



## **URBANS LAGOONS – Ways to urban development**

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**Report 1 of 3**



## Report 1

### Ways of the past

Uruguay's coastal lagoons are part of the National System of Protected Natural Areas of Uruguay (SNAP), an instrument for applying national environmental protection policies and plans. With the aim of protecting biodiversity, but in the past this is not necessary.

Formed by 4 main lagoons, José Ignacio, Garzón, Rocha and Castillos, Uruguay's coastal lagoons have existed since prehistoric times, when the oceans were at a higher level. When they retreated, they left a large string of sandy dunes that prevented the rivers from flowing into the ocean, forming lagoons. Since then, these mirrors have been separated from the adjacent sea by a sandy barrier called "Barra" (sand bar), which maintains an intermittent dynamic of natural or artificial opening and closing.

Its water bodies are calm, shallow and have brackish waters, which in addition to their beauty, shelter an exuberant biodiversity and act as a source of sediment and organic matter for the coastal zone, where the opening of the bar becomes important for variations in temperature, salinity and nutrients. These factors transform the lagoon into an environment of high biodiversity, places of refuge and breeding grounds for many species.



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