



RAMSAR
SITE NUMBER
2236

Laguna de Rocha //



(Rocha Lagoon)

Area:
10,933.0 ha

Date of designation:
05.06.2015

Coordinates:
34° 38' S 54° 17' W

Summary

The Laguna de Rocha (Rocha Lagoon) Ramsar Site forms parts of a lacustrine system on the Atlantic coast, which is characterised by the fact that it is linked to the Atlantic Ocean through a dynamic system of opening and closing sandbars. The wetlands in this site include beaches, coastal lagoons, rivers and other seasonal wetlands.

International importance

This area was designated a Ramsar site because it constitutes a representative sample of the coastal lagoons, which are unique ecosystems, and it is the only location in Uruguay where submerged aquatic vegetation grows all year round. The site also plays a key role in the maintenance of endangered and endemic species, which are part of its rich biodiversity.

General location

The site is located in the Rocha Department on the Atlantic coast of southeastern Uruguay.

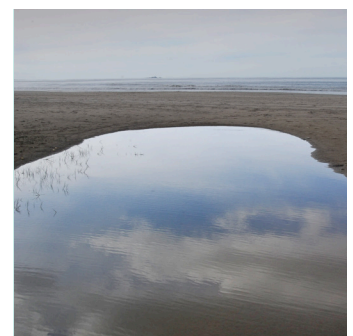


Laguna de Rocha

Adverse factors

The adverse factors are related to economic activities and urban development. These include the input of urban wastewater, changes in the water regime due to the opening of the sandbar by livestock farmers and in urban areas, the overexploitation of fish populations, poaching and urban sprawl.

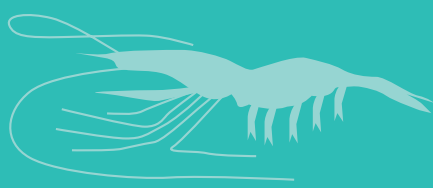
Moreover, tourism development has led to a high degree of land parcelling and a potential expansion in tourism infrastructures toward the coast.



Services provided by wetlands

These wetlands provide services thanks to fishing, shrimp catching and reed gathering. They also perform regulatory and purification functions and protect the coasts during natural events. The latter service is particularly important with regard to the effects of climate change such as the sea level rise and the frequency and intensity of storms.

The site also provides support services, since it constitutes the habitat for a wide variety of fauna and flora. Culturally speaking, it is a great value for tourism and recreational, scientific and educational activities.





COYPU
(*Myocastor coypus*)

Occurs above all in the Laguna de las Nutrias (Coypu Lagoon), associated with the Laguna de Rocha (Rocha Lagoon). The population of this species in the site, the largest in the country's coastal zone, is estimated at 2,000 coypus.



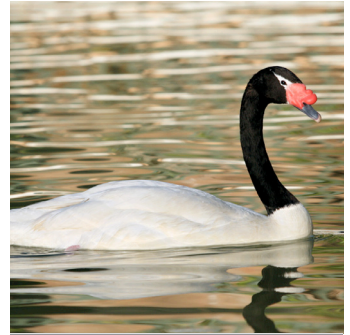
CHILEAN FLAMINGO
(*Phoenicopterus chilensis*)

This species uses the Ramsar site during the winter and its presence, along with that of other waterbirds that arrive in the site in large numbers led to the Rocha Lagoon being designated an Important Bird Area.



COOK'S HOCICUDO
(*Oxymycterus josei*)

This species of rodent is endemic and classified as Endangered. This species is very much restricted to a wetland habitat and the extent of its occurrence is less than 5,000 km². All individuals in this species live in fewer than 5 locations, and its habitat is endangered and continuing to decline.



BLACK-NECKED SWAN
(*Cygnus melancoryph*)

COSCOROBA SWAN
(*Coscoroba coscoroba*)

This site is of great importance for these two species of waterbird since it supports 14,000 individuals or 14% of the global population of the black-necked swan and 300 individuals or 1% of the population of the coscoroba swan.

Biodiversity

The sites supports 52% of the species recorded in Uruguay, including emblematic species such as the capybara (*Hydrochoerus hydrochaeris*) and the coypu (*Myocastor coypus*), which occur in the Laguna de las Nutrias (Coypu Lagoon) in particular, associated with the estuary of the Rocha Lagoon. The populations of these species in the site, the largest in the country's coastal zone, are estimated at 300 capybaras and 2,000 coypus.

As for the birdlife, 14,000 individuals or 14% of the global population of the black-necked swan (*Cygnus melancoryph*) and 300 individuals or 1% of the global population of the coscoroba swan (*Coscoroba coscoroba*) have been recorded in this site

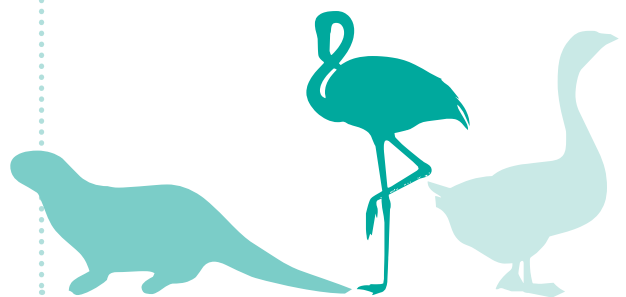


Management and conservation

In addition to belonging to the National System of Protected Areas, it is also part of the Bañados del Este Biosphere Reserve and is an Important Bird Area.

A management plan is currently being drawn up for the site and proposals have been made to control invasive species and to regulate leisure and livestock rearing activities.

There is also an educational programme, which organises talks in schools and provides information to visitors.



The Ramsar Convention

The Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, commonly known as the Ramsar Convention, is a global inter-governmental treaty that provides the frame-work for national action and international cooperation for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources. It is the only global treaty to focus on one single ecosystem.

