On the occasion of World Wetlands Day, France has doubled the area of its Wetland of International Importance covering the peatlands and lakes of the Jura mountain range. Originally named “Bassin du Druegon” when it was designated on the same day in 2003, Tourbières et lacs de la Montagne jurassienne (Ramsar Site no. 1266) has been extended from under 6,000 hectares to cover over 12,000 ha.

The Site extends between the towns of Pontarlier and Saint-Claude. It now includes large emblematic peat bogs such as those in the Druegon 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), the 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.

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