Title This year?s World Wetlands Day (WWD) theme is ?Wetlands and Tourism? and BirdLife Partners in the Caribbean are ready to be part of the experience. The Bahamas National Trust (BirdLife in the Bahamas) is showcasing the Harrold and Wilson Ponds National Park (HWNP) to tourists in celebration of these very important ecosystems. The tourists from a cruise ship in port will be taken to this Important Bird Area (IBA) for a guided tour by Bahamas National Trust (BNT) staff and then visit the Ardastra Gardens and Zoo for the Flamingo show.

With the intention of educating the tourism industry about the importance of wetlands to the Bahamas and outline the existing local threats, BNT´s Education Department is hosting a one-day workshop for tour operators on New Providence. The workshop will provide a nature-based experience with field trips to HWNP and Bonefish Pond National Park. The Bahamas National Trust will further support the learning and sharing experience with educational and promotional materials during these two field trips. The Bahamas National Trust will highlight the importance of wetlands to the Bahamas and their link with tourism in a news story to be featured in a local media tourism program. The story will focus on the protected wetlands on the islands of New Providence, Grand Bahama and Andros, and on the opportunities to further develop ecotourism activities in these ecosystems. [More about the work of the Bahamas National Trust in the conservation of wetlands] Grupo Jaragua (BirdLife in Dominican Republic) has also organized fun filled-activities to celebrate WWD, in this case mainly directed at youth (ages 12-18) from the local communities of Oviedo and El Cajuil. The youth will have the opportunity to visit laguna de Oviedo in Jaragua National Park IBA, learn about mangroves and about the importance of brackish wetland ecosystems for people and biodiversity. They will also have a chance to learn about Grupo Jaragua´s project ?The Mangroves of Laguna de Oviedo? and take a first-hand look at one of the existing mangrove plots from this project. After the field trip, participants will be ?treated? with two presentations on ?Wetlands and Ramsar sites? and ?Mangroves and their ecotourism value?. Another programmed WWD activity is a poster exposition, opened to the public at a college in the country capital. The expo will be a joint activity between Grupo Jaragua and a college student association. Grupo Jaragua´s WWD activities are supported by the MacArthur Foundation-funded project ?Conserving Caribbean mangroves in the face of a changing world?. [More about the wetlands of Jaragua National Park IBA] 2 February each year is WWD. It marks the date of the adoption of the Convention on Wetlands on 2 February 1971, in the Iranian city of Ramsar on the shores of the Caspian Sea. Each year since 1997, government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and groups of citizens at all levels of the community have taken advantage of the opportunity to undertake actions aimed at raising public awareness of wetland values and benefits in general, and the Ramsar Convention in particular.