

BirdLife *in the Americas*

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The BirdLife World Conference—the future of bird conservation

A full contingent of BirdLife Americas partners attended Empowering People for Change, the BirdLife World Conference, in Durban, South Africa, in March 2004. In excess of 350 delegates from more than 100 countries, including representatives across the breadth of the BirdLife



■ The BirdLife Partnership at the 2004 World Conference, Durban, South Africa

Partnership, from all major international conservation organizations, from governments, and bilateral and multilateral agencies attended.

Delegates adopted a tough new strategy committing BirdLife to improve the status of the world's 10,000 bird species and their habitats by 2015. Bird populations will serve as indicators of whether progress is being made in achieving these goals. In a final rallying call, BirdLife Director Dr Michael Rands said, "In ten years time, I hope the world can look back at the 2004 BirdLife World Conference in Durban and see it as a turning point in the way people around the world treat biodiversity and place local communities at the heart of future conservation efforts."

"The strategy we have adopted is a firm commitment by the BirdLife Partnership, in over 100 countries, to protect the world's birds and biodiversity for the sake of future generations. These are not empty words—we must succeed."

"We must ensure that everyone, from local people to government ministers, knows what is happening to the world's biodiversity, why it is happening, and how, through working with BirdLife and others, we can start to put things right."

As part of our drive to meet these commitments, BirdLife formally endorsed the widespread formation of "Site Support Groups", who will engage and empower local stakeholders in the management and conservation of Important Bird Areas (IBAs) throughout the world.

BirdLife Americas organizations met during the Conference to approve a Program for 2004–2008, which will commit us to completing an IBA inventory for the entire Americas region, and in parallel implement conservation actions at priority sites. The final item point on the agenda was to express thanks to the Chair, Caroline Schultz (from the Canadian Nature Federation), who in her four-year term has helped establish the foundation for BirdLife's growth in the Americas.

During the World Conference, new representatives from the Americas were elected to both the Regional and Global Councils. These dedicated individuals will help steer BirdLife as a whole and implement our Americas Program.

Ian Davidson, Head of BirdLife Americas Program

Last Minute News

New representatives to Global Council and the Executive Americas Regional Council of BirdLife International

Executive Americas Regional Council (ExCRA)

- Alberto Yanosky (Guyra Paraguay): President
- Caroline Schultz (Canadian Nature Federation): Ex-president
- Andrés Bosso (Aves Argentinas): Representative
- Representative (Americas Global Council member): Vacant

Global Council

- Julie Gelfand (Canadian Nature Federation)
- Loyda Sánchez (Panama Audubon Society)
- Ben Olewine (National Audubon Society)
- Alberto Yanosky (Guyra Paraguay)

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Together for birds and people

www.birdlife.org

News

British Birdfair announces support for Tumbesian dry forests of northern Peru project

North-western Peru has a great diversity of habitats in a small area, including mangroves, deserts, three distinct dry forest types, humid montane forests, paramo and subtropical forests. This diversity and the long-term climatic stability of the region has led to the evolution of many endemic species.

North-western Peru contains parts of eight Endemic Bird Areas, supports 80 endemic bird species and 21 globally threatened species, including spectacular flagship species like the critically endangered White-winged Guan, the vulnerable Marvelous Spatulatail (a hummingbird) and the near threatened Long-whiskered Owllet (only known from mistnet captured birds and not yet seen in the wild). The area also supports many Neotropical passerines, especially in montane forest areas. A consortium called "Forests without Borders – Bosques Sin Fronteras" was formed to combine efforts to conserve some of the critical sites in this long neglected but globally important region. In recognition of the area's importance and in support of the consortium's work, BirdLife has secured more than US\$1 million from the British Birdfair, World Parks Endowment, Nature and Culture International and the Lottery Fund to begin site-based conservation at six key Important Bird Areas (IBAs). To raise the profile of this region, Artists for Nature visited it in 2003, so a team of world-renowned wildlife artists could paint



■ *Treasures of the Forgotten Forest* book

and record the remarkable wildlife and culture they saw. Their efforts will be published in a coffee-table book with both Spanish and English editions entitled *Treasures of the Forgotten Forest*, which will be launched at the British Birdfair this August. In the meantime, to see examples of the work of some of the artists who took part, please visit <http://www.brucepearson.info/content/fieldwork.asp>, www.anf-yb.nl/PROecquad.html or www.anf-yb.nl/

For more information, please contact Ian Davidson (ian.davidson@birdlife.org.ec), Head Americas Division, BirdLife International.

Educating for BirdLife

The RSPB (BirdLife in the UK) has produced *Educating for BirdLife*, a booklet aimed at staff and volunteers working within the education sector for BirdLife organizations. It includes 19 case studies from around the world that illustrate the breadth and diversity of education projects and approaches used by NGOs and also includes a section with guidelines and ideas for developing education work. The RSPB's Barrie Cooper, author of *Educating for BirdLife*, says "Effective education is an important tool for BirdLife organizations. It can bring benefits through supporting conservation, raising the profile and

credibility of the organization and by educating current and future decision-makers. I hope this booklet will help staff and volunteers to develop their education programs for the benefit of conservation. If we can sow the seeds of conservation in young people today, the future will be better for birds and BirdLife."

Copies of Educating for BirdLife can be obtained from BirdLife's Cambridge or regional offices, or from Barrie Cooper, RSPB, The Lodge, Sandy, Beds SG19 2DL, UK. barrie.cooper@rspb.org.uk

Web Sites of Interest

Launching of the publication "Status of the World Birds"

Based on the IUCN's Red List Criteria, BirdLife International has assessed the status of all the bird species in the world for four times since 1980. The 2004 assessment reaches the conclusion that 1,215 species – one out of eight of the total – are globally threatened by extinction. A copy of the "Status of the World Birds" can be obtained at <http://www.birdlife.org/action/science/species/sowb> or upon request to birdlife@birdlife.org.ec

The "Manual on Field Exercises and Ornithology Lab" of the Wilson's Ornithological Society can be found in <http://www.ummz.lsa.umich.edu/birds/pdf/manualespanol.pdf>

You can obtain a free copy of *The Condor, Studies in Avian Biology, Pacific Coast Avifauna* and the *Wilson Bulletin* at <http://elibrary.unm.edu/wilson/>. The articles date from 1800 and on.

The NGO ALAS: Alianza para las Áreas Silvestres (Alliance for the Wild Areas) is proud to announce the official launching of its webpage, aimed at being a link between people with a high interest in birds, animals, plants and wild areas of Nicaragua. If you like birds, you will definitely enjoy the amazing drawings by Augusto Silva, which can be seen in the Nicaragua bird list in <http://www.avesnicaragua.org/>

The *Biology Conservation Neo-tropical Bulletin* Publisher in April 2004, can be read at <http://www.conservationbiology.org/SCB/Publications/NeoCons/>

As of May 2004, the "La Tangara" bulletin is available in PDF format at <http://www.latangara.org>.

The book "Estimating Numbers of Terrestrial Birds," edited by C. John Ralph and J. Michael Scott, is available at <http://www.blackburnpress.com/esnuoftebi.html>

You are welcome to visit the electronic magazine "El Huitzil" in the following website: <http://www.huitzil.net>

News

IBAs of the Tropical Andes inventory



■ The Important Bird Areas of the Tropical Andes publication

The Americas Regional Office launched the first inventory of Important Bird Areas (IBAs) in the Tropical Andes during the BirdLife World Conference last March. Data on species, habitats and the conservation status of 432 sites have been compiled and are being entered into the World Bird Database, a BirdLife management tool used to analyze data on species and sites.

The preliminary IBA inventory will be used to identify and map sites of greatest importance for migratory birds through a project supported by the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act (NMBCA), in collaboration with Conserva-

tion International, Armonia in Bolivia, the Museum of Natural History in Peru, CECIA in Ecuador, the Alexander von Humboldt Institute and ProAves in Colombia, and SCAV in Venezuela. Over the next six months, BirdLife will compile data on Neotropical migrants throughout the Andes, and welcomes information from interested individuals, tour companies and institutions that have databases on these species. The information will be used in the preparation of conservation plans for the highest priority sites for Neotropical migrants in the region.

For more information, please contact Kerem Boyla (Kerem.Boyla@birdlife.org.ec), Scientific Information Manager,, Americas Division, BirdLife International.

Conservation and management of South America's southern grasslands

The southern grasslands, located where the Amazonian and El Chaco habitats merge in Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay, harbor more Globally Threatened Birds (18) than any other grasslands in the Neotropics, three of them restricted to the Argentine Mesopotamian Grasslands Endemic Bird Area (EBA). They also harbor many other birds, including rheas, tinamous, and a variety of passerines. However, despite their importance there are few protected areas, and the habitat is becoming increasingly fragmented, especially as areas are converted to agricultural land. In Argentina, for example, more than two million hectares have been replaced by exotic trees, cattle and pastureland.

BirdLife, through its Partners in Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay, is developing an alliance to help protect the ecological integrity of the southern cone grasslands. The alliance will support the identification and documentation of key biodiversity areas, it will devise ways so that productive areas at a regional level can be managed without affecting their biodiversity, and it will support other grassland conservation measures.

For further information, please contact Rob Clay (rob@guyra.org.py), Manager of Science and Planning, Guyra Paraguay.



■ Ecoregions of the Southern Cone

BirdLife global figures

BirdLife International...

- BirdLife is present in more than 100 countries (currently 100 network countries and nine country programs)
- Global membership more than 2.5 million
- Global staff of 5,000

- Around a quarter of a million active volunteers
- 2.5 billion press and media contacts annually (opportunities to read, hear or watch BirdLife news)
- 4.5 million children involved annually

- One million hectares of land owned or managed for conservation
- 3.5 million visitors to BirdLife reserves annually

News

DarwinNet: A conservation initiative for Peru's Tumbesian region

The dry forests of south-western Ecuador and north-western Peru—the Tumbesian region—are some of the most threatened on earth, despite their biological richness and high levels of endemism. Roughly 6,300 plants are found in western Ecuador, of which nearly 20% are endemic and the forests harbor some 800 bird species, including 84 restricted-range species. 253 species of reptiles and amphibians include many species of frogs, 60% of them endemic. The increase in human activities has caused enormous pressure on the region and a loss of thousands of forest hectares.

Bosques Sin Fronteras, a consortium of 11 conservation organizations from Ecuador and Peru, including BirdLife, are working to protect the biological and cultural diversity of the Tumbesian Region in collaboration

with local communities and the governments of each country. In total, these organizations manage in collaboration with local people approximately 62,000 ha of forests in private reserves that are home to 14 Globally Threatened Bird species.

Bosques Sin Fronteras, supported by BirdLife and the Darwin Foundation, is currently proposing a bi-national ecoregion-based Clearing House Mechanism (CHM) called DarwinNet. This transboundary initiative will co-ordinate the flow of information on sustainable development and conservation of the dry forests of Ecuador and Peru between interested parties. It will encourage dialogue between international development agencies, governmental and non-governmental organizations, the scientific community, local authorities and

local communities. This will be achieved through the development of a website to enable access to a Geographic Information System (GIS), databases and a virtual library on the region, the setting up of online discussion forums and holding meetings to exchange experiences, the establishment of offices in both countries and the publication of a newsletter on the project's activities.

Overall, the initiative will raise awareness of the region's richness, and encourage conservation and sustainable use of its biodiversity.

For more information, please contact: David Thomas at BirdLife International (david.thomas@birdlife.org).

Important Bird Areas Program

Effective Conservation of IBAs in Paraguay: the case of San Rafael



José Luis Cartes

Sharp-tailed Streamcreeper, in the San Rafael Reserve

In 1997, San Rafael became the first Paraguayan IBA declared, and has become an example of continuous and effective conservation action. In 1999, Guyra Paraguay (BirdLife in Paraguay) joined forces with Pro Cosara, Natural Land Trust, Enlace and the Institute for Environmental Law and Economy through the Alliance for the Conservation of San Rafael, to co-ordinate their activities for the site. These included the purchase of core conservation areas from

private estates within San Rafael Reserve, patrolling and surveying, implementing conservation management actions, establishing sustainable and organic agricultural programs, and taking action against illegal activities.

San Rafael has been a protected area since 1992, but within it there are more than 50 private properties that were never purchased and included within the reserve because of a lack of government resources. In 2000 the protected area became a "Managed Resources Reserve", meaning that land-owners within the reserve were allowed to undertake activities that are considered sustainable and of low ecological impact, such as organic agriculture, certified cattle

rearing and sustainable forestry. However, because these conservation conditions lacked clear guidelines, the Alliance began to buy land to establish a core conservation area of at least 10,000 ha to support the reserve. Through this land-purchase scheme, the first estate (Guyra Reta, 2,270 ha) was purchased using funds from the Garfield Foundation. Subsequently, the Alliance has succeeded, with support from the Paraguay Embassy in Washington D.C. and collaboration from the Paraguay Ministry of Foreign Affairs, plus outside donor support from the World Wildlife Fund, The Nature Conservancy (TNC), the Many Hats Foundation, Conservation International and Earth's Birthday in securing the purchase of blocks of 104 and 1,250 ha, bringing the total area purchased to date for the long-term conservation of Paraguay's first, and most important IBA to more than 3,600 ha.

Rob Clay (rob@guyra.org.py), Manager of Science and Planning and José Luis Cartes (jlcartes@guyra.org.py), Site Conservation Acting, Guyra Paraguay.

Important Bird Areas Program

Paraguayan national IBA workshop

Last August the first national workshop on ornithology, organized by Guyra Paraguay (BirdLife in Paraguay) took place, aimed at identifying the country's Important Bird Areas (IBAs). 42 such sites were recognized, 15 of them legally recognized by the government. Guyra Paraguay has active conservation programs at 13 IBA sites, and is supporting activities at a further 17. After the workshop, the following proposals were made:

1. To organize a follow-up workshop to assess additional IBAs.
2. To complete a national inventory of IBAs, including preliminary borders for each area.
3. To include important data in BirdLife's World Bird Database (WBDB)
4. To collect and analyze information from experts on other forms of biodiversity to help identify key biodiversity areas and to assess the level of overlap between IBAs and places important for other taxa.
5. To establish an IBA monitoring program using GIS technology.
6. To take immediate steps to conserve the highest priority IBAs.

These above ambitious goals reflect the urgent need for conservation of Paraguay's IBAs.

Rob Clay (rob@guyra.org.py), Manager of Science and Planning and José Luis Cartes (jlcartes@guyra.org.py), Site Conservation Acting, Guyra Paraguay.

First Cuban IBA workshop



Americas Regional Office, assisted by Angelica Estrada and funded by the British Birdfair. More than 30 participants, representing the majority of Cuba's provinces attended, plus ornithologists from 11 of the most important institutions in the country and staff from protected areas.

A Consultative Committee to the Cuban IBA Program was formed and 35 potential IBAs identified, each with a person in charge of data collection. This workshop allowed those attending to gain a better understanding of BirdLife's IBA program, and to encourage them to contribute data to help bird conservation in the region.

Susana Aguilar, Cuban IBA Co-ordinator, National Center for Protected Areas (CNAP) (susy@snap.cu)

Participants in the First Cuban IBA workshop

The first national workshop on Important Bird Areas (IBAs) took place in Cuba from 2-6 February 2004 at Villa San José del

Lago, Sancti Spiritus, marking the official beginning of the IBA program in the country. The event was organized by the National Center for Protected Areas (CNAP), and supported by the BirdLife

Funds secured for protection of grassland IBAs



Gabriel Rocha

Aves Uruguay (BirdLife in Uruguay) has secured US\$29,000 from Fund for the Americas for a project on Important Bird Areas (IBAs) in the grasslands bordering Argentina, in Rio Negro and Paysandú. The project, which began in March 2004, will last for 15 months and will aim to establish agreements between private landowners and the Ministry of Housing, Land and the Environment to secure conservation of these vital sites.

seed eaters, Saffron-cowled Blackbird, Black-and-white Monjita and Sharp-tailed Grass-Tyrant. Workshops will be held between landowners, the authorities and local NGOs on grassland conservation, and there will be educational environmental activities for local communities.

Gabriel Rocha (elaenia@adinet.com.uy), Coordinator IBA Program, Aves Uruguay.

Aves Uruguay will monitor Globally Threatened Birds in the grasslands, including

Saffron-cowled Blackbird, a vulnerable species found in the Uruguayan grassland

News from the Partnership

Birds of the Condor Mountain Range, Ecuador

Chris Canaday



■ Cordillera del Cóndor and Nangaritza river

CECIA's (BirdLife in Ecuador) "Exploration of birds in the Condor Mountain Range, Ecuador" project is examining the avifauna of this region to identify the important areas for conservation. Data were gathered over three years, ending in 2003 when three expeditions took place to study habitats at various altitudes within the Condor Range. The first of these, in March, visited the

■ Peruvian Antpitta

Warintz Shuar community and their surroundings in Morona-Santiago province. Birds recorded included Bar-winged Wood-wren, a species endemic to this region, and Pygmy Antwren, which, at 2,000 m, was at unusually high altitude for this lowland species that is normally found below 700 m and is indicative of the co-existence of Andean and Amazon species

in this part of Ecuador. The second expedition focused on the southern part of the Condor Range, specifically around La Canela, Zamora Chinchipe province. Several important nationally threatened birds were recorded, including Wattled Guan, White-necked Parakeet, Masked Saltator and Peruvian Antpitta. On the third expedition, in September, the presence in the area of the nominate race of Andean Tyrant, first reported by L. Navarrete y C. Canaday in December 2000, was confirmed. A female was seen collecting weeds at an altitude of 2,000 m, at the military base of Condor Mirador.

The border dispute between Ecuador and Peru has thankfully been settled, but the lowlands, in particular, are now threatened by agricultural expansion and the area must now be carefully protected to conserve the many rare and restricted-range species it harbors, including Buckley's Cotinga and Rufous-browed Tyrannulet.

*Ana Ágreda (piranga_72@hotmail.com),
Cordillera del Cóndor Project Leader,
Corporación Ornitológica del Ecuador
(CECIA).*

Environmental degree courses in Argentina

Eduardo Haene



■ Graduates, November, 2003

Aves Argentinas (BirdLife in Argentina) has, as its main educational project, been offering an environmental degree course through the Argentina Naturalists School since 1989. Students have to pass 16 subjects to be awarded either a Field

Naturalist or Environmental Interpreter Diploma. Students attend 16 classes on each subject, and are required to perform a practical task too, either in a laboratory or museum or in a nature reserve. In July and September, each student is encouraged to participate in a two-day field workshop close to Buenos Aires.

In 2003, 119 students studied for a Diploma, taking an average of two subjects each. Almost 80 people went to a farewell party to celebrate the end of the school year, including teachers, students and graduates' relatives where students made speeches

praising the warmth, dedication and professional attitude of the teachers, and the friendly atmosphere—particularly on field trips. 11 graduates received diplomas, and the three students with the best grades were awarded Eduardo Ladislao Holmberg Awards, named after the outstanding Argentinean naturalist, Holmberg. Two of the graduates—a volunteer working at the Ribera Norte Educational Refuge (San Isidro) and an employee at the La Plata Municipal Ecological Park—received scholarships to work on an urban natural reserves project, which Aves Argentinas is undertaking in conjunction with AVINA.

*Eduardo Haene
(haene@avesargentinas.org.ar), Director of
Environmental Education, Aves
Argentinas/AOP.*

News from the Partnership

Eriocnemis project enters second stage



Francisco Sornoza

■ Black-breasted Puffleg

CECIA (BirdLife in Ecuador) and the Numashir Foundation for the Conservation of Threatened Ecosystems

have begun the second stage of their *Eriocnemis* project on two *Eriocnemis* hummingbirds species, the Black-breasted and Turquoise-throated Pufflegs.

CECIA has spent the last eight years gathering biological data on the Black-breasted Puffleg, which is Critically Endangered and confined to Pichincha province, close to the capital, Quito, in areas seriously affected by natural habitat loss through deforestation, agricultural expansion and urbanisation. Now the project will focus on trying to locate this species in other areas around the Pichincha, Atacazo and Pululahua

volcanoes and the Guayllabamba valley, particularly in trying to identify and conserve those places used by the birds during their altitudinal migrations.

For more information on the project, please contact Juan Fernando Freile and Gabriela Castañeda, Fundación Numashir para la Conservación de Ecosistemas Amenazados, jffreile@numashir.org, gcastaneda@numashir.org or Tatiana Santander and Markus Tellkamp, Fundación Ornitológica del Ecuador-CECIA, cecia_de@uio.satnet.net

BirdLife and CEPF take action for Brazil's Atlantic Forests



Jaqueline M. Goerck

■ Atlantic Forest in Serra das Lontras, Brazil

BirdLife has joined forces with the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF)* to begin site conservation work at six sites in Brazil's highly threatened Atlantic Forests: Boa Nova (Bahia), Serra da Ouricana, Valença (Bahia), Fazenda

Pindobas IV (Espírito Santo), Restinga de Macambaba/Cabo Frio (Rio de Janeiro) and Serra das Bocaina/Paraty/Angra dos Reis (Rio de Janeiro/Sao Paulo). Conservation efforts will include helping local people establish and manage Site Support Groups, support for alternative and sustainable agricultural practices, training in forest

management and monitoring efforts, and strategic land purchases.

Working with local partners, BirdLife is already supporting on-the-ground site conservation work at Murici and Serra das Lontras, two of the 15 highest priority Important Bird Areas (IBAs), out of a total of 161, identified by BirdLife in conjunction with the Fundação Zoobotanicado Rio Grande do Sul (FZBRS). 104 Globally Threatened Birds are known from Brazil's Atlantic Forest region, where less than 8% of the original forest remains, mostly in scattered remnants across the landscape.

For more information on BirdLife's Brazil Program, please contact birdlifebrasil@uol.com.br.

* CEPF is a partnership of Conservation International, the World Bank, the GEF and the MacArthur

News from the Partnership

BP Silver Award for Araripe Manakin

A BP Silver Award of US\$10,000 has been given for a project to study the Araripe Manakin, a recently discovered, highly threatened species in eastern Brazil.

First described in 1998, the Araripe Manakin is Critically Endangered and numbers fewer than 250 individuals living on the slopes of the Chapada do Araripe, Ceará state, one of the 16 highest priority Atlantic Forest Important Bird Areas (IBAs) identified by the joint BirdLife Brazil, Fundacao Zoobotanico Rio Grande do Sul (FZBRs) IBA program. The manakin is apparently closely associated with water springs, and is therefore a good indicator of

environmental quality. Like other manakins, the species has a complex breeding behavior, with males performing courtship displays at communal leks. Preliminary surveys have shown that the region has been under intense human pressure in recent years. Because of its cool climate, it is popular with holiday makers, and the type locality has even been converted into a recreational park, where the natural pools attract many visitors. The present study will investigate the distribution and ecological requirements of the Araripe Manakin by systematically visiting the chapada's most significant natural springs throughout the year, and information on ownership and

land-use in the area will be gathered, to assess the threats and most appropriate conservation measures for this species. Successful protection of the manikin's habitat is essential to protect this important watershed and much of the chapada's unique and threatened biodiversity.

*David Wege (david.wege@birdlife.org.uk),
del Caribbean Program Manager, BirdLife
International.*

Paraguay: in search of our national bird



Doris Insfran

In late 2002, Guyra Paraguay (BirdLife in Paraguay), with the support of the Environment Secretary and with support from the Peace Corps, launched a campaign entitled "In the search of our national bird" The aim was to have the Bare-throated Bellbird, an emblematic species in Paraguay known locally as the Guarani (Paraguay's native language), and with deep roots in local culture, declared as Paraguay's national bird.

The campaign was also aimed at raising awareness among young people about bird conservation and the importance of protecting biological diversity. Activities

took place throughout Paraguay, including the gathering of 3,624 signatures supporting the bellbird's nomination as the national bird, 20 workshops covering aspects of the biological and cultural importance of the bellbird, along with many exhibitions, presentations, contests and other events. On 10 March 2004, an event was held at the National Congress, and a petition of 3,500 signatures from those committed to the conservation of Paraguay's biological diversity presented. Now, Congress can pass an Act to have the Bare-throated Bellbird declared Paraguay's national bird, and the Commission for Natural Resources is drafting legislation to this effect.

*Elizabeth Cabrera (ecabrera@guyra.org.py),
Guyra Paraguay.*

■ Bare-throated Bellbird (*Procnias nudicollis*)

Aves Uruguay receives BP Award

A joint project between university students and Aves Uruguay (BirdLife in Uruguay) has received a 2004 BP Award to survey and study threatened grasslands birds.

The students in charge of the project will be offered technical support by Aves Uruguay, and will be able to meet and share

experiences with Aves Argentinas (BirdLife in Argentina), which is also studying the birds of this highly threatened grassland habitats.

*Gabriel Rocha (elaenia@adinet.com.uy),
Aves Uruguay.*



The Americas working for birds...

Oriental Center of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (BIOECO) opens in Cuba

In February 2004, the Oriental Center of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (BIOECO) opened its doors in Santiago de Cuba. The Center includes the Juan Cristóbal Gundlach Natural Sounds Laboratory, the first of its kind in the country, where examples of Cuba's fauna will be stored for research and educational purposes. It already has a database of digitalized sounds of Cuban birds and amphibians, which are currently being processed.

The creation of the Center came about thanks to the support of the Field Museum

of Chicago, the MacArthur Foundation, Cornell University's Maculay Natural Sounds Laboratory and the Cuban IBA Program. The National Center for Protected Birds was in charge of setting up the Center, and received funding from the British Birdfair.

The laboratory was opened by Devorah Moskovitz, an ornithologist from the Field Museum, and Gregory Budney, sound curator of Cornell University's Maculay Natural Sound Laboratory. Other dignitaries attending included Nicasio Viña Dávila

from the Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment in Santiago de Cuba, and Miguel Abad, Director of BIOECO and the Director of the National Center for Bird Protection. BIOECO's new sounds laboratory accepts contributions from similar institutions or laboratories around the world.

*Freddy Rodríguez Santana
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Oriental de Ecosistemas y Biodiversidad,
Cuba.*

Biodiversity conservation promoted in Guyana



The Guyana region, which includes Guyana, Surinam, French Guyana and parts of Venezuela, Colombia and Brazil, has the world's highest percentage of intact tropical rainforest, more than 25% of the world's remaining total. The area is also known for its high level of endemism—of 20,000 vascular plant species catalogued, around 35% are endemic. The region also has many ecosystems, some of them unique, like the tepuis. Human cultural diversity is high too, with at least 100 Amerindian groups spread throughout the region.

The Guyana Shield Initiative (GSI) is a long-term project aimed at sponsoring conservation and promoting sustainable development in this area. Local communi-

ties, local authorities, international and local NGOs, and scientists work together to identify priority areas to be protected and how to meet the needs of the area sustainably.

In 2002, the GSI held a Guyana Shield conservation priority-setting workshop, in Paramaribo, Surinam. It was co-sponsored by Conservation International (CI), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the World Conservation Union (IUCN). Participants included more than 100 experts on the region's biodiversity and specialists in socio-economics. Their conclusions were published in 2003 in *Priorities for the conservation of the Guyana region*, and included a map showing the region's biodiversity, socio-economic pressures and conservation possibilities. Attendees assessed possible implications of future socio-economic pressure on biodiversity, and established conservation priorities at a regional level based on biological priorities and the threat level affecting the region. Biologically important areas were identified based upon the variety of animal species, endemism, important ecological processes and other biological criteria. Outputs from the workshop included a commitment by UNDP to assist the establishment of a Policy Level Network among the countries of the region, the signing of the Paramaribo Declaration, which contains a detailed list of recommended actions for conservation in the area, and a technical report entitled *The Guyana region – a global priority*, which includes

the recommendations of more than 100 workshop participants.

In March 2004 the Guyana Shield Initiative completed the first stage of the project, thanks to support from the Netherlands Committee of IUCN (NC-IUCN), and funds from DGIS. The first phase included the preparation of a proposal to the Global Environment Facility (GEF) to obtain funds for the region and a workshop to establish regional priorities and to assess the opportunities for sustainable activities such as the development of carbon capture programs, forest products not sourced from timber, sustainable timber production and ecotourism projects.

*For more information, please visit
www.guianashield.org/ie/index.htm or
contact Mathew Foster
(m.foster@conservation.org)*

News from the region



United States: *United States: Audubon's Birds of America available on the web*

Audubon (BirdLife in the US) is now hosting John James Audubon's *Birds of America* on the web. The images and text from an 1840 edition of the seven-volume set of this magnificent work are now available to anyone with internet access. They provide an insight into John James Audubon—the man, the artist, and the conservationist—and should help foster a better understanding of the National Audubon Society and inspire new and renewed conservation efforts.

Please visit
www.audubon.org/bird/BoA/BOA_index.html.



Panama: *Panama Audubon's chairperson joins Waterbird Conservation Council*

Rosabel Miró—Chairperson of Panama Audubon Society (BirdLife in Panama)—has joined the Waterbird Conservation Council, which met recently in Key Largo, Florida, USA. The Council is responsible for co-ordination, and providing support and information on the implementation of the North America Water Birds Conservation Plan (NAWCP). Other member organizations include BirdLife, USFWS, Manomet Center for Conservation Sciences, American Bird Conservancy, Canadian Wildlife Service and The Nature Conservancy.

For more information, please contact Rosabel Miró
 (rosabelmiro@mac.com).

Ecuador - Peru: *Book to support conservation of the Tumbesian region*

BirdLife's Americas Regional Office is assisting with the publication of *Treasures of the Forgotten Forest* a book featuring the artwork resulting from two visits to the Tumbesian region by the Artists for Nature Foundation, with the objective of raising local awareness of the importance of the region for conservation.

For more information, please contact Ian Davidson
 (Ian.Davidson@birdlife.org.ec).



Argentina: *Bird guide available*

Don't miss your chance to purchase the Guide to the birds of Argentina and Uruguay. For further details contact: info@avesargentinas.org.ar

Canada: *Michael Bradstreet receives BirdLife award*

BirdLife has presented several awards that recognize outstanding contributions to wildlife conservation, including one to Bird Studies Canada's (BirdLife in Canada) Michael Bradstreet. The 12 Conservation Achievement Awards were presented at a ceremony that took place at BirdLife's World Conference in Durban, South Africa, this March. Since 1989, Michael Bradstreet has been the Executive Director of Long Point Bird Observatory and subsequently of Bird Studies Canada. Under his leadership the observatory has been transformed into a Canadian-wide bird research and conservation organization.



Dominican Republic: *34 IBAs proposed*

34 Important Bird Areas (IBAs) have been proposed in the Dominican Republic, although the identification process is still underway with information on boundaries, location, altitude, characteristics, accessibility and threats to the sites being compiled. The Jaragua Group is proposing to set up a Site Support Group.

For further information please contact
jaragua@tricom.net.

Uruguay: *Fund of the Americas support for Aves Uruguay*

Fund of the Americas has donated US\$29,000 to Aves Uruguay (BirdLife in Uruguay) for a project to strengthen local capacity for environmental management and conservation of grasslands in the Important Bird Areas (IBAs) of Río Negro and Paysandú, Uruguay. The money will also help support the institutional development of Aves Uruguay, who for the first time will employ two staff members, an Executive Director and an Executive Assistant, for at least 15 months. They will work with local communities in the departments of San Javier, Young, Nuevo Berlin, Fray Bentos, Guichon, Lorenzo Gueyres and Paysandú, and Gabriel Rocha will be appointed as the project's overall co-ordinator. More information from elaenia@adinet.com.uy.



Opportunities

Upcoming Events and Meetings

Caribbean Endemic Bird Festival (22 April–22 May 2004)

The Society for the Conservation and Study of Caribbean Birds is raising awareness of the unique bird fauna of the Caribbean through an annual Caribbean Endemic Bird Festival. Naturalist hikes, lectures, photography exhibitions and other activities are part of the Festival, all focused on endemic bird species. In 2004 the Festival runs from 22 April (Earth Day) until 22 May (Biodiversity International Day). More than 1,000 people from seven countries participated in the festival in 2003. This year, activities will be organized in every island/country in the Caribbean by local committees and allied organizations. For further information, please contact Adrienne G. Tossas, Festival Co-ordinator (agtossas@caribe.net).

Fourth annual conference on Important Bird Areas, Arizona, USA, (11–15 August 2004)

This conference will be a good opportunity to exchange ideas on the IBAs Program. For more information, please contact Connie Sanchez (csanchez@audubon.org), or visit www.audubon.org/bird/iba/conference.html

Third international conference on albatrosses and petrels, Montevideo, Uruguay, (23–27 August 2004)

More information can be found at <http://www.iapc2004.com>

2004 World Bird Festival "Linking People to Birds", worldwide, (October 2004)

BirdLife is inviting everyone and every organization to participate in the 2004 World Bird Festival. This educational event

aims to awaken people's awareness of the importance of conservation and the protection of birds and their habitats. The Festival has been celebrated every October since 1993. Each year a theme is chosen, and this year it will be "Linking People to Birds". Should you wish to join the network of more than 70 organizations that celebrate this annual Festival, please email birdlife@birdlife.org.ec

Nineteenth international zoology conference, Beijing, China, (23–27 August 2004)

For more information or to register, please visit www.icz.ioz.ac.cn or email icz2004@panda.ioz.ac.cn

Training

RARE Program "Promoting protection through pride"

What does a puppet show, rap videos and two-meter high flamingo costumes have to do with bird conservation? Well, the answer is a lot! The RARE program's "Promoting conservation through pride" uses techniques like this to reach a particular target audience who are crucial to bird conservation throughout the Americas—from the Caribbean to Mexico, Guatemala, the

coast of Ecuador and Brazil—and now to Sierra Leone, South Africa and even China. To learn more about the RARE program and how you can help bird conservation, please email pride@rareconservation.org or visit www.rareconservation.org, or call Megan Hill at Rare, tel. 703-522-5070.

Funding

BP Conservation Program

The BP Conservation Program seeks to develop young conservation professionals. Originally established as a partnership between BirdLife and BP, today the Program is still funded by BP and supported by four environmental conservation organisations: BirdLife, Fauna & Flora International (FFI), the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) and Conservation International (CI).

Each year, the Program makes Awards of up to US\$75,000 to support students groups in their fieldwork. To help them, BP runs training workshops where leaders can learn all aspects of how to run an expedition. This year, 29 teams working on a variety of species and environmental issues from 23 countries received more than US\$600,000 through the Program. In May 2004, a representative of each team visited the UK for a three-week training course, and the opportunity to exchange experiences with the other participants and conservation experts. This year, nine projects from the Americas and the Caribbean received a BP Award, three of them to organizations within the BirdLife Partnership: Asociacion Armonia from Bolivia received

US\$75,000 to work with threatened bird species in the country; Aves Uruguay won US\$7,500 for conservation of threatened birds in the grasslands of Uruguay; and the Brazil Program received US\$9,500 for the conservation of the Araripe Manakin, a Critically Endangered species from the lowland Brazil.

If you wish to apply for a BP Program Award, you will need to fill out the application form and submit it by 31 October. More information can be found at <http://conservation.bp.com/applications/default.asp>, and application guidelines are at <http://conservation.bp.com/pdfs/Guidelines%202004.doc>

Deadline: October 31, 2004



The American Partnership



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SCAV

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Partner



Together for birds and people

BIRDLIFE INTERNATIONAL
BirdLife International, through the Americas Division and its Partnership, strives to conserve birds, their habitats and global biodiversity, working with people towards sustainability in the use of natural resources.

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www.birdlife.org

The Bulletin Birdlife in the Americas is produced three times per year. Your comments and suggestions, as always, are very welcomed, please contact Editor, Itziar Olmedo (itziar.olmedo@birdlife.org.ec)