

Panama Bay saved from destruction

Title

There's been a great start to 2014 for one of the most important sites for migratory waterbirds in the Americas.

The Panama Supreme Court has issued the long-awaited final decision on the [The Bay of Panama](#). This ruling, on the legality of the administrative decision that created the wetland protected area, basically means a reprieve from destructive development. The Supreme Court has reinstated the protected status for the Bay of Panama wetlands, removing the temporary suspension it had placed on the protected area a year ago.

“Good use of environmental law and scientific studies, and the help of our local and international partners have influenced the final decision of the court”, said Rosabel Miró, Executive Director of Panama Audubon Society, the country's BirdLife Partner.

“This court ruling will certainly help us to affect the proper implementation of environmental laws in other protected areas of the country that currently face similar to the Bay of Panama threats.”

The Bay of Panama is one of the five most important stopover and wintering areas for migratory shorebirds in the entire Americas, with more than 30% of the global population of [Western Sandpiper](#) and 22% of the global population of [Whimbrel](#).

Its extensive mangrove forests play a vital role in supporting fisheries, filtering pollutants in urban and agricultural runoff, and protecting Panama City from floods. The Mangroves and wetlands of Panama Bay are also vital to other globally threatened wildlife including Jaguar, Tapir, Spider Monkey, American Crocodile, and Loggerhead Turtle.

“Panama Audubon Society spearheaded the public outcry against this decision, and working with local and international partners, successfully organised environmental, trade, business and community groups to collectively voice the importance of conserving the Bay's wetlands”, said Dr Hazella Shokellu Thompson, BirdLife's Director for Partnership, Capacity and Communities.

“Congratulations to Panama Audubon Society and all involved.”