

## World Wetlands Day 2025: Protecting the Blue and Green Heart of the Caribbean



*By Adeline Raphael, Disaster Risk Reduction, Environment & the Caribbean Sea Adviser*

On February 2nd, the world marks World Wetlands Day, a moment to recognize the essential role wetlands play in sustaining biodiversity, mitigating climate change, and protecting coastal communities. In the Greater Caribbean, wetlands—mangroves, seagrass beds, estuaries, and coastal lagoons—serve as natural barriers against extreme weather, carbon sinks, and vital habitats for marine life. Yet, these ecosystems are disappearing three times faster than forests, threatened by urban expansion, pollution, and climate change.

### **The ACS Commitment to Wetland Conservation**

As a regional body dedicated to cooperation among Caribbean states, the ACS takes these issues seriously and is committed to advancing concrete solutions for wetland conservation through:

- Advocacy for stronger legal protections, including the recognition of the Caribbean Sea as a Special Area under international law.
- Nature-based solutions through its Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction Agenda, integrating mangrove restoration and coastal resilience strategies.
- Action on pollution and sargassum influxes, supported by the ACS Sargassum Sub-Commission.

### **Strengthening the Global Response at UNOC3**

The ACS recognizes that protecting wetlands requires a coordinated international response. That is why, during the United Nations Ocean Conference (UNOC3) in Nice in June 2025, the ACS will present a set of concrete proposals to reinforce wetland conservation efforts, promote nature-based solutions, and secure dedicated funding for sustainable coastal management in the Greater Caribbean.

The wetlands of the Caribbean protect us, it is time we protect them in return.