



## “AMICS DE SES FEIXES” (Friends of Ses Feixes)



Ses Feixes is a wetland area situated between Ibiza Town (Ibiza’s capital city) and Talamanca. It is an important wintering ground and resting place for many migratory birds and constitutes a key haven for wildlife, harboring a great variety of fauna and flora. These include rare bats, reptiles, and more than 140 species of birds.



In the Mediterranean region wetlands are fast disappearing, which gives the remaining ones exceptional value. Ses Feixes is unique among these because of the irrigation system created here by the Arabs, who reclaimed the inundated coastal area, and transformed it into fertile plots, watered by a network of irrigation canals. The elegant gateways marking the entrance to a *feixa* (field) are the only ones of their kind in the world. These ingenious irrigation systems transformed the original wetland into extremely productive land, farmed until recent times.



### THREATS:

For many years, construction has posed a major threat to Ses Feixes. Drainage for building has fragmented the original wetland into two smaller sections (Prat de Vila, and Prat de Ses Monges), and the area suffers from total abandonment.

Although the authorities have now designated the area as a “green belt” and UNESCO recognizes the importance of the site, another large threat to the wetland is looming: the

Spanish government has given green light to a new harbor development, and it is feared that pressure to divert heavy port traffic will eventually result in a new road being built through the wetland.

### HOPEFUL SIGNS:

Ses Feixes is in the process of being declared a Site of Cultural Interest (*Bien de Interés Cultural*). This will provide the area some protection, though not very strong. In addition, the Ibiza Town Agenda 21 Action Plan envisages the construction of an interpretation centre, which would mark an important step in the area’s preservation, if implemented. Other positive signs include the recent restoration work carried out on the ancient portals, and the cleaning of the main drainage canals.

### ACTIONS FUNDED BY THE IBIZA PRESERVATION FUND

The future of Ses Feixes depends upon a well informed public. The IBIZA PRESERVATION FUND is supporting Amics de la Terra (Friends of the Earth Ibiza) efforts to educate the public about the environmental and cultural significance of Ses Feixes, raising awareness on the need for protection. This will include guided visits, videos, conferences, publications and website promotion.

The ultimate aim is to build a network of informed citizens, the “Amics de Ses Feixes” (Friends of Ses Feixes), who will engage in the defense of the area against future threats. The creation of an interactive blog and other information tools will encourage action aimed at preventing damage to the wetland, as well as support for positive, protection and restoration initiatives.

On a longer term, should more funding be available, it might be possible to support the purchase of *feixes* and carry out pilot restoration work, thus encouraging larger-scale recuperation of the wetland.