a remarkable nursery site for the critically endangered European eel (*Anguilla anguilla*). The region is also of great interest for its cultural heritage. Human activities include recreational hunting and fishing. Changes in water levels due to human activities in the surrounding area pose a threat to the Site.

Marais De Kaw

Site number: 644 | Country: France (outr-mer) | Administrative region: Guyane Française
Area: 137,000 ha | Coordinates: 04°39'55"N 52°05'36"W | Designation dates: 08-12-1993
[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Marais de Kaw. 08/12/93; Guyane Française; 137,000 ha; 04°38'N 052°06'W. Nature Reserve, Regional Nature Park. A vast grassland swamp, wide mudflats colonized by mangroves, and swamp forests bisected by small tidal rivers and dotted with ponds. The diverse wetland habitats and their continuity with the Amazon basin provide for a high diversity of flora and fauna exhibiting high levels of endemism and supporting various endangered species. The site includes internationally important habitat for numerous species of waterbirds using the site for feeding, breeding, and wintering. An important area for nature tourism, hunting, fishing, and scientific research. Ramsar site no. 644. Most recent RIS information: 2007.

Marais de Sacy

Site number: 2,312 | Country: France | Administrative region: Hauts-de-France
Area: 1,073 ha | Coordinates: 49°20'20"N 02°33'13"E | Designation dates: 09-10-2017
[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Marais de Sacy includes a vast wetland and alkaline peatland of great ecological and cultural value, which is also important for research and education. The presence of typical, well-preserved habitats of European importance which have unfavourable status nationally lends the Site great conservation significance for the Atlantic biogeographical region. It is home to globally vulnerable species such as the southern water vole *Arvicola sapidus*, the great raft spider *Dolomedes plantarius* and the narrow-mouthed whorl snail *Vertigo angustior*. It is also an important stage for migratory birds. Non-intensive grazing and traditional hunting practices carried out in cooperation with landowners help maintain the Site's ecological character. Water cress *Nasturtium officinale* was once produced here for the Paris market and many of the ponds remain. The Site has an interesting hydrology; some parts are supplied from the north by calcium carbonate-rich groundwater and others from the south by sulphate-rich rainfall. It provides water for agriculture and drinking water for more than 25,000 people. The peatland traps and stores carbon while the accumulation of organic matter enables soil formation.

Marais d'Orx et zones humides associées

Site number: 1,995 | Country: France | Administrative region: Région Nouvelle-Aquitaine

Area: 956 ha | Coordinates: 43°35'50"N 01°23'13"W | Designation dates: 27-10-2011

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

The Site consist of a vast wetland area which mainly consists of marshes, mudflats, and wet meadows, surrounded by a network of dykes and canals. The marshes have been restored after being drained in the past for agricultural purposes. Today, it serves as an important dormitory, wintering, nesting, and migratory stopover site for many species of waterfowl. The Site is also important for numerous insects, amphibians, reptiles, fish, and mammals, including threatened species such as the European eel (*Anguilla Anguilla*) and the European mink (*Mustela lutreola*). The vulnerable southern water vole (*Arvicola sapidus*) and the aquatic warbler (*Acrocephalus paludicola*) also find habitat on the Site. More than 1% of bird species including European spoonbill (*Platalea leucorodia*), ringed plover (*Charadrius hiaticula*), northern shoveler (*Anas clypeata*) and northern pintail (*Anas acuta*) have been observed. The Site plays a major role in flood control, as it is the only flood expansion zone in the Boudigau hydrographic network. The Site welcomes up to 600 visitors per day during the peak season. A management plan is being prepared for the period up to 2031.

Marais du Cotentin et du Bessin, Baie des Veys

Site number: 516 | Country: France | Administrative region: Basse Normandie

Area: 38,891.4 ha | Coordinates: 49°19'33"N 01°14'11"W | Designation dates: 05-04-1991

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

The Site consist of an extensive complex of marshes and associated floodplains converging at a coastal bay. Vegetation consists of converted and unconverted wet grassland and the largest peatlands in France. The area is extremely important for breeding, staging and wintering numerous species of waterbirds such as the vulnerable aquatic warbler (*Acrocephalus paludicola*). It provides habitat for a variety of passerines and various species of notable plants. Human activities include pastoralism, hunting and fishing. As agriculture declines, natural succession will occur, ultimately replacing plant and animal species of great conservation importance with woodland species. The principal aim of the park is to maintain extensive agricultural practices to preserve the marsh habitat.

Marais du Fier d'Ars

Site number: 1,269 | Country: France | Administrative region: Poitou-Charentes

Area: 4,452 ha | Coordinates: 46°13'N 01°28'W | Designation dates: 02-02-2003

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Marais du Fier d'Ars. 02/02/03; Poitou-Charentes; 4,452 ha; 46°13'N 001°28'W. Nature Reserve (119 ha), Special Protection Area and proposed Site of Community Importance EC Directives. A complex of tidal sands and mudflats and diked marshes on the island of Ré off the Atlantic coast, including active and abandoned salt pans, freshwater marshes, reedbeds, oyster basins, extensive salt pastures, active dunes, dune forests, sandy and rocky coasts, and important seagrass beds (*Zostera noltii*). The site harbours a number of plant and animal species of conservation concern, including two regional endemics, the dune plant *Omphalodes littoralis* and the subspecies of the bluethroat *Luscinia svecica namnetum*. More than 31,000 waterbirds use the site in winter. Four populations of them occur regularly above the 1% threshold: *Branta bernicla bernicla*, *Recurvirostra avoseta*, *Calidris alpina*, *Limosa limosa islandica*. Human uses include oyster farming and numerous leisure and tourist activities (cycling, walking, fishing, canoeing, angling, sailing, swimming). Two visitor centres provide education facilities. Ramsar site no. 1269. Most recent RIS information: 2002.

Marais et tourbières des vallées de la Somme et de l'Avre

Site number: 2,322 | Country: France | Administrative region: Hauts de France

Area: 13,100 ha | Coordinates: 49°56'21"N 02°20'30"E | Designation dates: 18-12-2017

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

The Site includes lower stretches of the Somme River and its main tributary, the Avre, together with adjacent marshes and peatlands. At its northern (downstream) end it meets another Ramsar Site, Baie de Somme ([Ramsar Site no. 925](#)), which stretches to the river's estuary. The Site is part of one of the largest alkaline peat complexes in north-west Europe. The excellent conservation of the Site's peatland habitats, which is exceptional in the Atlantic biogeographical region, together with their different developmental stages, make the Site very important for animal and plant biodiversity. Notable species include the globally threatened purple small-reed *Calamagrostis canescens* and the European eel *Anguilla anguilla*. The Site is important as a wintering location for species such as the Eurasian bittern *Botaurus stellaris* and the Savi's warbler *Locustella luscinioides*, as well as for the breeding little bittern *Ixobrychus minutus*, the Eurasian teal *Anas crecca* and the western marsh harrier *Circus aeruginosus*. The Site is being actively managed as a Natura 2000 site and is also protected under other designations. 70% of the population of the Somme department live close to the Site, and it is central to local farming and the leisure economy. It is of wider cultural and historic importance; the Site's ancient fluvial terraces hold the earliest traces of human occupation in north-west Europe.

Marais salants de Guérande et du Mès

Site number: 746 | Country: France | Administrative region: Pays de la Loire

Area: 5,042.8 ha | Coordinates: 47°20'51"N 02°27'12"W | Designation dates: 01-09-1995

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

The Site is a representative example of the coastal lagoons/talus complex forming the salt marshes typical of the Atlantic seaboard. Its habitats are home to over 20,000 waterfowl in winter, making up over 1% of the Western Palearctic population for several species. The site exhibits an exceptional assemblage of flowering plants including numerous rare or protected species. The very high level of primary production, the highly diversified aquatic environments, and the greatly differing salinity levels give rise to rich algal and invertebrate communities which in turn support the bird species present. The Site is important for numerous species of nesting, feeding, resting and wintering migratory birds and waders, and hosts almost 10% of the French Atlantic population of breeding pied avocet (*Recurvirostra avosetta*) and 7% of the global population of black-tailed godwit (*Limosa limosa*). The area has a remarkable ethnological and sociological history. Human activities include salt production, hunting, fish farming and shellfish hatcheries. The rise of tourism in the area might affect the conservation of the Site.

Marais Vernier et Vallée de la Risle maritime

Site number: 2,247 | Country: France | Administrative region: Région Haute-Normandie, département de l'Eure (27), France

Area: 9,564.5 ha | Coordinates: 49°25'52"N 00°28'40"E | Designation dates: 18-12-2015

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

The Site is a large estuarine complex of alluvial marshes, mudflats, estuarine waters, rivers, peatlands, and a network of ditches and open water bodies which converge into the Grand'Mare natural pond. Marais Vernier, a former meander of the Seine River, holds the largest peat deposit in France. The Risle coastal river is a transition zone between saline and fresh water, which supports intertidal habitats of great importance for fish. The Site as a whole regroups 43 species of fish, of which 32 are indigenous, and provides important migratory paths or reproductive grounds for a number of species including the globally endangered European eel (*Anguilla anguilla*), the northern pike (*Esox lucius*) and the lamprey (*Lampetra fluviatilis*). The wetland provides wintering grounds for several species of waterbirds including large numbers of European golden plover (*Pluvialis apricaria*) and northern lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*). Human activities are focused on agriculture, hunting and fishing. The Site holds important social and cultural values associated with a history of wetland-related traditional practices which maintain this mosaic of habitats and the associated biodiversity. Cottages on the Site showcase the traditional use of reeds for thatching. The main threats to the Site relate to drainage in Marais Vernier, and the poplar tree plantations, roads, and utility and service lines crossing the Site. A management plan is in place for the Natura 2000 Site, which covers the whole Ramsar Site area.

Mares temporaires de Tre Padule de Suartone

Site number: 1,651 | Country: France | Administrative region: Corse

Area: 218 ha | Coordinates: 41°27'51"N 09°14'30"E | Designation dates: 02-02-2007

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

The Site in the south-east of Corsica consists of four temporary pools and their catchments and two temporary streams, which are dominated by several types of scrub, rock rose, and spring grasses. The existence of the pools in an almost semi-arid granite landscape, rich in species adapted to extreme conditions, is a rare geomorphological phenomenon in the region. These environments are renowned for the presence of globally vulnerable plants such as antinoria (*Antinoria insularis*) and the endemic Corsican scilla (*Prospero corsicum*). The presence of plants of the classes *Isoeto-littoreletea* and *Isoeto-nanojuncetea*, which are now quite rare in Europe, contributes to a plant community of great interest. The pools support a great diversity of species of which most are rare and closely associated with this type of environment, including four amphibians that are nationally protected. The principal land use is the grazing of cattle and goats, though these seem to have declined since 2000. Fires remain a potential threat to the ecosystem.

Réserve naturelle nationale des Terres australes francaises

Site number: 1,837 | Country: France (outr-mer) | Administrative region: Terres Australes et Antarctiques Françaises

Area: 2,337,100 ha | Coordinates: 48°57'30"S 67°17'41"E | Designation dates: 15-09-2008

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

The Site is located in the southern Indian Ocean and consists of two sub-Antarctic archipelagos – Crozet and Kerguelen – and the subtropical islands of Amsterdam and Saint-Paul. The islands are widely separated by open sea, so the centre coordinate given is purely notional. The Site includes a great variety of inland and coastal wetland types such as peatlands, marshes and lakes, rocky shores, estuaries and fjords. It supports many endemic species including the globally vulnerable Eaton's pintail *Anas eatoni* and Crozet pintail *Anas eatoni drygalskii*, and the critically endangered Amsterdam albatross *Diomedea amsterdamensis*. The islands represent an important refuge and reproduction ground for millions of migratory birds. Many marine mammals such as the southern sea elephant *Mirounga leonina* and the Antarctic seal *Arctocephalus tropicalis* are also well represented. The major threat is related to the introduction of non-native species such as cats and rats that are leading to the population decline of many bird species. Climate change is also affecting the ecological character of the Site.

Rhin Supérieur / Oberrhein

Site number: 1,810 | Country: France | Administrative region: Alsace

Area: 22,413 ha | Coordinates: 48°25'N 07°45'E | Designation dates: 05-09-2008

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Rhin supérieur / Oberrhein.05/09/08; Alsace; 22,413 ha; TRS centre 48°25' N 007°45' E. Natura 2000 SPA, National Nature Reserve. The upper part of the river Rhine's western bank, along nearly 170km. The hydrological regime has been strongly regulated in the 19th century and the site consists of many different natural areas such as relict swampy forests and meadows, but also humanmade habitats including dumps, canals and agricultural lands. The site support a large number of internationally protected species such as *Bufo calamita*, *Castor fiber*, *Lutra lutra* and *Myotis myotis*, and it provides nesting, resting, and wintering habitats for many birds, indeed every year an average of 55,000 migratory birds stop here. The Rhine also supports migratory fish species such as *Salmo salar*, *Alosa alosa*, *Salmo trutta*, *Lampetra fluviatilis* and *Anguilla anguilla*. Navigation, water sports, agriculture, hydroelectric power stations are only few of the main land uses. Canalization and deforestation could represent serious threats for the area. Ramsar site no. 1810. Most recent RIS information: 2008.

Rives du Lac Léman

Site number: 519 | Country: France | Administrative region: Rhône-Alpes
Area: 1,915 ha | Coordinates: 46°21'N 06°22'59"E | Designation dates: 05-04-1991
[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Rives du Lac Léman. 08/04/91; Rhône-Alpes; 3,335 ha; 46°23'N 006°28'E. Special Protection Area EC Directive; Natural Reserve, Hunting Reserve. Several physically separate zones on the shores of Lac Léman (Lake Geneva) consisting of alluvial terraces, gravel islands, lacustrine dunes, extensive reedbeds and parts of the Dranse, Redon, Foron and Vion rivers. Lac Léman is the second most important wintering area for waterbirds in France. Breeding and staging birds use the site, which also supports various mammals and a rich flora including several rare plant species. Land use includes commercial fishing, fish farming, agriculture, and tourism. Significant shoreline development is causing a decline in nesting birds. Ramsar site no. 519. Most recent RIS information: 1990.

Salins d'Hyères

Site number: 1,838 | Country: France | Administrative region: Région Provence Alpes Côte d'Azur
Area: 900 ha | Coordinates: 43°04'59"N 06°10'59"E | Designation dates: 15-09-2008
[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Salins d'Hyères. 15/09/08; 900 ha; 43°05' N 006°11' E. Natura 2000 SPA; ZNIEFF (Zone Naturelle d'Intérêt Ecologique, Faunistique et Floristique). One of the largest Mediterranean coastal wetlands in France, constituted of two separate sites: Salin des Pesquiers and Vieux Salins. The area is of a great importance for many birds during their migration season, but also for breeding and wintering. It regularly supports 218 bird species, amongst them *Grus grus*, *Lanius senator*, *Calandrella brachydactyla*, and *Hirundo daurisa*. Exploited for salt from 1848 until 1995, the salins d'Hyères were acquired by the Conservatoire du littoral and represent a mosaic of different habitats very important in supporting a wide range of other fauna and flora species. These wetlands are the only site in continental France where *Matthiola tricuspidata* and *Tamarix Africana* can be found. The site is located in an urban area where the main economy is based on coastal tourism. Possible threats are the spreading of exotic species and algal bloom. Ramsar site no. 1838. Most recent RIS information: 2008.

Tourbière de Moltifao

Site number: 1,994 | Country: France | Administrative region: Haute-Corse
Area: 34 ha | Coordinates: 42°28'47"N 09°09'24"E | Designation dates: 27-10-2011
[View Site details in RSIS](#)

The Site in the Asco river basin is the largest active raised bog on the island of Corsica. Several of its plant species are protected on a national, European or international level and some of them are not found anywhere else in Corsica. Over 200 species of mushroom have been recorded. Notable animal species are the European pond turtle (*Emys orbicularis*) and Hermann's tortoise (*Testudo hermanni*). Hunting, fishing and some scientific and educational activities take place in the Site. Public visits have been planned every year since 2008 for World Wetlands Day. Urban developments near the Site have disrupted the river flow and pose a potential threat of water pollution. Additionally, fires and invasive *Ailanthus altissima* trees have an impact on the ecosystem.

Tourbières et lacs de la Montagne jurassienne

Site number: 1,266 | Country: France | Administrative region: Bourgogne-Franche-Comté

Area: 12,156 ha | Coordinates: 46°42'08"N 06°08'12"E | Designation dates: 02-02-2003

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

The Site extends between the towns of Pontarlier and Saint-Claude in the Jura mountain range. Originally named "Bassin du Dugeon" when it was designated in 2003, the Site's area was extended in 2021 from under 6,000 hectares to cover over 12,000 ha. It now includes large emblematic peat bogs such as those in the Dugeon basin, the valleys of the upper Doubs and Orbe Rivers, and the valley of Chapelle-des-Bois and Bellefontaine. Its 18 lakes and 2000 ha of peatlands represent about 40% of the area of peatlands in the Jura massif. The limestone subsoil allows a juxtaposition of alkaline and acid peatlands which is unique in France for its size. The Site provides numerous habitats of importance for a variety of nationally or internationally protected species, from plants and fungi to dragonflies, butterflies, fish, birds, amphibians and reptiles. Two thirds of the national population of the common snipe (*Gallinago gallinago*) nest here, and the Site is also an important spawning ground for the northern pike (*Esox lucius*), the lavaret (*Coregonus lavaretus*), lake trout (*Salmo trutta*) and the white-clawed crayfish (*Austropotamobius pallipes*). In the past the peat habitats were greatly modified for the exploitation of peat, the development of forestry and agricultural activities, but peatland restoration activities have been successfully implemented. The Site is nonetheless still sensitive to droughts, and to pollution from the surrounding agricultural land.

Vallées de la Scarpe et de l'Escaut

Site number: 2,405 | Country: France | Administrative region: Région Hauts-de-France

Area: 27,622 ha | Coordinates: 50°25'58"N 03°25'27"E | Designation dates: 02-02-2020

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Situated adjacent to the border with Belgium, Vallées de la Scarpe et de l'Escaut is a complex of connected ponds, marshes, canals, peat bogs, alluvial and swamp forests, rivers, streams and aquifers, which lies between the Scarpe and l'Escaut rivers. Some of the larger water bodies are of anthropogenic origin, as they were created by the collapse of old mining complexes. The natural and also the human-made areas provide habitats for nesting and migrant birds, and the wetland also hosts diverse fish and amphibians. Several species are listed as nationally or internationally threatened. Among these are the critically endangered European eel, the moor frog (*Rana arvalis*), of which half of the national population is found in the Site, and the vulnerable aquatic warbler (*Acrocephalus paludicola*). The wetland is also important for its water purification, storage and hazard reduction functions, which benefit over 300,000 people living around the site. Notable threats include drainage, agriculture, urbanization and overuse of the natural resources of the site.

Zones humides et marines de Saint-Martin

Site number: 2,029 | Country: France (outr-mer) | Administrative region: Saint-Martin

Area: 2,996.7 ha | Coordinates: 18°04'59"N 63°04'59"W | Designation dates: 27-10-2011

[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Zones humides et marines de Saint-Martin. 27/10/11; Saint-Martin; 2,997 ha; 18°05'N 063°05'W. Protected Biotope, Nature Reserve. Shallow marine waters, sea grass beds, coral reefs, mangroves, lagoons and a network of 14 ponds dispersed throughout the French side of the island. The ponds are influenced by the sea and serve as feeding, breeding and wintering areas for as many as 85 bird species, many of them threatened and some endemic. The marine part of the site harbours most of the coral reef areas surrounding the island and is habitat to several endangered and critically endangered sea turtles such as Leatherback *Dermochelys coriacea*. It constitutes a feeding and spawning area for more than 100 species of fish and is also important as shelter, nursery and migration path. The site fulfills a diverse set of ecological functions like water flow regulation, oxygenation of water, stabilization and storm protection as well as the reduction of pollutant loads entering the Sea. The marine part of the site is used for recreational activities such as diving, sailing, kayaking and surfing. Threats include poaching, water pollution from sewage, and extreme weather events as well as increasing water temperatures. Ramsar Site no. 2029. Most recent RIS information: 2012.