El Salvador has designated Complejo Los Cobanos, located in the west of the country, as its eighth Wetland of International Importance. The complex is particularly important as it features the only coral reef formation between Mexico and Costa Rica. The Ramsar Site (no. 2419 on the List of Wetlands of International Importance), which has also been designated as a protected natural area, consists of a rocky beach of volcanic origin, mangroves, coral reefs and open waters.

At the Site, threatened ecosystems such as mangroves provide shelter and habitat for endangered species such as the brown sea cucumber (*Isostichopus fuscus*), and vulnerable species such as the leatherback sea turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*) and the giant seahorse (*Hippocampus ingens*). Los Cobanos is also a nesting site for the critically endangered hawksbill turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*). It is the only place in El Salvador where the reef-forming lobe coral (*Porites lobata*) is found.

The Site controls floods while also retaining sediments and toxic materials carried mainly by nearby rivers. The mangrove forest serves as a windbreak barrier and as a carbon sink.

Among the main threats to the Site is the presence of unauthorized human settlements.

Source URL: https://www.ramsar.org/news/el-salvador-designates-complejo-los-cobanos