The Ramsar authority in Portugal has designated two new Wetlands of International Importance, bringing that country’s total to 30 Ramsar Sites covering 132,471 hectares. As summarized by Ramsar’s Assistant Advisor for Europe, Ms Laura Máiz-Tomé, based on the Ramsar Information Sheets, Pateira de Fermentelos Lake and Águeda and Cértima Valleys (1,559 hectares, 40°33′52″N 008°30′28″W) contains one of the largest freshwater lakes of the Iberian Peninsula with a mosaic of wetland habitats, reed beds and marshland as well as riparian vegetation. The site supports important populations of migratory and threatened bird species, like the *Ixobrychus minutus, Ardea purpurea, Circus aeruginosus, Milvus migrans* and *Sylvia undata*. In the lagoon and in its adjacent water system, fish also find favourable ecological conditions for refuge and spawning during the breeding season.

The wetland has a major role in groundwater recharge, flood control, sediment trapping and maintenance of water supply for both natural and human-made ecosystems. The largest threat factors which might affect the ecological status of the site are essentially intensive farming, cattle raising, and contamination of water and soils by industrial and urban infrastructures. The Municipality of Águeda has implemented a Development Plan for the site which provides a set of strategies and actions aiming at the sustainable development of the area.

The second new site, Vascão River (Ribeira do Vascão) (44,331 hectares, 37°27′N 007°48′W) in the Algarve region, includes the biggest river without artificial interruptions such as dams or reservoirs in Portugal. Situated in the Mediterranean Region, it supports high concentrations of threatened species of such freshwater fishes as Jarabugo (*Anaecypris hispanica*), European Eel (*Anguilla anguilla*) and Sea Lamprey (*Petromyzon marinus*).

The wetland area regulates the Vascão River floods. The riparian vegetation contributes to underground water infiltration and stabilization of different hydrological processes. Numerous archaeological remains from the Roman and Islamic periods are found in the area, and it is popular for outdoor activities, nature sports, and environmental education. The lack of sewage treatment plants in the adjacent villages threatens the ecological character of the site, but management plans have been implemented together with restoration activities and invasive alien species eradication strategies.
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