Chile has designated two new Wetlands of International Importance: “Humedales de Monkul” with an area of 1,380 hectares and “Humedal del río Limarí desde Salala hasta su desembocadura” with an area of 527 hectares. The two together cover an area of 1,907 hectares.

Humedales de Monkul (no. 2423 in the List of Wetlands of International Importance) is an estuary system consisting of coastal lagoons, tall grass marshland and riparian grasslands. The site holds about 171 plant species including endemic and vulnerable species, such as the willow-leaf podocarp (Podocarpus salignus). At least 134 animal species including about 80 species of waterbirds and 13 migratory species are present. Endangered species include the marine otter (Lontra felina).

The site is an essential source of livelihoods for the Mapuche indigenous communities that have inhabited the area since pre-Columbian times and use the site for fishing and hunting. Among the main threats are the canalization of the wetland for the expansion of livestock farming, and the change in land use as a consequence of increasing agricultural and forestry activity.

Humedal del río Limarí, desde Salala hasta su desembocadura (no. 2424 in the List of Wetlands of International Importance) is part of a network of coastal wetlands in northern Chile, which includes estuarine and shallow marine waters. The site is important for its high biodiversity, as it supports more than 130 animal and plant species. It provides habitat for endemic species including 32 plants such as the copao (Eulychnia acida) and 16 animals, including the flathead mullet (Mugil cephalus), the spotted false monitor (Callopistes maculatus), the coruro (Spalacopus cyanus) and the Atacama toad (Rhinella atacamensis), a species classified as vulnerable according to the IUCN Red List.

The site is of singular ecological value as a breeding, refuge and feeding habitat for a significant number of
native and migratory birds. It is also a source of food and water for the surrounding communities. However, it has suffered the pressures of deforestation, erosion, and the discharge of waste and chemical contaminants.

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