



Guinea-Bissau designates Bijagós Archipelago

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Guinea-Bissau

Guinea-Bissau has named the large Archipel Bolama-Bijagós (1,046,950 ha; 11°14'N 16°02'W) as its second Ramsar Site. The archipelago, which is also a Biosphere Reserve, has the only active delta islands in the Atlantic Coast of West Africa. The intertidal mudflats host one of the largest populations of migratory shorebirds in the world (with over 870,000 recorded in 2001) on the East Atlantic flyway. Visitors include the Eurasian Curlew (*Numenius arquata*), Curlew Sandpiper (*Calidris ferruginea*), Eurasian Oystercatcher (*Haematopus ostralegus*) and Red Knot (*Calidris canutus*). The influence of coastal upwelling and estuaries and the large areas of mangrove support the reproduction and early growth of a large number of fish species. The site hosts the largest colony of green turtles (*Chelonia mydas*) in Africa, and provides a habitat for over 15 vulnerable species including the Hippopotamus, West African Manatee (*Trichechus senegalensis*), Timneh Parrot (*Psittacus timneh*), Atlantic Humpbacked Dolphin (*Sousa teuszii*), Leatherback Turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*) and Green Turtle (*Lepidochelys olivacea*).

As described by Ramsar's Dede Amah, based on the accompanying RIS, the archipelago is also a source of livelihoods for over 32,000 inhabitants, who use some areas for rice farming, palm plantations and subsistence fishing, and the others for cultural and spiritual purposes. The main threats facing the site are overfishing, tourism and ongoing offshore oil exploration and bauxite mining in the neighbouring regions.

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