Title Located in the Piura region of Peru, the most austral mangroves of the pacific coast are found at San Pedro de Vice. Together with the Virrila estuary and the lakes of Ramon and Ñapique, they make up the Piura wetlands complex, of great importance to migratory shorebirds, with more than 20 species using the complex as stopover and wintering sites. San Pedro?s importance has been underlined by several national and international conservation designations since the area was declared a Municipal Conservation Area in 2000 by the San Pedro de Vice municipality and as Regional Sanctuary in 2003 by Piura?s local government. Peru?s 13th Ramsar designation followed in 2008 and the site was incorporated into the network of Peruvian Important Bird Areas (IBAs) in 2009 due to the presence of the endangered Peruvian Tern (*Sterna lorata*), Peruvian Plantcutter (*Phytotoma raimondii*) and Rufous Flycatcher (*Myiarchus semirufus*), among other Tumbesian endemics. The latest recognition of the site?s importance came in February 2010, when the site became formally part of the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network (WHSRN). San Pedro de Vice was designated due to the presence of more than 1% of the regional population of Sanderling (*Calidris alba*). This small sandpiper breeds in the high arctic from June to mid-July, after which populations have very different migration patterns, wintering between North America and Chile. The species is sensitive to disturbance on beaches and loss of wetland habitat at stopover and wintering sites. The shorebird reserve network was launched in the late 1980s in response to serious population declines in shorebirds. A key feature of this conservation strategy involves the landowners signing an agreement with the network in favour of the site?s conservation. Importantly, both IBAs and WHSRN sites have monitoring programs to ensure that conservation is effective, data from which can be shared between the two programs. The official designation ceremony took place in the mangroves themselves on 10 July, with the mayor of San Pedro de Vice, Armando Bancayan Amaya, receiving a certificate from Carol Lively of the US Forestry Service. At the same ceremony, members of an organization working to conserve wetlands, Centro Neotropical de Entrenamiento en Humedales, received recognition for their collaboration in mangrove conservation. Regional and local authorities were also present at the ceremony, including the president of the local community of Sechura.

The Mayor of San Pedro de Vice receives a certificate from WHSRN, through Carol Lively, of the US Forestry Service.

What can the multiple designations bring to the site in terms of its conservation? Diego Luna, WHSRN representative for the Southern Cone, also present at the ceremony, explains, ?this designation opens a great opportunity for new strategic alliances, resources and tools to further mangrove conservation in the region. Given diverse threats to the site, including possible petroleum exploitation, IBA, Ramsar and now WHSRN designations will provide further grounds for a legally protected area?. Fernando Angulo, responsible for the BirdLife Country Program in Peru, emphasises further, ?each designation serves a particular purpose, and we hope that the sum total will lead to formal protection of the area. The designations have already led to greater awareness of the site?s importance locally and nationally?. Recently, the mangroves at San Pedro de Vice were proposed as a ?Regional Conservation Area? by the National Protected Areas authority in Peru. This protected area category,

within Peru?s National System of Protected Areas, will provide further impetus for the site?s conservation through a legal conservation status. The event was well covered in the local press, including El Tiempo and El Regional Piura. Photos by Fernando Angulo See links below for other mangrove news items.