Morocco has designated two Wetlands of International Importance on the occasion of World Wetlands Day.

Merja de Fouwarate (Ramsar Site no. 2324) is a shallow swamp, which is believed to be a remnant of a large wetland complex that once covered the Gharb plain of northwestern Morocco. It provides nesting, staging and wintering habitat for about 60 species of waterbird, whose numbers may exceed 20,000 during wintering and passage periods. Its hydrology has greatly improved since the beginning of the 21st century, leading to the expansion of aquatic plants which now occupy up to 30% of the Site area and provide shelter for many waterbirds to nest. Tamarix, acacia and eucalyptus trees also attract breeders.

Among the birds are several rare species including the endangered white-headed duck *Oxyura leucocephala*, the vulnerable marbled teal *Marmaronetta angustirostris* and the near-threatened ferruginous duck *Aythya nyroca*, black-tailed godwit *Limosa limosa* and Eurasian curlew *Numenius arquata*. The peri-urban location of the Site, and the associated drainage, backfilling and urbanization, and urban and agricultural pollution, have caused long-term losses in its area.

Sebkhat Imlili (Site no. 2323) is a relic of an original Saharan aquatic system, which bears witness to the recent tropical past of the extreme south of Morocco. The sebkha (salt flat) is in an area of limited and irregular rainfall over ten kilometres from the Atlantic Ocean. In its northern part are more than 160 permanent water pockets. The water is salty or hypersaline, but the pockets are home to aquatic flora and fauna with origins in marine, stagnant freshwater and flowing freshwater environments. Notably, these include a locally endemic fish of the *Cichlidae* family, which is related to the Guinean tilapia *Coptodon guineensis*, and some rare plant species. About 50 species of birds visit the site more or less regularly, especially migrants attracted by its greenery and water-related features.

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