France has designated a stretch of the Atlantic coast as its 51st Wetland of International Importance.

Situated at the western tip of Brittany, Baie d’Audierne ("Ramsar Site" no. 2460) 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 Spiranthex 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.

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