



Ramsar Sites Information Service

Annotated List of Wetlands of International Importance

Portugal

31 Ramsar Site(s) covering 132,487 ha

Bertiandos and S. Pedro of Arcos Lagoons

Site number: 1,613 | Country: Portugal | Administrative region: Região Norte
Area: 346 ha | Coordinates: 41°45'52"N 08°38'07"W | Designation dates: 02-12-2005
[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Bertiandos and S. Pedro of Arcos Lagoons. 02/12/05; Região Norte; 346 ha; 41°45'N 008°39'W. Natura 2000, Protected Landscape, partly National Ecological Reserve. A complex of permanent and temporary freshwater lakes on the right bank of the Lima River, hosting a broad range of 500 inventoried floristic and many fauna species. It is an important habitat for aquatic bird species for breeding, resting and migrating species, supporting amongst others *Gallinula chloropus*, *Alcedo atthis* and *Ardea purpurea* or *Caprimulgus europaeus*. It also supports two migrating fish species, *Anguilla anguilla* and *Petromyzom marinus*, that use the Estorãos River during the larval age and as an ecological corridor for the spawning sites located upstream. The strong relations between the area and the local population are part its cultural value, together with environmental education, leisure activities and outdoor recreation. Some of these activities may affect the ecological features, especially the agricultural developments of corn and rye-grass succession, with increasing abandonment of the pastures areas, and the intensification of agricultural production, including the spread of exotic species plantation (*Eucalyptus globulus*). Further impacts on the species composition and spread of some exotic species are caused by frequent forest fires and the cleaning of drainage trenches in the flooded space. Ramsar site no. 1613. Most recent RIS information: 2006.

Caldeira da Graciosa

Site number: 1,798 | Country: Portugal | Administrative region: Azores archipelago
Area: 120 ha | Coordinates: 39°01'33"N 27°58'23"W | Designation dates: 16-06-2008
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Caldeira da Graciosa (Furna do Enxofre). 16/06/08; Archipiélago de las Azores; 120 ha; 39°01'N 027°58'W. UNESCO Biosphere Reserve. A volcanic crater on Graciosa island, one of the largest of its kind with a perfect vault, containing on its bottom a lake of cold and sulphurous freshwater. It constitutes a rare example of cave and lake with volcanic activity of small geysers inside. There are important native and endemic species of arthropods characteristic of this habitat and the endemic species of bat *Nyctalus azorica* can also be found there. The cavern Furna do Enxofre (on the World Heritage tentative sites list) is the high point of the island for tourists, and the access to its grounds is made in circles through the stairs of a curious tower built in the cave. Ramsar site no. 1798. Most recent RIS information: 2008.

Caldeira do Faial

Site number: 1,799 | Country: Portugal | Administrative region: Azores archipelago
Area: 312 ha | Coordinates: 38°35'09"N 28°42'52"W | Designation dates: 16-06-2008
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Caldeira do Faial. 16/06/08; Archipiélago de las Azores; 312 ha; 38°35'N 028°42'W. Nature Reserve, Sítio de Importância Comunitária SIC. A big circular depression created by a volcanic explosion situated in the central part of Faial Island. The caldera, 390 metres deep, is in good conservation status and supports different wetland types with species native and endemic to the Azores and Macaronesia, as well as laurel forest. It hosts unique wetland ecosystems including mires, forested and non forested peatlands, seasonal freshwater marshes and streams. The presence of many endemic invertebrates and some threatened plant species (*Bellis azorica*, *Lactuta watsoniana*, *Veronica dabneyi* and *Isoetes azorica*) confers high ecological importance to the site. The wetland is also very important in the island context for the hydrological value as supplies freshwater to the inhabitants. It also has scenic and tourist value, being one of the main attractions of the island. Ramsar site no. 1799. Most recent RIS information: 2008.

Caldeirão do Corvo

Site number: 1,800 | Country: Portugal | Administrative region: Azores archipelago
Area: 316 ha | Coordinates: 39°42'32"N 31°06'36"W | Designation dates: 16-06-2008
[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Caldeirão do Corvo. 16/06/08; Archipiélago de las Azores; 316 ha; 39°42'N 031°06'W. UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, Regional Nature Park, Sítio de Importância Comunitária SIC. A crater that covers most of Corvo Island's surface and includes two permanent lakes with some scattered islets. The wetland has very good and representative habitats of peat dominated by peat moss *Sphagnum* and Macaronesian woodlands of great importance at regional level. The site regulates all of the aquifer of the island. The area is well known as passage for many migrant birds either from Europe or North America as the island is more or less at the same distance from both continents. Colonies with high numbers of threatened species of seabirds also occur, e.g., Cory's shearwater (*Calonectris diomedea*) and the roseate terns (*Sterna dougallii*). Of the 35 birds species recorded in the site, 21 are also breeding here. Threats to the site include invasive flora species. Ramsar site no. 1800. Most recent RIS information: 2008.

Complexo Vulcânico das Furnas

Site number: 1,801 | Country: Portugal | Administrative region: Azores archipelago
Area: 2,855 ha | Coordinates: 37°45'N 25°19'W | Designation dates: 16-06-2008
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Complexo Vulcânico das Furnas. 16/06/08; Archipiélago de las Azores; 2,855 ha; 37°45'N 025°19'W. The site covers the entire valley within an impressive crater of a volcano which still has some secondary activity such as small geysers and numerous springs and streams of hot sulphurous water. The main water body is the Furnas Lake (Lagoa das Furnas), whose shore and shallow waters are among the best habitats for waterbirds migrating through the Azores. The slopes of the crater are home of a good diversity of native plants of the laurel forest of Macaronesia. The Furnas complex is a very well known tourist attraction in the archipelago and it is also of great scientific interest. The eutrophication of the lake and the expansion of exotic invasive species are considerable threats to this site, which is under an urgent recovery plan for its restoration. Ramsar site no. 1801. Most recent RIS information: 2008.

Complexo Vulcânico das Sete Cidades

Site number: 1,802 | Country: Portugal | Administrative region: Azores archipelago
Area: 2,171 ha | Coordinates: 37°51'18"N 25°46'55"W | Designation dates: 16-06-2008
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Complexo Vulcânico das Sete Cidades.16/06/08; Archipiélago de las Azores; 2,171 ha; 37°51'N 025°46'W. Protected Landscape. The site is one of the greatest tourist attractions of the archipelago and includes the whole crater and catchment area of Sete Cidades on São Miguel island and the adjacent smaller mountains of Serra Devassa. Several lacustrine systems occur in the site which is composed of a dozen relatively small ponds and lakes and the famous blue and green lakes (Lagoa Azul and Lagoa Verde) the largest of the Azores (4.38 km² and 53.2x10⁶ m³ of water volume). Besides the high landscape significance, the complex is important as a breeding and stopover area for some species of migrant birds at regional level, especially ducks and waders. The eutrophication of the lakes, the expansion of exotic invasive species, the intensification of grazing and livestock, as well as erosion, are the main threats to this site, which is under a urgent recovery plan for its restoration. Ramsar site no. 1802. Most recent RIS information: 2008.

Complexo Vulcânico do Fogo

Site number: 1,803 | Country: Portugal | Administrative region: Azores Archipelago
Area: 2,182 ha | Coordinates: 37°46'03"N 25°28'19"W | Designation dates: 16-06-2008
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Complexo Vulcânico do Fogo.16/06/08; Archipiélago de las Azores; 2,182 ha; 37°45'N 025°28'W. Sitio de Importância Comunitária SIC, Nature Reserve. Located in the central part of São Miguel island, the biggest of the Azores archipelago, the site includes all the catchment area of the Fogo complex, with the lake of Fogo (Lagoa do Fogo) within the large crater and the geothermal springs, waterfalls and geysers of Caldeira Velha. The site provides electrical energy to the island through its geothermal power plant, and the water springs of Lombadas are also an important economic resource, supplying most of the island and providing mineral water. Ecologically there are several typical and threatened habitats of peatland and laurel forest which support several endemic and native species of plants and animals, such as the snipe (*Gallinago gallinago*). The high hydrological and ecological value of the area makes it a perfect refuge and resting site for many migratory birds. The geothermic phenomena attract many tourists every year. The threats for the site are mainly absence of vigilance and illegal dumping. Ramsar site no. 1803. Most recent RIS information: 2008.

Estrela Mountain upper Plateau and upper Zêzere River

Site number: 1,614 | Country: Portugal | Administrative region: Região Centro
Area: 5,075 ha | Coordinates: 40°21'22"N 07°35'40"W | Designation dates: 02-12-2005
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Estrela Mountain upper Plateau and upper Zêzere River. 02/12/05; Região Centro; 5,075 ha; 40°21'N 007°37'W. Biogenetic Reserve, Natural Park, Natura 2000 site. Comprises the upper mountain and plateau (up to 1,993m, the highest point in Portugal) as well as the Candeeira valley and parts of the Zêzere river valley, which is described as its own biogeographical sector, the "Estrellense", a transition zone between the temperate and mediterranean macrobioclimate. Due to high precipitation, there are various natural lakes, ponds, swamps, bogs, springs, brooks and rivers as well as mat-grass swards, shrublands, rocky environments and little areas of woodlands. The abiotic quality of the site is excellent, being mainly nutrient-poor and having very soft waters because of the high precipitation and the seepage from granite rocks. Thus flora and fauna include excellent examples of the endemic and rare taxa, such as *Narcissus asturiensis* or *Lycopodium clavatum* amongst the plants. Agro-pastoral systems are a traditional activity in the area, which is also used for modern agriculture and forestry. Overgrazing, over-extraction of water for electricity, and uncontrolled rubbish dumping present potential threats. Ramsar site no. 1614. Most recent RIS information: 2006.

Estuário do Sado

Site number: 826 | Country: Portugal | Administrative region: Regiao Alentejo
Area: 25,588 ha | Coordinates: 38°27'41"N 08°43'34"W | Designation dates: 08-05-1996

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Estuário do Sado. 08/05/96; Regiao Alentejo; 25,588 ha; 38°27'N 008°43'W. Special Protection Area EC Directive; Nature Reserve. An estuarine area separated from the sea by dunes and dominated by sand and mudflats exposed at low tide. The site includes vast saltmarshes and reedbeds. The area supports an extremely important fauna including migratory waders and other waterbirds -- herons and flamingos (*Phoenicopterus ruber*) -- many passerine species, mammals (otter *Lutra lutra*, the wildcat *Felis sylvestris*), and a resident population of the common bottlenose dolphin *Tursiops truncatus*. Human activities include salt production, commercial fish farming, rice cultivation, cattle raising, hunting, and tourism. Ramsar site no. 826. Most recent RIS information: 1993.

Estuário do Tejo

Site number: 211 | Country: Portugal | Administrative region: Lisboa e Vale do Tejo
Area: 14,563 ha | Coordinates: 38°49'51"N 08°59'08"W | Designation dates: 24-11-1980

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Estuário do Tejo. 24/11/80; Regiao Lisboa e Vale do Tejo; 14,563 ha; 38°50'N 008°57'W. Special Protection Area EC Directive; Nature Reserve. An estuary, with extensive mudflats, saltmarshes, reedbeds, human-made salt pans, and reclaimed agricultural polders. The area is important for at east 16 species of wintering or staging waterbirds, numerous species of breeding birds, and the otter *Lutra lutra*. Human activities include fishing and shellfish collecting, and intensive hunting and agriculture outside the Reserve. Ramsar site no. 211. Most recent RIS information: 1992.

'Fajãs' of Caldeira and Cubres Lagoons

Site number: 1,615 | Country: Portugal | Administrative region: Azores Autonomic Region
Area: 87 ha | Coordinates: 38°37'58"N 27°56'49"W | Designation dates: 02-12-2005

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'Fajãs' of Caldeira and Cubres Lagoons. 02/12/05; Azores Autonomic Region; 87 ha; 38°38'N 027°57'W. Natura 2000 site, Special Ecological Area. Comprising the Fajã do Cubres, the Fajã da Caldeira and a narrow coastal area connecting the two brackish coastal lagoons at the base of the steep sides of S. Jorge Island. The fajãs are areas created by landslide processes at the base of coastal cliffs. While the Caldeira Lagoon is connected with the ocean through a channel with tidal influence, the Cubres Lagoon, communicates only by percolation through the barrier with the sea. The site features variegated lagoon systems, unique for this region and highly uncommon on volcanic ocean islands, which provide important habitat for breeding and migrating birds such as *Charadrius alexandrinus*, *Stema dougallii* and *Calonectris diomedea*. The architecture and the testimonials of traditional agriculture form the historical and cultural value of the site, and one of the major religious celebrations of the Azores takes place in the Fajã da Caldeira. Presently the vast majority of the land is either used for pasture or completely abandoned, with the exception of some small farming and clam-catching activities. Ramsar site no. 1615. Most recent RIS information: 2006.

Ilhéus das Formigas e Recife Dollabarat

Site number: 1,804 | Country: Portugal | Administrative region: Azores archipelago

Area: 7 ha | Coordinates: 37°16'N 24°46'W | Designation dates: 16-06-2008

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Ilhéus das Formigas e Recife Dollabarat. 16/06/08; Archipiélago de las Azores; 7 ha; 37°16'N 024°46'W. The Formigas are volcanic islets emerging from an extensive submarine mount of lava deposits and fossil sediment deposits; they are located roughly between the two main islands of the eastern group of the archipelago, Santa Maria and São Miguel. These coastal habitats are found only at this site in the biogeographic region of Macaronesia and include islets, shallow waters, subtidal shores and coral reefs. The reefs are well known in the North Atlantic for their high biodiversity and rich diversity and quantity of pelagic and demersal fishes that use the site for feeding and spawning. There are also kelp grasslands of *Laminaria ochroleuca* and black corals (*Antiphatés wollastoni*) colonies under 15 metres deep which are excellent habitat for the Dusky grouper (*Ephinephelus marginatus*), the Comb grouper (*Mycteroperca fusca*), the Ornate wrasse (*Thalassoma pavo*), and *Centrolabrus caeruleus* that can reach quite uncommon large body sizes. In spite of the threats caused by illegal fisheries, both sport and professional, the site remains in a very good state of conservation. Ramsar site no. 1804. Most recent RIS information: 2008.

Lagoa da Albufeira

Site number: 825 | Country: Portugal | Administrative region: Regiao Lisboa e Vale do Tejo

Area: 1,995 ha | Coordinates: 38°31'N 09°07'46"W | Designation dates: 08-05-1996

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Lagoa de Albufeira. 08/05/96; Regiao Lisboa e Vale do Tejo; 1,995 ha; 38°30'N 009°10'W. Protected at municipal level. A coastal lagoon on sandy soils with intermittent communication to the ocean across a narrow vegetated dune system. Freshwater creeks flowing into the lagoon provide habitat for many marshland species. Habitats include reedbeds, shrub and pinewoods. An important stopover site for many migratory birds using the Eastern Atlantic flyway to Africa, with major concentrations recorded in the autumn. Terns and marshland passerines are especially noteworthy in the area. The wetland plays a major role in maintaining water tables in the area. Principal human activities include intense recreation, camping and leisure housing, shellfish production, traditional fishing, and agriculture. Ramsar site no. 825. Most recent RIS information: 1993.

Lagoa de St. André et Lagoa de Sancha

Site number: 828 | Country: Portugal | Administrative region: Regiao Alentejo

Area: 2,638 ha | Coordinates: 38°03'38"N 08°48'23"W | Designation dates: 08-05-1996

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Lagoa de St. André et Lagoa de Sancha. 08/05/96; Regiao Alentejo; 2,638 ha; 38°03'N 008°48'W. Special Protection Area EC Directive. Shallow, brackish coastal lagoons subject to widely fluctuating water and salinity levels set on the dry southwest coast of Iberia. The site includes an extensive dune system with characteristic vegetation, extensive reedbeds merging into agricultural areas, and pine forest. The lagoon is a major waterbirds refuge in Western Iberia, supporting outstanding concentrations of up to 13,000 F. atra in the post-breeding period. It is also important as a breeding and wintering site for ducks and other waterbirds. The reedbeds are crucial stopover sites for many trans-saharan passerines. Human activities include traditional fishing, recreation, agriculture, and livestock grazing. Ramsar site no. 828. Most recent RIS information: 1993.

Mira Minde Polje and related Springs

Site number: 1,616 | Country: Portugal | Administrative region: Região Lisboa e Vale do Tejo
Area: 662 ha | Coordinates: 39°31'19"N 08°41'25"W | Designation dates: 02-12-2005

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Mira Minde Polje and related Springs. 02/12/05; Região Lisboa e Vale do Tejo; 662 ha; 39°29'N 008°38'W. Natura 2000 site, Natural Park. A subterranean hydrological system based on the polje, or flat, closed depression draining underground, situated in the country's most important limestone karstic region and part of the recharge area of the two most important karstic aquifers and karstic springs in Portugal. The flooding episodes with very high fluctuations of groundwater level are a rare example in the West Mediterranean biogeographic region. The Alviela spring is one of the deepest in the world and is locally connected to a cave complex that represents the most significant fluvio-karstic phenomena in Portugal, one which supports several bat colonies with more than 5,000 bats in total. The Almonda spring is related with the most extensive Portuguese cave, an important Paleolithic site. The area features important habitat types under which temporary ponds, natural eutrophic lakes, and tall humid grasslands are the most abundant. Adverse effects are mainly caused in some places by water pollution, urban and industrial developments, and increasing tourism. There are educational activities at the underground interpretation centres in the Pena and Almonda Caves as well as the interpretation centre and Cave Bats Observatory at the Alviela Springs, which welcome up to 100,000 visitors per year. Ramsar site no. 1616. Most recent RIS information: 2006.

Mondego Estuary

Site number: 1,617 | Country: Portugal | Administrative region: Região Centro
Area: 1,518 ha | Coordinates: 40°07'31"N 08°49'25"W | Designation dates: 02-12-2005

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Mondego Estuary. 02/12/05; Região Centro; 1,518 ha; 40°08'N 008°50'W; National Ecological Reserve, Important Bird Area. Comprises the estuary of the Mondego River as it passes around the Murraceira island, including intertidal areas, salt marshes, salt pans, reedbeds, rice fields and fish farms. This site is one of the main stopover and refuge areas for migrating birds along the northwestern coast of Portugal and is particularly important for waders, especially *Recurvirostra avosetta* and *Phoenicopterus ruber*. During the breeding season the site is regionally important for species such as Black-winged Stilt *Himantopus himantopus* and Little Tern *Sterna albifrons*. Aquaculture and fishing are the chief economic activities, which is focused on three migratory species of high economic value, the Sea lamprey, Allis shad, and Twaite shad. Traditional salt production has been decreasing or been transformed for aquaculture, which has led to a loss of suitable habitats for waders and other waterbirds. Potential threats come from increasing eutrophication due to intensive use of fertilisers and herbicides and the subsequent occurrence of macro-algae blooms. The neighbouring expanding harbour and the adjacent industrial region put further pressure on the site. Ramsar site no. 1617. Most recent RIS information: 2006.

Pateira de Fermentelos Lake and Águeda and Cértima Valleys

Site number: 2,089 | Country: Portugal | Administrative region: Baixo Vouga
Area: 1,559 ha | Coordinates: 40°33'51"N 08°30'28"W | Designation dates: 03-12-2012

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Pateira de Fermentelos Lake and Águeda and Cértima Valleys. 27/07/2012; Região Centro; 1,559 ha; 40°33'52'N 008°30'28'W. Natura 2000 (SPA) and Sensitive Area. The site contains one of the largest freshwater lakes of the Iberian Peninsula with a mosaic of wetland habitats, reed beds and marshland as well as riparian vegetation. The site supports important populations of migratory and threatened bird species, like the *Ixobrychus minutus*, *Ardea purpurea*, *Circus aeruginosus*, *Milvus migrans* and *Sylvia undata*. In the lagoon and in its adjacent water system, fish also find favourable ecological conditions for refuge and spawning during the breeding season. The wetland has a major role in groundwater recharge, flood control, sediment trapping and maintenance of water supply for both natural and human-made ecosystems. The largest threat factors which might affect the ecological status of the site are essentially intensive farming, cattle raising, and contamination of water and soils by industrial and urban infrastructures. The Municipality of Águeda has implemented a Development Plan for the site which provides a set of strategies and actions aiming at the sustainable development of the area. Ramsar Site Number: 2089. Most recent RIS information: 2012.

Paúl de Arzila

Site number: 822 | Country: Portugal | Administrative region: Regiao Centro
Area: 585 ha | Coordinates: 40°10'12"N 08°33'14"W | Designation dates: 08-05-1996
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Paúl de Arzila. 08/05/96; Regiao Centro; 585 ha; 40°40'N 008°33'W. Special Protection Area EC Directive; Nature Reserve. Permanently flooded wetland including ponds and drainage channels along the Mondego River, surrounded by pine forest and farmland. The dominant feature is extensive reedbeds associated with *Salix*. The area supports important breeding and wintering populations of several species of wetland birds. The site is important for water retention and flood regulation. Human activities include fishing, reed cutting, and environmental education. Ramsar site no. 822. Most recent RIS information: 1993.

Paúl de Madriz

Site number: 823 | Country: Portugal | Administrative region: Regiao Centro
Area: 226 ha | Coordinates: 40°07'39"N 08°38'01"W | Designation dates: 08-05-1996
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Paúl de Madriz (Bas Mondego). 08/05/96; Regiao Centro; 226 ha; 40°08'N 008°38'W. Special Protection Area EC Directive. Permanently inundated freshwater marsh in an open alluvial plain with extensive reedbeds, *Salix*, and other marshland species. A freshwater spring ensures water availability in exceptionally dry years. There is a bird sanctuary supporting important concentrations of the breeding mallard *Anas platyrhynchos* and other species of breeding and wintering waterbirds. The otter *Lutra lutra* occurs in the area. Ramsar site no. 823. Most recent RIS information: 1993.

Paúl de Tornada

Site number: 1,106 | Country: Portugal | Administrative region: Lisboa e Vale do Tejo, Oeste
Area: 50 ha | Coordinates: 39°26'47"N 09°08'01"W | Designation dates: 24-10-2001
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Paúl de Tornada (Tornada Marsh). 24/10/01; Regiao Lisboa e Vale do Tejo; 50 ha; 39°27'N 009°03'W. A small freshwater permanently flooded marsh in a small alluvial plain, with extensive reed beds and numerous areas of open water, surrounded by agricultural and forest land. It fulfils the representativeness Criterion 1 and also supports a considerable diversity of species, particularly of migratory birds, as well as some threatened fish, mammal, reptile, and amphibian species. The site is presently located on private property that is rented to the environmental organizations GEOTA and PATO, with national and local government support, and a visitors' centre and observatory are in place. Ramsar site no. 1106. Most recent RIS information: 2001.

Paúl do Boquilobo

Site number: 824 | Country: Portugal | Administrative region: Regiao Lisboa et Vale do Tejo
Area: 529 ha | Coordinates: 39°23'07"N 08°31'55"W | Designation dates: 08-05-1996
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Paúl do Boquilobo. 08/05/96; Regiao Lisboa e Vale do Tejo; 529 ha; 39°23'N 008°32'W. Biosphere Reserves, Special Protection Area EC Directive; Nature Reserve. A freshwater marsh subject to winter floods of the Tejo River. The site supports characteristic aquatic vegetation and various tree species create hedges around the wetland, providing excellent cover for breeding waterbirds and other fauna. The site, an internationally important wintering site for *Anas acuta*, includes a major heronry. Human activities are agriculture and, in the surrounding areas, hunting. The area is important for maintaining the water table. Ramsar site no. 824. Most recent RIS information: 1993.

Paúl do Taipal

Site number: 1,107 | Country: Portugal | Administrative region: Lower Mondego, Center Region
Area: 233 ha | Coordinates: 40°11'N 08°41'19"W | Designation dates: 17-10-2001

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Paúl do Taipal (Taipal Marsh). 24/10/01; Regiao Centro; 233 ha; 40°11'N 008°41'W. EC Birds Directive Special Protection Area. A freshwater permanently flooded marsh in a small alluvial plain in the Mondego river valley, with extensive reed beds and some open water. The wetland is surrounded by agricultural land, with rice fields downstream. It has great bird diversity and habitats of major importance for migratory birds for wintering (including more than 1% of the Mediterranean population of *Anas clypeata*) and resting areas (for example, transaharan passerines and palearctic birds). It also supports a significant portion of the indigenous fish species *Rutilus macrolepidotus*, *Barbus bacogei*, and *Cobitis marocana* in all life-cycle stages. The area is very important for local regulation of the underground water table and may also act as a buffer zone, contributing to increased protection of adjoining farmlands against erosion by winter floods. The marsh is publicly owned and managed, with educational activities and traditional fishing practiced within the site; conventional corn and rice cultivation takes place on private lands roundabout. Ramsar site no. 1107. Most recent RIS information: 2001.

Planalto Central das Flores

Site number: 1,806 | Country: Portugal | Administrative region: Azores archipelago, Flores Island
Area: 2,572 ha | Coordinates: 39°26'50"N 31°13'05"W | Designation dates: 16-06-2008

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Planalto Central das Flores (Morro Alto). 16/06/08; Archipiélago de las Azores; 2,572 ha; 39°26'N 031°12'W. Sitio de Importância Comunitária SIC, Nature Reserve. A plateau area located at around 600m asl dominated by important wetlands ranging from permanent freshwater lakes to forested and non-forested peatlands adapted to low oxygen conditions. The wetlands play a significant role in the hydrological regulation of aquifer recharge and discharge on the Isla de las Flores. Among the four permanent lakes and their excellent water quality, Lagoa Negra is the deepest of the Azores archipelago with its 108 metres depth, while Lagoa Funda is the biggest on the island. The area is among the best place for migrating and breeding waterbirds in the Azores, with several American birds occurring there, and it is also the best conserved complex of mountain habitats in the region. It supports a broad variety of ecosystems supporting a large amount of plant endemism such as *Amni trifoliatum*, *Angelica lignescens*, *Euphorbia stygiana*, *Frangula azorica*, *Juniperus brevifolia*, *Leontodon filli*, *Leontodon rigens*, *Myosotis maritima*, *Pericallis malvifolia* and *Viburnum tinus subcordatum*. The site is also home of the endemic Bat of Azores (*Nyctalus azoreum*) also protected at national level. Ramsar site no. 1806. Most recent RIS information: 2008.

Planalto Central da Terceira

Site number: 1,805 | Country: Portugal | Administrative region: Azores archipelago
Area: 1,283 ha | Coordinates: 38°44'32"N 27°12'42"W | Designation dates: 16-06-2008
[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Planalto Central da Terceira (Furnas do Enxofre e Algar do Carvão). 16/06/08; Archipiélago de las Azores; 1,283 ha; 38°44'N 027°12'W. Sitio de Importância Comunitária SIC, Natural regional monument. A rather flat area on the top of the central plateau of Terceira Island that includes different and diverse palustrine habitats, a small set of geysers (Furnas de Enxofre) and a volcanic cave with a permanent subterranean lake inside (Algar do Carvão). The site has particular ecological conditions which support the peatland flora characteristic of the Azores and Macaronesia, with special relevance for the communities of *Juniperus brevifolia*, *Sphagnum* and laurel forest woodlands. The exuberant vegetation contributes in great degree to the rainfall levels of the area. This is the habitat for native and rare species such as the Azores Wood Pigeon (*Columbus palumbus azorica*) or the Snipe (*Gallinago gallinago*). The wetland has great importance for its hydrological characteristics for water retention and recharge of the underground springs. The geyser's field is an interesting habitat due to its excellent status of conservation. The Algar do Carvão is an ancient volcano with a small subterranean lake of clear waters and silicate stalactites as a unique case in the world. The lake is fed by rainwater from the surface and some small springs under the lake. The traditional 'corridas' are organised locally with the bulls (touros) that are raised within this site, which confers a special social importance to the site. Ramsar site no. 1805. Most recent RIS information: 2008.

Planalto Central de São Jorge

Site number: 1,807 | Country: Portugal | Administrative region: Azores archipelago
Area: 231 ha | Coordinates: 38°39'05"N 28°04'29"W | Designation dates: 16-06-2008
[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Planalto Central de São Jorge (Pico da Esperança). 16/06/08; Archipiélago de las Azores; 231 ha; 38°39'N 028°04'W. Sitio de Importância Comunitária SIC, Nature Reserve. The site, a plain on the top of the plateau of São Jorge island, is a perfect example of the Macaronesian peatlands of the Azores due to its hydrological conditions and diversity of native species of plants dominated by peat moss *Sphagnum*. Amongst the endangered species: *Bellis azorica*, *Euphrasia grandiflora*, *Lactuca watsoniana*, *Prunus lusitanica* ssp *azorica*. The site is important for its water storage and regulation characteristics. The area is in relatively good shape in terms of conservation status, although lack of control and increasing pressure from tourism could become a threat. Ramsar site no. 1807. Most recent RIS information: 2008.

Planalto Central do Pico

Site number: 1,808 | Country: Portugal | Administrative region: Azores archipelago
Area: 748 ha | Coordinates: 38°26'30"N 28°13'49"W | Designation dates: 16-06-2008
[View Site details in RSIS](#)

Planalto Central do Pico (Achada). 16/06/08; Archipiélago de las Azores; 748 ha. 38°26'N 28°13'W. Sitio de Importância Comunitária SIC, Nature Reserve. The site covers the central area of Pico Island where there are several palustrine wetlands and the catchment areas of freshwater lagoons and ponds. The Lagoa Seca and the Cabeço dos Grotões correspond to volcanic craters while the remaining are topographic depressions receiving water from all their catchment areas. The wetlands are ecologically important as they constitute very illustrative examples of the native and endemic species and wetland habitats of Macaronesia and the Azores. Also some birds have here their main distribution areas in the region, especially the snipe (*Gallinago gallinago*) and the woodcock (*Scolopax rusticola*). Although not the most important tourist asset on the island, the area is of scenic interest and visited by many people. Ramsar site no. 1808. Most recent RIS information: 2008.

Praia da Vitória Marsh

Site number: 2,099 | Country: Portugal | Administrative region: Autonomous Region of the Azores
Area: 16 ha | Coordinates: 38°44'07"N 27°03'36"W | Designation dates: 13-12-2012

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Paúl da Praia da Vitória (Praia da Vitória Marsh). 13/12/2012; Archipiélago de las Azores; 16 ha; 38°44' N 027°04' W. Located in the urban centre of Praia da Vitória on the Azores island of Terceira. The marsh's strategic location allows the observation of a considerable number of migratory birds from both European and American continents. The wide diversity of bird species, especially considering its geographical origin and the importance of the site as a refuge for the mid-Atlantic migratory routes, provides the site with a special conservation value. Locally, the importance of the site can be measured by the presence of a considerable number of endemic species (e.g., *Columba palumbus azorica*, *Fringilla coelebs moreletti*, and *Motacilla cinerea patriciae*). Within it, some fish and mammals can also be found, notably the *Anguilla anguilla* and a bat *Nyctalus azoreum*, both considered as Endangered under the IUCN Red List. The marsh plays an important role in the local hydrological cycle, regulating floods of the surrounding hydrologic basin. Considered to be an excellent strategic point for bird watching, recreation and educational and environmental awareness purposes, the marsh has an added value for tourism and local development. Eutrophication, largely due to agricultural run-off, is seen as the principal threat, and there is a response plan in place that involves annual removal of algae. Ramsar Site no. 2091. Most recent RIS information: 2012.

Ria de Alvor

Site number: 827 | Country: Portugal | Administrative region: Regiao Algarve
Area: 1,454 ha | Coordinates: 37°08'10"N 08°36'37"W | Designation dates: 08-05-1996

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Ria de Alvor. 08/05/96; Regiao Algarve; 1,454 ha; 37°08'N 008°37' W. Protected Landscape Area; National Ecological Reserve. A coastal lagoon and estuarine wetland system separated from the sea by sand spits. The site includes stable and mobile dunes with characteristic vegetation, intertidal sand and mudflats, tidal saltmarshes, and salt pans. An important stopover site for many trans-saharan passerines, with nationally important numbers of several species of avifauna breeding at the site. The area is most valued for its aquatic life, which includes important commercial shellfish production. A field station and bird-ringing station are located at the site. Ramsar site no. 827. Most recent RIS information: 1997.

Ria Formosa

Site number: 212 | Country: Portugal | Administrative region: Algarve
Area: 16,000 ha | Coordinates: 37°01'50"N 07°48'48"W | Designation dates: 24-11-1980

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Ria Formosa. 24/11/80; Regiao Algarve; 16,000 ha; 37°03'N 007°47'W. Special Protection Area EC Directive; Natural Park. A complex of coastal saltwater lagoons and barrier islands, with extensive mudflats, sand banks, dune systems, saltmarshes, and substantial *Zostera* beds. The site also includes *Pinus* plantations, urban areas, agricultural land, industrial sites, and nurseries for fish and mollusc rearing. The area is important for numerous species of breeding, wintering and staging waterbirds, including egrets and ibis. The site is of botanical importance, supporting several endemic plants, and is a major nursery zone for fish. Ramsar site no. 212. Most recent RIS information: 1992.

Sapais de Castro Marim

Site number: 829 | Country: Portugal | Administrative region: Algarve

Area: 2,235 ha | Coordinates: 37°12'22"N 07°26'44"W | Designation dates: 08-05-1996

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Sapais de Castro Marim. 08/05/96; Regiao Algarve; 2,235 ha; 37°12'N 007°26'W. Nature Reserve, Special Protection Area EC Directive. A complex estuarine system of creeks, alluvial plains, saltmarshes and artificial salinas, subject to wide fluctuations in tidal range and salinity levels. The wetland is noteworthy for its halophytic saltmarsh communities and distinctive shrubby vegetation adapted to the extremes of a hot, dry and saline environment. The site supports several species of breeding waterbirds and a small heronry, and is crucial for large numbers of non-breeding flamingos *Phoenicopterus ruber* and spoonbills *Platalea leucorodia*. The wetland plays a crucial role in maintaining water tables, flood attenuation, and serves as a freshwater reservoir in one of the driest areas of Portugal. Human activities include salt production, intensive agriculture, fish-farming, tourism, and recreation. The area holds historic settlements of Roman and Arabic occupation. Ramsar site no. 829. Most recent RIS information: 1993.

Vascão River

Site number: 2,090 | Country: Portugal | Administrative region: Alentejo

Area: 44,331 ha | Coordinates: 37°27'N 07°48'W | Designation dates: 03-12-2012

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Vascão River (Ribeira do Vascão). 30/10/2012; Região Algarve; 44,331 ha; 37°27' N 007°48' W. Natura 2000 (SPA, SCI), Natural Park. Vascão River is the biggest river without artificial interruptions such as dams or reservoirs in Portugal. Situated in the Mediterranean Region, it supports high concentrations of threatened species of such freshwater fishes as Jarabugo (*Anaocypris hispanica*), European Eel (*Anguilla anguilla*) and Sea Lamprey (*Petromyzon marinus*). The wetland area regulates the Vascão River floods. The riparian vegetation contributes to underground water infiltration and stabilization of different hydrological processes. Numerous archaeological remains from the Roman and Islamic periods are found in the area, and it is popular for outdoor activities, nature sports, and environmental education. The lack of sewage treatment plants in the adjacent villages threatens the ecological character of the site, but management plans have been implemented together with restoration activities and invasive alien species eradication strategies. Ramsar Site Number: 2090. Most Recent RIS information: 2012.