

Title **Panama City, Panama. (April 22, 2012)** - Earth Day is celebrated worldwide on April 22, a day that invites reflection on the importance of our natural resources and particularly on fragile ecosystems such as mangroves. The National Wetlands Committee of Panama celebrated Earth Day with the visit of the Secretary General of the [Ramsar Convention](#), Anada Tiéga, to Panama Bay Ramsar Site, a Wetland of International Importance, a Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network site, [an Important Bird Area](#) and a protected area in Panama that is valued for the ecosystem services it provides. This is the first time a Secretary General has visited a Ramsar site in Panama. During the tour, the Secretary General congratulated the National Wetlands Committee for their performance and highlighted the role it has played as a technical advisor on the conservation of wetlands in the country. The National Wetlands Committee, created in 2006, consists of the National Environmental Authority, Aquatic Resources Authority of Panama, Panama Audubon Society (PAS), ANCON, CREHO, CEASPA, Fundación Natura and STRI. The activity included learning about the wastewater treatment plant under construction in Panama City, a few meters from the Ramsar site which can be, according to Mr. Tiéga, "a case study of wetlands in urban areas, integrating in the planning process urban development and conservation of wetlands". The Panama Bay Wetlands could provide inputs into the study, such as how the application of the guidelines of the Ramsar Convention and the ecosystem services could be viewed in conjunction with a comprehensive approach.



Rosabel Miró of Panama Audubon Society speaking to the Secretary General of the Ramsar Convention, Anada Tiéga. Photo: Karl Kaufmann/Audubon Panamá

During the visit, Rosabel Miró, Executive Director of PAS also spoke with Mr. Tiéga about its collaboration with the [National Audubon Society](#) to develop and implement a conservation plan for the Bay of Panama Wetlands, their project for monitoring shorebirds at the site, the production of a television program for young children about wetlands in conjunction with the US Forest Service and local NGOs, and about the newly formed [Mangrove Alliance](#). PAS is part of the Mangrove Alliance, a conservation initiative of BirdLife Partners and other organizations whose objectives are to conserve, restore and sustainably manage the mangrove ecosystems in the Neotropics. The Panama Bay Ramsar Site is a wetland of hemispheric importance for migratory shorebirds. Each year, 1 to 2 million shorebirds visit its 85 kms of coastline during their migration. For more information on the work of [Panama Audubon Society](#) in wetlands conservation in Panama, please contact: Rosabel Miró R. National Wetlands Committee Secretary (a.i.) Executive Director, Audubon Panama P.O. Box 0843-03076 Panama, Republic of Panama Phone/Fax: (507) 232-5977 Cell: (507) 6616-8954 Skype: rosabelmiro www.audubonpanama.org

