The National Commission for Protected Natural Areas (CONANP) carries out successful conservation and restoration initiative in this peri-urban wetland, which provides essential ecosystem services to the population of Cancún, Mexico.

Designated as a Wetland of International Importance in 2008 the Nichupté is formed by lagoons and mangroves adjoining the city of Cancún and surrounded by urban areas. The wetland offers spectacular scenery to millions of tourists who visit Cancún each year and provides essential provisioning, regulating and supporting ecosystem services to the city’s population among other helping to reduce the risk of natural disasters.

Ramsar Secretariat Senior Advisor for the Americas, Maria Rivera, visited the Site within the framework of the 13th meeting of the Conference of Parties (COP 13) to the Convention for Biological Diversity.

Biologist Jaime González, Director of the Protected Natural Areas (ANP) explained the ecological restoration work including reforestation, mainly of mangroves. Just over 69,000 mangrove specimens have been introduced as well as 3,300 of another seven species. Hydrological restoration has allowed the reforested areas to be linked up to the Nichupté Lagoon System through 850 square meters of canals. An invasive exotic species, Casuarina equisetifolia, has been controlled, with over 7,600 specimens being removed from 11.1 hectares of the protected area.

Ecological restoration work has led to an average survival rate of 91% of mangrove introduced through reforestation.

Despite the intense pressure from the development of tourism in the zones surrounding the Site, protection, conservation and management measures carried out by CONANP and ANP have allowed for the maintenance of the ecological features that led to the wetland’s designation as a Ramsar Site.

Mexico has designated 142 Sites as Wetlands of International Importance, which represent 65% of the
Ramsar sites in North America and 4% of the surface area of all the Ramsar Sites. Therefore, Mexico plays a crucial role as a regional role model for compliance with the Ramsar Convention.