

Location



Introduction

The Republic of Senegal is a Sub-Saharan country in West Africa and is bordered by Mauritania to the north, Mali to the east, Guinea to the southeast and Guinea-Bissau to the southwest. Senegal has a coastline on the Atlantic Ocean which is 531 km long. The coastline is not contiguous as it is interrupted by 80 km of coastline belonging to The Gambia Republic.

Senegal has a tropical climate, with a rainy season from May to November and a dry season from December to April dominated by hot, dry, harmattan wind.

The Senegal River in the north runs along the border with Mauritania and the estuary which leads to the Atlantic Ocean is one of the largest in The Canary Current Large Marine Ecosystem (more below). There is also another large estuary running from the Casamance River in the southern Casamance region. There is major coastal upwelling off the coast of Senegal.

Regional Seas and Biogeography

West and Central Africa Regional Sea
Canary Current LME

Habitats

- Mangroves are mostly found in the southern parts of Senegal, below Dakar, on the border with The Gambia Republic and in the Casamance region.
- Delta/estuary – the system around the Parc National du Delta de Saloum supports a rich and varied fauna (see more below).
- Seagrass beds are common throughout the coast of Senegal.

Biodiversity Hotspots

RAMSAR sites

Kalissaye (also an IBA), in the southern southern Casamance province south of the Gambia river, is a rich coastal and marine site consisting of gallery forests, mangroves, saltwater channels and freshwater rivers. It is a refuge for numerous endangered species, including various wading birds and sea turtles and also a feeding area for humpback dolphins (CR) and African manatees (VU).

Parc National de la Langue de Barbarie (also an IBA) is a site at the southern end of a thin, sandy peninsula in the neighbourhood of the city of Saint-Louis, the peninsula separates the Atlantic Ocean from the final section of the Senegal river. The park has several sea turtle species which use the site for spawning and feeding and as a migration corridor, as well as a bird island, which receives thousands of nesting pairs of gulls and terns. Overall the site is particularly important for large numbers of breeding and wintering gulls and terns and is home to the largest number of wintering ospreys in Africa.

Parc National des Oiseaux du Djoudj (also an IBA) is an inland delta in the Senegal River floodplain, near to the Mauritanian border. It is also a World Heritage Site. The park consists of an extensive complex of seasonally inundated brackish lakes and pools linked by a network of channels, with reed beds. It is an important shelter for Palaearctic migrant birds and various species use the site for breeding, staging and wintering (peak season being December). It hosts more than 1.5 million birds.

Parc national du Delta du Saloum (also an IBA and Biosphere Reserve) located north of the Gambia river, consists of extensive mangrove forests with saltwater channels, lagoons, islands, and islets. The

site is important for a wide variety of waterbirds and seabirds, some occurring in large congregations. The marine and coastal zone, and particularly the sandbars and islands, are of huge importance for breeding terns and gulls, holding the largest breeding colony of Royal terns in the world. The site also supports four species of breeding turtles.

Réserve Naturelle Communautaire de Palmarin, north of the Gambia river, includes various rivers and inlets, intertidal mud, sand and salt flats, mangrove swamps and islands. These wetlands provide foraging and resting areas for several shorebird species as well as green turtles. The Reserve also includes several sacred woods which historically significant cultural characteristics and play an important role in the preservation of natural resources and the promotion of ecotourism.

Réserve Naturelle d'Intérêt Communautaire de la Somone consists of a lagoon with its bed and channels permanently covered by water, mangroves, the sandy foreshore, salt flats at the edge of the mangrove and the transition area between the estuary and the mainland, including a barrier beach. It is important habitat for migratory birds such as herons, egrets and flamingos.

National Parks and Ecological Reserves

Parc National des Iles de la Madeleine (also an IBA) is a 480 hectare marine protected area which lies offshore from the capital of Dakar, a rocky archipelago supporting colonies of aquatic birds. Breeding colonies are known for various cormorant, gull and tern species.

IBAs

Idem above.

IMMAs

There are no IMMA's currently identified in Senegal.

At risk Wildlife

In this section, some individual wildlife species are mentioned followed by a letter in parentheses. These are species included in the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species within the top three categories of risk - Vulnerable to extinction (VU), Endangered (EN) or Critically Endangered (CR). A more complete list of IUCN listed species is found in Appendix 1.

→ **At risk birds**

Numerous species of shorebirds can be found along Senegal's coast, including stints, godwits, curlews, knots, egrets, herons and spoonbills. A number of pelican and cormorant species are nesting. For seabirds, Several species of grebe, storm petrel (including the leach's storm petrel [EN]) jaeger and skua have been observed as present during the non-breeding season or on migration. The red-billed tropic bird (*Phaethon aethereus*) breeds at the Parc Nationale des Iles de la Madeleine.

→ **At risk reptiles**

Five species of sea turtle can be found along the Senegalese coast, whose waters are well known as a migratory corridor. Green, olive ridley, loggerhead and leatherback are known to nest sporadically. Hawksbill turtles are more rarely observed.

Parc National des Oiseaux du Djoudj also contains large populations of crocodiles and African manatees (VU).

→ **At risk mammals**

There are no Important Marine Mammal Areas yet identified along the coast of Senegal, but there are threatened mammal species present in the waters, such as the blue whale (EN) and Atlantic humpback dolphin (CR). Historical records suggest the presence of several dolphin and whale species off the Senegalese coast and (for dolphins) in its riverine systems and there are several reports of marine mammal strandings.

African manatees have been found in the Senegal river and associated wetlands, as well in the Parc National Djoudj, Saloum delta, upper part of Gambia River and in the riverine Casamance system.

Manatees move between Senegal and neighbouring countries via adjoining river systems.

Past experience with oil spill and potential risks

There have been no recorded major oil spills in Senegal. Exploration for offshore oil and gas commenced in 2023, with first oil expected in 2024.

International and Regional Treaties and Agreements

→ **Oil spill and HNS Response**

- CLC Convention 69
- CLC Protocol 76
- CLC Protocol 92
- FUND Protocol 76
- FUND Protocol 92
- FUND Protocol 2003
- LLMC Convention 76
- LLMC Protocol 96
- OPRC Convention 90
- HNS Convention 96
- HNS PROT 2010
- OPRC_HNS 2000
- BUNKERS CONVENTION 01

→ **Marine Biodiversity Protection**

- Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (AEWA)
- Abidjan Convention for Cooperation in the Protection, Management and Development of the Marine and Coastal Environment of the Atlantic Coast of the West and Central Africa Region
- GI-WACAF (The Global Initiative for West, Central and Southern Africa)

Oil Spill Response and HNS Spill Response

→ **National Contingency Plan?**

The Plan national de lutte contre la pollution marine (national oil spill contingency plan or plan POLMAR) was adopted in 2008. An onshore response plan (plan national d'organisation des secours en cas de catastrophes or ORSEC) is in place to manage crisis situations on the shore, which could include marine pollution incidents.

→ **Role of Competent National Authorities**

HASSMAR (la Haute Autorité chargée de la coordination de la sécurité maritime, de la sûreté maritime et de la protection de l'environnement marin) is responsible for preparedness and response to oil spill incidents at sea. Shoreline response falls under the responsibility of the Civil Protection department of the Ministry of the Interior.

Oiled Wildlife Preparedness and Response

→ **Formal guidelines?**

The national plan does not specify detailed guidance on oiled wildlife response, although it states that the Ministry of environment is in charge of authorisation of associations and NGOs for set up of wildlife rehabilitation centres. There is no reference of a national oiled wildlife response plan.

Le Comité national de Gestion et de suivi des Echouages de Mammifères Aquatiques (COGEMAQ) is a national stranding network for marine mammals. COGEMAQ is headed by HASSMAR and includes several other ministries such as La Direction des Parcs Nationaux, la Direction de la Protection et de la Surveillance des Pêches, la Direction des Eaux, Forêts, Chasses et de la Conservations des Sols, la Direction de l'Environnement et des Etablissements Classés, as well as the navy, police, firefighting and health services.

→ **Response objectives and strategy**

No reference.

→ **Euthanasia or rehabilitation?**

It is likely that the Senegalese authorities would allow rehabilitation.

→ **Impact assessment**

L'Institut Fondamental d'Afrique Noire (IFAN) at Cheikh Anta DIOP university (marine biology department) will likely be contacted to carry out monitoring and impact assessment for marine mammals, as well as the Centre de Recherches Océanographiques de Dakar Thiaroye (CRODT) and the Ecole Inter Etats des Sciences et Médecines Vétérinaires (EISMV). All three organisations participate in the COGEMAQ committee. Under COGEMAQ, the EISMV and the Service National de l'Hygiène are responsible for diagnosis and mitigating potential health impacts on the local population, as well as the disposal of marine mammal carcasses. IFAN, CRODT, and EISMV are responsible for collecting and analysing data on marine mammal stranding and investigating causes of stranding. IFAN also conduct monitoring and research on birds. Local research institutes may also be contacted by the authorities.

The Belgian organisation Tougoupeul carries out bird (including osprey ringing studies) and sea turtle monitoring in the Parc National de la Langue de Barbarie, in conjunction with park rangers.

The African Aquatic Conservation Fund (see under wildlife responders below) are likely to get involved in impact assessment through the link to their marine wildlife stranding programme.

→ **Notification and early response**

For marine mammal strandings, these are reported to the maritime or onshore authority emergency contact point who will notify HASSMAR..

→ **Wildlife responders**

The African Aquatic Conservation Fund conducts would likely get involved in the event of an oil spill threatening marine mammals or turtle population in Senegal. They conduct cetacean monitoring (including Atlantic humpback dolphins – CR) and run a marine mammal stranding network together. The stranding network conducts surveys of the northerly coast between Dakar and St. Louis and also the central coast to document stranded sea turtles, cetaceans, and other wildlife. Scientists from the Fund also conduct monitoring of manatees, including rescue of injured or entrapped manatees.

The Partenariat Régional pour la Conservation de la Zone Cotière et Marine (PRCM) is an international coalition of organisations working on coastal conservation issues in West Africa. Headquartered in Senegal, they may provide support during an oiled wildlife incident, especially for sea turtles (as they run projects on sea turtle conservation and protection in various West African countries).

→ **Cooperation between stakeholders**

No reference.

→ **Permanent facilities**

No oiled wildlife rehabilitation facilities are known in Senegal. Laboratory facilities for impact assessment for marine mammals are present, run by the organisations mentioned in the impact assessment section.

→ **Current processes**

A national workshop was held in 2021, to discuss a new shoreline response plan being developed by HASSMAR (with assistance from GI-WACAF and Cedre), as well as to launch a new set of coastal sensitivity maps for oil spills.

A number of highly pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) outbreaks occurred in coastal seabirds in 2023, especially affecting Royal Terns.

Documentation and references

General references

Action plan for the conservation of the West African Manatee. https://www.cms.int/sites/default/files/document/Afr_Cet_Man_Manatees_AP_e_0.pdf

Arrêté portant création d'un Comité national de gestion et de suivi des échouages de mammifères aquatiques (COGEMAQ).

BirdLife International (2024) Country profile: Senegal. <http://datazone.birdlife.org/country/senegal>

Djoudj National Bird Sanctuary. <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/25>

GI-WACAF Country Profile for Senegal. 2019. <https://www.giwacaf.net/en/countries/senegal/profile>

IOPF Country Profile for Senegal. 2018. <https://www.itopf.org/knowledge-resources/countries-territories-regions/senegal/>

sMemorandum of Understanding for the Conservation of Cetaceans and their Habitats in the Pacific Islands Region. <https://www.cms.int/pacific-cetaceans/fr/country/senegal>

RAMSAR Sites Information Service. Country Profile for Senegal. <https://www.ramsar.org/country-profile/senegal>

Seabird Conservation, Handbook for West Africa. 2023. <https://www.birdlife.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/West-Africa-Seabird-Handbook-low-res.pdf>

The State of the World's Sea Turtles (SWOT) Report, Vol. XII. <https://www.seaturtlestatus.org/swot-report-vol-12>

https://www.preventionweb.net/files/submissions/14922_SenegalAnalyseinstitutionelle.pdf

<https://www.tougoupeul.be/langue-de-barbarie>

<https://www.oilreviewafrica.com/events/event-news/senegal-will-start-2023-with-gas-production-says-sophie-gladima>

<https://www.woodside.com/what-we-do/growth-projects/sangomar>

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Appendix 1

→ At risk birds

Common name / Latin name / IUCN Red List Category (CR,EN,VU) / Resident-Migratory (season) / Breeding-Nesting-Pupping (season)

Common Pochard / *Aythya ferina* / VU / Resident/migratory / Non-breeding
Black Crowned Crane / *Balearica pavonina* / VU / Resident/migratory / Non-breeding
Leach's Storm-petrel / *Hydrobates leucorhous* / VU / Resident/migratory / Non-breeding
Audouin's Gull / *Larus audouinii* / VU / Resident/migratory / Non-breeding
Northern Bald Ibis / *Geronticus eremita* / VU / Resident/migratory / Non-breeding

Atlantic humpback dolphin / *Sousa teuszii* / CR / / Not well studied
Blue whale / *Balaenoptera musculus* / EN / / Not well studied
African manatee / *Trichechus senegalensis* / VU / Resident/migratory / Not well studied
Hawksbill turtle / *Eretmochelys imbricata* / CR / Migratory (forages offshore) / Non-nesting
Green turtle / *Chelonia mydas* / EN / Resident/migratory (forages offshore) / Nesting
Loggerhead turtle / *Caretta caretta* / VU / Resident/migratory (forages offshore) / Nesting
Leatherback turtle / *Dermochelys coriacea* / VU / Resident/migratory (forages offshore) / Nesting
Olive Ridley turtle / *Lepidochelys olivacea* / VU / Resident/migratory (forages offshore) / Nesting

➔ **At risk reptiles**

Common name / Latin name / IUCN Red List Category (CR,EN,VU) / Resident-Migratory (season) / Breeding-Nesting-Pupping (season)

➔ **At risk mammals**

Common name / Latin name / IUCN Red List Category (CR,EN,VU) / Resident-Migratory (season) / Breeding-Nesting-Pupping (season)