

BirdLife in the Americas

Vol. 6 Number 2

August 2003

World Bird FESTIVAL 2003

Raptors of the Americas

¡Let's get together this October to celebrate the World Bird Festival!

The World Bird Festival is an educational and awareness raising event sponsored by BirdLife International. The event's goals are to highlight the importance of conserving and protecting the birds of the world and their habitats on our planet. During the nine years that the event has been held, more than one million people in over 25 countries have taken part in the numerous events and activities that the Americas Partnership of BirdLife International along with the participation of more than 70 organizations, scientists and education centers, have organized.

As part of this year's theme, *Raptors of the Americas*, we want to highlight the value of birds of prey in the world and the necessity of conserving their habitats. The most recent statistics show that 71 of the 322 birds of raptor species of the world are threatened; of these, 27% are found in the Americas.

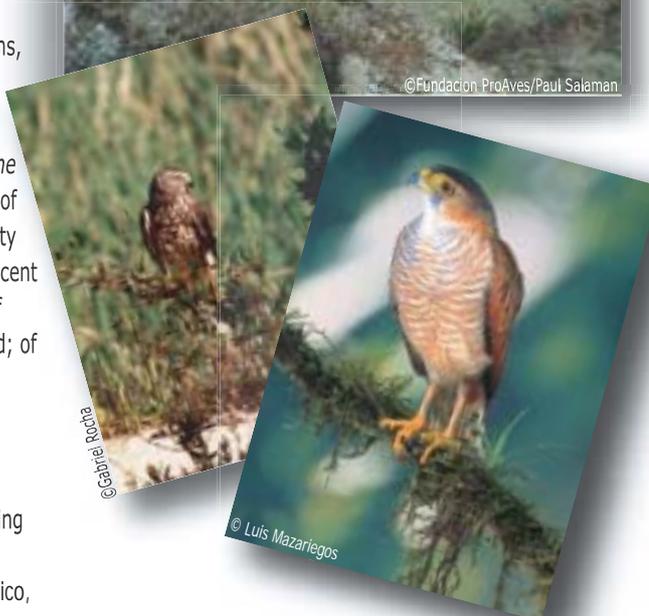
Raptors of the Americas

South America holds the distinction of being the second most ecologically diverse continent in the world; together with Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean, it provides important habitat to all but two of the 99 birds of raptors of the New World.

The diversity of raptors is enormous in the region, especially in the neotropics. Five South American countries, Colombia, Venezuela, Ecuador, Bolivia and Peru, are



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among those which support the greatest number of species; further, the neotropics have five more genera of birds of prey than are found in the old world (26 versus 21).

Last Minute News



©Werner Deuser

Hyacinth Macaw, Bolivia

¡Help us to Save Them!

In the Americas there are 720 threatened bird species. If you would like to contribute information to save them, visit the online discussion rooms that BirdLife International has opened to determine which species should be considered threatened and to update the existing information.

Visit us at: <http://www.birdlife.org>

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Together for birds and people

News

Taiwan's support to the BirdLife Brazil Programme

Thousands of kilometres of ocean and land apart, the BirdLife Brazil Program has enjoyed a fruitful collaboration with the Government of Taiwan over the years. From the very beginning of the establishment of the BirdLife Brazil Programme in 2000, the Council of Agriculture (CoA) of the Republic of China (Taiwan) has supported BirdLife conservation work there, through their annual scheme of Conservation Grants. By supporting the establishment of the Mata Atlantica IBA program and, more recently, the specific site conservation project at Serra das Lontras, the CoA has played an important role in the development of the program and the achievement of important

conservation results. CoA's interest in international conservation work has also benefited BirdLife work elsewhere with support granted to the Albatross campaign, the Globally Threatened Species program, the BirdLife Global Education Competition, the South Asia program, Forest Conservation in Sumatra, and the IBA work in Central Asia for a total of about \$300,000 USD over the last five years.

Jaqueline Goerck (birdlifebrasil@uol.com.br).



With the support of the Council of Agriculture of the Republic of China (Taiwan)

BirdLife Partners meet to discuss support strategies

Canadian Nature Federation and Bird Studies Canada were the hosts of the First meeting of the "Supporting Partners" in the central offices of the former organization in Long Point, Eastern Canada. The Supporting Partners are those members of BirdLife Partners who are interested and committed to providing assistance to other Partners in completing BirdLife's Mission. This concept has already shown success in Africa and Europe. In addition to the Canadian partners, representatives of Guyra Paraguay, Audubon Society, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), La Sociedad Española de Ornitología (SEO) and Vogelbescherming, met to discuss how the



Supporting Partners Participants, Canada

organizations can support a wide range of activities coordinated by BirdLife International. A report concerning the key achievements of this meeting will be presented in the Americas Regional Partnership Meeting, which will be held in Asuncion in August, 2003. Ian Davidson (davidson@birdlife.org.ec).

Save the Albatross Campaign: "\$20,000 USD for an Idea" receives 84 ideas (SEO/BirdLife)

To date in the open forum of ideas organized by SEO/BirdLife, a total of 84 proposals for keeping birds away from long line fish hooks have been submitted. The proposed ideas come from over 11 countries including, New Zealand, Hawaii, Argentina, Uruguay, Colombia, Ireland and Spain, which have contributed the majority (58). In terms of professions, more than half of the contestants are from the fishing industry or families of fisherman. Biologists, oceanographers, students, industrial engineers and journalists have also participated. "This experience shows a new focus in

defense of conservations goals. The sector has responded by applying their practical knowledge. They understand fishing, we understand birds. It is a beautiful example of working together for a common goal. We hope that this initiative can come up with a definite solution to a problem that has affected an economic activity with grave environmental repercussions," comments Alejandro Sanchez, General Director of SEO/BirdLife. It is hoped that the final results will be published in November, 2003. Carles Carboneras (ccarboneras@seo.org).

Web Pages of interest

Results of the Neotropical Birds of Prey Conference and the report on the Harpy Eagle Workshop that was held in Panama City in October 2002 are available in PDF format at: <http://www.fondoperegrino.org>

Birdscape. Birdscape magazine contains information concerning conservation work with birds and other forest species that share their habitat at: <http://birdhabit.fws.gov>

The web page of the Diver/Loon specialist group of Wetlands International is: <http://www.briloon.org/diver.htm>

Free online articles of the journal Ibis are available at: <http://www.ibis.ac.uk>

If you would like to submit articles to The Auk, it can now be done via Internet at www.rapidreview.com. Revisions can also be solicited and received electronically at this same address. If you have any difficulties with this process, please contact auk@uark.edu

All the articles published in the journal, Landscape Ecology between 1987 and 1997 are now available free of charge in PDF format at: <http://www.kluweronline.com/issn/0921-2973>

The database of neotropical ornithologists is now online. It can be directly accessed at: <http://www.huitzil.net/botn.pdf>

The Spring, 2003 bulletin of the Conservation Management Institute (CMI) is available at: <http://www.cmiweb.org/bulletin.htm>

Oxford University Press has begun a program whereas students from developing countries are eligible to receive, either free or with considerable discount, a large number of scientific publications electronically. Complete information is available at: <http://www3.oup.co.uk/jnls/dev1>

If you would like to share observations and information concerning birds of Ecuador, subscribe to the electronic listing of Ecuador Birds. To join, send a blank email to: aves_Ecuador-subscribe@grupoyahoo.com

The electronic magazine, ECOSISTEMAS, a scientific publication and review of ecological and environmental techniques of the Asociación Española de Ecología Terrestre, can be consulted at: www.aeet.org/ecosistemas/portada.htm

News from the Partnership

ARGENTINA

Aves Argentinas supports sea birds



Banco de imágenes Aves Argentinas/AOP

Participants on the Seabird Workshop

In September 2001, the Centro de Investigaciones de Puerto Deseado de la Universidad Nacional de la Patagonia Austral, began a joint project with the private company, ARGENOVA S.A., to evaluate the extent of incidental mortality of albatrosses and petrels in long-line fishing in Argentina. During 2002, a mutual contract was signed between the two institutions to evaluate the use and efficiency of various mitigation techniques. In September of the same year, the project, "Incidental death reduction of sea birds associated with long line fishing in Argentina," was begun with financial support from The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Wildlife Conservation Society, together with the collaboration of Aves Argentinas/AOP and the National Audubon Society.

Now, for the first time in Argentina, scientists, technicians, businesses, NGOs, and fishing boat captains are working together to monitor the extent of the problem and to seek solutions to "fish in the sea and not in the sky."

Patricia Gandini, Project Director

(pagandini@yahoo.com.ar).

Workshop on the interaction between seabirds and the fishing industry in the Argentinean Sea

From 23rd - 25th of April, 2003, a Workshop was held which included investigators, representatives of NGOs, governmental organizations and all those interested in the conservation of sea birds.

The goal of this Workshop was to evaluate the current situation in Argentina's marine areas and to come up with recommendations for possible solutions to the conservation challenges facing the marine avian community. This Workshop was organized by Aves Argentinas and the Fundación Vida Silvestre Argentina, and was aided by the Universidad Nacional de Mar del Plata, INIDEP, the Dirección de Fauna Silvestre and the Secretaría de Ambiente y Desarrollo Sustentable de la Nación.

The Workshop proposed various recommendations to reduce the impact of fishing on sea birds; among the best plans were: (1) Support the implementation of the Conservation of Petrels and Albatrosses Agreement (ACAP) and monitor its implementation in national and provincial waters. (2) Perform a more active role in state organizations and authorities to apply the legal restraints at national level. (3) Complete and strengthen legal text planning in the fishing industry with a focus on promoting an ecosystem, multidisciplinary and precautionary approach.

Fabian Rabuffetti (rabuffeti@avesargentinas.org.ar), Aves Argentinas/ AOP.

Alliance Formed between Alparamis, S.A. and Aves Argentinas in favor of El Bagual Ecological Reserve



Banco de imágenes Aves Argentinas/AOP

Conservation efforts by both parties have been increased to protect this 4,000-hectare reserve that is home to a number globally threatened species. Soon, a collection of monographs on the biodiversity of the El Bagual Reserve, will be published. Management practices of pastures and the development of environmental education activities will also begin shortly. In this way, Aves Argentinas confirms its support for the management and conservation of the Chaco region. For more information, info@avesargentinas.org.ar

Training in Uruguay



Brenda Marfisi, 2003

During May, 2003, Aves Uruguay (GUPECA) initiated a strategic planning process with the support of the Americas Division of BirdLife International. As a result, the central mission was clearly defined along with the strategic objectives and organizational operations. Another support activity that has also been very useful for the members of GUPECA has been the "Building on Experience" training program in which Aves Uruguay participated in Slovenia, Australia, Canada and the Philippines. The current focus on strengthening the institution is one of the main goals for meeting future conservation challenges. Gabriel Rocha (elaenia@adinet.com.uy).



E. Freire

ARGENOVA Ship

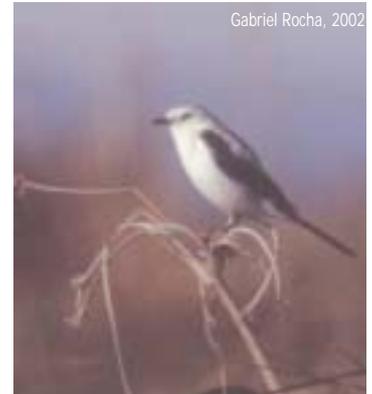
Important Bird Areas Program

First Agreement signed for the Conservation of an IBA in Uruguay

An Uruguayan team of investigators has identified several new IBAs and helped to more clearly defined existing ones. Initially, 10 IBAs were identified. Following recent studies, 15 more IBAs were identified to bring the total to 25 in Uruguay. In other developments, Aves Uruguay signed the first conservation agreement with the owner of an IBA in the State of Canelones, in the Laguna del Cisne. The agreement was signed to initially work in the area for three years. This area is very important for the conservation of a number of threatened species in the vulnerable category

such as, *Xolmis dominicana* and *Porzana spiloptera* and for species in the Near Vulnerable category such as *Spartonicoa maluroides* and *Limnortyx rectirostris*. This is the first step in the third and fourth phases of the IBA program. A possibility also exists for signing further agreements with landowners. Because Aves Uruguay is an institution comprised of volunteers, it is limited in its capacity to advance conservation.

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



Gabriel Rocha, 2002

Xolmis dominicana, Laguna del Cisne, Canelones

Directory of the Important Bird Areas of Panama Released

The most detailed study to date on the status of birds and other wildlife in Panama, was published and released publicly in June, 2003. For its size, Panama is one of the world's most biologically diverse nations in the Americas. The book was produced by BirdLife International's Partner in Panama, the Panama Audubon Society (PAS), with financing from Vogelbescherming Nederland (BirdLife's Partner in the Netherlands) and the United States Forest Service, and is based on studies sponsored by Panama's Fundación Natura. The 342-page book, written in both English and Spanish, de-

scribes each of the 88 Important Bird Areas (IBAs) in the country, and also includes a list of threatened birds, data on other threatened/endemic fauna, and conservation issues for each site. The book's other key findings include: IBAs have been identified that include 210 of Panama's 216 endangered, endemic and biome-restricted species. IBAs cover almost 28% of Panama's land area (75,516 km²), and most are threatened at some level. Just 35 (40%) of Panama's IBAs are formally protected.

George Angehr (angehr2@tivoli.si.edu).



Sociedad Audubon de Panamá

Dr. George Angehr, Panama's directory author

Ecuador identifies 114 IBAs in their First National Workshop

Between the 9th and the 11th of July, the National Workshop on Important Bird Areas of Ecuador was held at the San Francisco University, Quito. The conference, which was attended by more than 90 participants including ornithologists, landowners and managers of protected areas, discussed the IBAs of the country based on a list of candidate IBAs. Further discussions included defining the

criteria for prioritizing conservation actions in the IBAs. As a result, a list of 95 definite IBAs was prepared along with 19 IBAs which were added during the beginning of August for a grand total of 114 IBAs to be included in the future directory of IBAs in Ecuador.

Juan F. Freile (aicas@conservation.org), IBA Coordinator of Ecuador.



First National IBA Workshop, Ecuador

Puerto Rico's IBA Program, 2003

The Sociedad Ornitológica Puertorriqueña (SOP) has been directing the IBA program in Puerto Rico since the beginning of 2002. SOP coordinates various projects and fieldwork with the goal of furthering knowledge of the island's avifauna and to be able to offer recommendations for their protection. One of these projects, the inventory of an endemic species which is very vulnerable and virtually unknown, the Elfin Woods Warbler (*Dendroica angelae*), is being directed by

ornithologists from the University of Puerto Rico at Mayaguez. A plan has also been prepared for the conservation of the Sierra Bermeja, a series of hills in the south east of Puerto Rico that provides habitat for 75% of the island's endemic species, including those in danger of extinction such as Puerto Rican Nightjar (*Caprimulgus noctitherus*) and the Yellow-shouldered Blackbird (*Agelaius xanthomus*). The plan includes censuses of the area's avian community and an

inventory of the Puerto Rican Nightjar population. With help from the biologists of the Universidad Interamericana de San Germán, land use and habitat quality was evaluated using aerial photography. To achieve protection and restoration of the habitat, land owner participation was encouraged. Adrienne G. Tossas (agtossas@caribe.net), IBA Program Coordinator, Sociedad Ornitológica Puertorriqueña.

Important Bird Areas Program

A year and a half of IBAs in Colombia: a good start

The IBA Program in Colombia has made significant progress since its beginnings in 2001 with the coordination by the Alexander von Humboldt Institute, and the support of BirdLife International, the World Bank, The Royal Embassy of the Low Countries, and the Global Environmental Fund (GEF). The IBA Program is one of the conservation tools highlighted in the "National Strategy for Avian Conservation" created by the Colombian ornithological community.

During the initial phase of the project in March 2002, 18 people met in the First IBA Workshop to both define IBA selection criteria and discuss fundamental aspects of Colombia's IBA Program. 356 potential IBAs were eventually identified. Since then, the Alexander von Humboldt Institute has been working nationally to secure additional information to enable the selection of IBAs.

As of July 2003, 25 site monitoring groups have been nominated and 103 areas have been identified as IBAs in 23 of the 32 states of the country. Fifty of these areas already have a designation form and

seven were officially declared IBAs. These IBAs are located in the following areas:

- EcoParque Los Besotes (Cesar)
- Reserva Natural Laguna de Sonso (Valle del Cauca)
- Lagunas de Fuguene, Cucunuba y Palacio (Cundinamarca y Boyaca)
- Gravillera del Valle del Rio Siecha (Cundinamarca y Boyaca)
- Selva de Florencia (Caldas)
- Reserva Natural Semillas de Agua (Tolima)
- Reserva Biológica Cachalu (Santander)

With the goal of motivating the ornithological community and speeding up the process of identifying and nominating Colombian IBAs, five regional, participatory IBA Workshops have been planned throughout the nation. The first of these was held on the 5th June in Pereira and dealt with the Cordillera Central Region and the Valley of the Rio Cauca. Thirty people participated in this workshop and 28 areas were proposed as IBAs. Four additional Regional Workshops will be held in Colombia in hopes of achieving similar results. These



Colombian IBA Workshop in Pereira, Colombia. June 2003

include:

- Costa Atlántica, San Andrés y Providencia
- Cordillera Oriental y Valle del Río Magdalena
- Cordillera Occidental y Pacífico Colombiano
- Amazonía y Orinoquía

Once Colombia's IBAs have been identified, the next step will be to support the conservation and monitoring of these areas.

Loreta Rosselli (aicascolombia@humboldt.org.co) IBA Coordinator, Alexander von Humboldt Institute www.humboldt.org.co/conservacion/aicas.

Advances in Brazil's IBA Program

In 1999, BirdLife International's Brazil Program began specific conservation projects in two areas north-east of Brazil in the Mata Atlántica. These areas, Muriçi in Alagoas and Serra das Lontras in Bahia, are of importance for the conservation of globally endangered bird species. The conservation programs in these two areas were made initiated before the formal process of identifying and officially designating them as IBAs.

To date, there is already a list of 161 IBAs of the Atlantic Forest region. The authors of this inventory, Grayson Bencke and Giovanni Mauricio, are currently

revising the directory of the IBAs in the Atlantic Forest region of Brazil based on additional information obtained during the most recent IBA workshop held in Brazil last year. The Brazil Program obtained financing from Rio Tinto for the publication of this directory, which will be released both in English and Portuguese. Additionally, the Brazil Program has expanded its activities into the following areas: Boa Nova (Bahia), APA of Guaratuba (Paraná) and Chapada do Araripe (Ceará).

Jaqueline M. Goerck (birdlifebrasil@uol.com.br), Program Director, Brazil



IBAs of the Atlantic Forest

Aves Argentinas completes its Third Regional IBA Workshop

Aves Argentinas has defined, as one of its strategic priorities, the completion of the national inventory of Important Bird Areas of Argentina by the end of 2004. Up until now, three workshops have been held; the first in Buenos Aires (Eco-regions the Pampas, Campos and Espinal), the second in La Cumbre, Córdoba (Eco-regions the Yungas, Chaco

Seco, Puna and Monte) and the last in Posadas, Misiones (Eco-region the Selva Paranaense and Chaco Húmedo). The remaining workshop will deal with Patagonia. To date, 70 people have participated. By the end of February of 2004, Aves Argentinas will have a preliminary document of the IBAs of Argentina.

Adrián di Giacomo (info@avesargentinas.org.ar) IBA Coordinator. Aves Argentinas.

Raptors of the Americas

¿What are raptors?

Raptors have always fascinated humans. From the most ancient cultures and religions, these birds have been used as symbols of authority, power and victory but more than anything, have represented our natural environment and symbolize freedom.

Raptors have existed for 50 million years and worldwide there are over 310 species. In the raptor group (Falconiformes) in the Americas includes: Vultures, Eagles, Hawks, Falcons and Caracaras.

With the exception of Antarctica, it's possible to find these birds in the majority of habitats and in almost all areas of the world, from sea level to the high Andes (*Andean Condor - Vultur gryphus*). Raptors have many morphological adaptations to find and prey upon other animals. These adaptations include: a precise vision, sharp talons and large, hooked bill. They feed on insects, carrion, and a wide range of vertebrates, from amphibians to reptiles, birds, rodents and mammals (including primates).

The importance of raptors

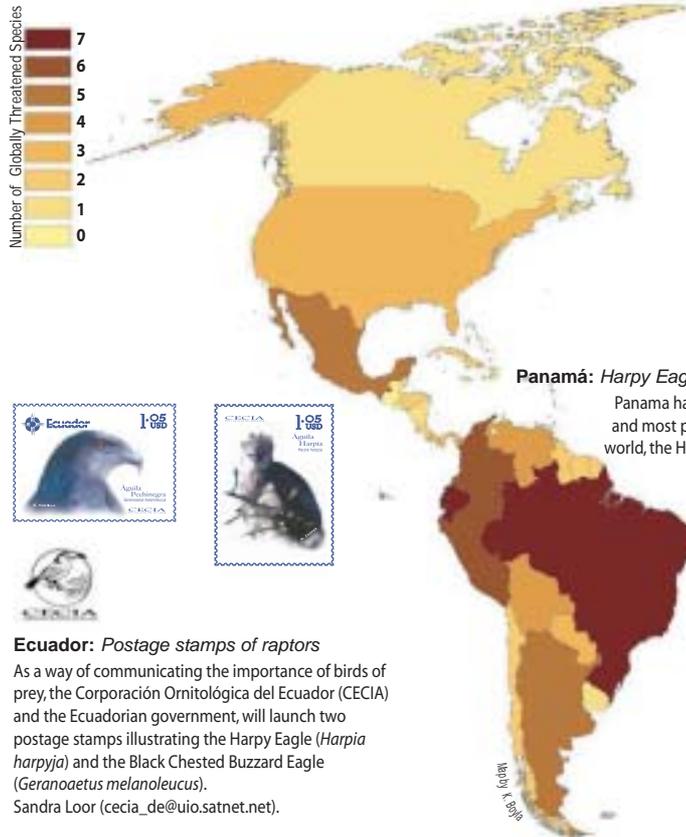
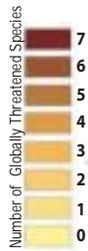
Raptors are useful to humans and have an important ecological role:

- They are efficient "controllers" of species that are potential transporters of human diseases and of species that harm agricultural production such as rodents, locust and many other species. Additionally, those birds of prey that feed on game species kill, in the majority, those individuals that are weak or sick.
- Carrion feeders eat dead organisms that in other circumstances would decompose and could become disease vectors.
- Occupying the top of the food chain and being sensitive to climatic changes, they are valuable indicators of environmental quality and are extremely valuable for understanding ecological processes and the health of our planet, including the threat of chemical contamination. Thereby giving humans an early warning of potential danger.

Moreover, birds of prey can play an important role in conservation strategies owing to the fact that:

1. They can take the role of umbrella species: the large range of a bird of prey can hold large populations of other species.
2. They are flagship species: because they awake the interest and support of the general public, they can arouse interest. For example the Andean Condor or the Harpy Eagle.

¿Where should we protect raptors?



Panamá: Harpy Eagle as the National Bird
Panama has one of the world's largest and most powerful Birds of Prey in the world, the Harpy Eagle (*Harpia harpyja*), as its national bird.
Karla Aparicio (k_aparicio@yahoo.com).



Ecuador: Postage stamps of raptors
As a way of communicating the importance of birds of prey, the Corporación Ornitológica del Ecuador (CECIA) and the Ecuadorian government, will launch two postage stamps illustrating the Harpy Eagle (*Harpia harpyja*) and the Black Capped Buzzard Eagle (*Geranoaetus melanoleucus*).
Sandra Lloor (cecias_de@uio.satnet.net).



Banco de imágenes Aves Argentinas



Chile: Birds of Prey Recovery Center
The center was created in 1991 and is the first of its kind in Chile. To date, 39% of the 600 birds admitted to the center have been returned to the wild. In addition, UNORCH, together with other Chilean, Argentinean and organizations from other countries have undertaken a cross border program for the conservation of the Andean Condor. In late 2001, eight condors were released in the Yerba Loca Nature Reserve. (Chile)
UNORCH (unorch@entelchile.net).



Argentina: Threatened Birds Recovery Center Güira Oga
Guira Oga, the home of the birds, was created in 1997 and is located in the forest of the Misiones Region. This center treats injured birds and evaluates the possibilities of their re-introduction to the wild. So far, they have helped more than 200 birds including, raptors, parrots and wild turkeys.
Aves Argentinas (info@avesargentinas.org.ar).



Threats

In the last two centuries, raptors throughout the world have been viewed as a threat to hunting and ranching which has resulted in a large number being killed or having their eggs stolen. In the Americas, a large number of Raptors, including the California Condor (*Gymnogyps californianus*), Wilson's Buzzard (*Chondrohierax wilsonii*), the Harpy Eagle and the Andean Condor have been declared Globally Endangered Species. Some have been protected through legal legislation such as the California Condor in the United States and the Andean Condor in Venezuela, Ecuador, Bolivia, Peru, Chile and Argentina. Regardless, raptors continue to be persecuted, poisoned and robbed of their eggs.

Direct Harm

Historically, the human persecution of raptors has been the major cause of their population declines. Farmers and hunters, wanting to reduce losses of farm animals and game species, have systematically tried to eliminate predators. Regardless, the legal protection of the majority, but not all raptors, has been adopted in almost all developed countries. As a result of these protections, deliberate hunting has been reduced drastically over recent years in Europe and North America. In spite of this, in tropical areas,

raptors continue to be ignored both by the law and by the public and are sacrificed for pleasure, food or feathers or when they attack chickens and other animals. In light of these threats, creation and the strengthening of laws should be one of the principal objectives of organizations dedicated to the conservation of raptors.



Diego Lombelida
Northern Crested-caracara (Caracara cheriway)

Poisoning

The poisoning of raptors is still very widespread, sometimes deliberate but, most times accidental, owing to the baiting of carrion to poison other predators.

Pesticides

Pesticides are another important threat. The wide range use of pesticides in agriculture led to the collapse of populations of many raptors species during the 50's and the 60's; in these cases, DDT was the most widely publicized because it affected the entire food chain including insectivores, granivores along with those that preyed upon them. As a result, the reproduction of raptors was severely affected.

Thanks to restrictions imposed on the use of DDT and a more careful approach to the use of other poisonous chemicals, species such as the Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus*) are now recovering. Without a doubt, the use of poisonous chemicals is still a threat, particularly in developing countries where there are still few restrictions.

ber of species it affects. For some time, threats to tropical forests have attracted the attention of conservationists worldwide. Although some humid forests in the regions, especially those at the mouth of the Amazon and Orinoco rivers, include some of the largest extents of tropical forests in the world, the same can't be said for the Atlantic Forests of Brazil nor the forests of the Pacific Coasts of Ecuador and Colombia and many tracks of Central American and Caribbean Forests. In all, 40% of raptors of the region (39 of 97 species), including eight migratory species, depend on some part of the forest for at least a part of their life cycle. Thus, the continuing loss of this habitat clearly affects the populations of these species.

Other forms of mortality related to human influence include electrocution by utility poles and collision with cables. The importance of these two significant mortality factors was, for some time, overlooked, but actually is very serious in some areas.



King Vulture (Sarcorampus coronatus)

Diego Lombelida

Threatened raptors of the Americas

Critically Endangered

<i>Gymnogyps californianus</i>	United States, Mexico
<i>Leptodon forbesi</i>	Brazil
<i>Chondrohierax wilsonii</i>	Cuba
<i>Buteo ridgwayi</i>	Dominican Republic, Haiti

Endangered

<i>Accipiter gundlachi</i>	Cuba
<i>Leucopternis occidentalis</i>	Ecuador, Peru

Vulnerable

<i>Leucopternis lacernulata</i>	Brazil
<i>Harpyhaliaetus coronatus</i>	Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Paraguay
<i>Buteo galapagoensis</i>	Ecuador
<i>Micrastur plumbeus</i>	Colombia, Ecuador

Near Threatened/Least Concern

<i>Vultur gryphus</i>	Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Venezuela
<i>Accipiter collaris</i>	Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Venezuela
<i>Leucopternis plumbea</i>	Colombia, Ecuador, Panama, Peru
<i>Leucopternis polionota</i>	Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay
<i>Buteo solitarius</i>	United States
<i>Buteo regalis</i>	Canada, Mexico, United States
<i>Morphnus guianensis</i>	Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, French Guyana, Guatemala, Guyanas, Honduras, Panama, Peru, Suriname, Venezuela
<i>Harpia harpyja</i>	Argentina, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, French Guyana, Guatemala, Guyanas, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Suriname, Venezuela
<i>Phalacroboenus australis</i>	Argentina, Chile, Falkland Islands



Plumbeous Forest Falcon (Micrastur plumbeus)

Pauli Salaman/Fundación ProAves

Habitat Loss

The greatest threat faced by raptors today and in the future, throughout the world, is the loss, fragmentation, and degradation of habitats that cause the reduction of the extent and quality of area available for hunting and nesting. In the tropics, deforestation constitutes the greatest threat for these birds and can be considered the greatest worldwide threat facing raptors in coming years owing to the large num-

Recommendations for Conservation of raptors

Public education through conferences, pamphlets, museum exhibitions, and at times live demonstrations of raptors in zoos should be an integral part of the activities undertaken by organizations that wish to demonstrate the importance of the conservation of raptors. Additionally, biologically oriented activities made to protect these species should include habitat management, reintroductions, artificial feeding and monitoring of populations. BirdLife International has been working since 1995 to identify those important international areas for globally threatened, endemic, range restricted, biome restricted or congregatory species. In the Americas, raptors have been included in all of the criteria mentioned above and have been key in the development of a methodology by BirdLife that is based on building of local capacities to conserve biodiversity through the selection and conservation of Important Bird Areas (IBAs) in each country.

Itziar Olmedo (birdlife@birdlife.org.ec).

News from the Americas

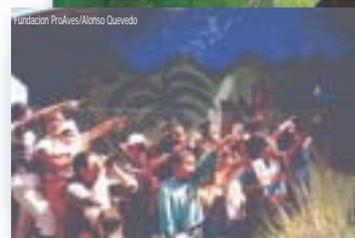
COLOMBIA

Local communities contribute to the conservation of parrots in the Colombian Andes

Since 1998, Fundación ProAves has developed and promoted activities focused on the promotion of threatened parrots such as *Ognorhynchus icterotis*, *Hapalopsittca fuertesi*, *H. amazonina*, *Bolborhynchus ferrugineifrons*, *Pyrrhura viridicata*, *P. calliptera* and *Leptosittaca branickii* through a focus on the protection of their habitats and the unification of local communities in conservation activities to ensure the project's long term sustainability. Along these lines, ProAves and the Asociación Red de Reservas de la Sociedad Civil (a society made up of over 180 reserves distributed throughout the entire country) has been able to establish 8 reserves in the state of Antioquia for a grand total of 13 reserves that protect 2,600 hectares of forests. Additionally, they have achieved a compromise with local small farmers to establish five reserves in the state of Tolima for the protection of 1,200 hectares. These reserves, nominated by Sociedad Civil, are made up of important sections of quality forest habitat whose owners have voluntarily decided to conserve these natural resources. For landowners, to belong to the Reserve Association, means that they can receive technical assistance for the management of their farm (for example, productive agricultural practices

that are friendly to the environment, eco-tourism, etc.) and they can receive legal help to enable them to receive local incentives to conserve and resolve conflicts related to their land holdings. This innovative initiative focusing on the landowners includes the promotion of sustainable agricultural practices and the encouragement of a pro-environment attitude. In other words, a landowner will be happy to keep his land covered with forest for the long-term because they will clearly see the benefit of doing so. ProAves has contacted local authorities and has been able to establish, in the state of Quindío, a 1,300 hectares reserve with the local municipality named as co-manager. In this way, the NGO and the local authorities are working together to protect this natural reserve. A similar process is being undertaken in Tolima to protect 2,000 more hectares.

In these reserves, and in other areas of importance, activities aimed at conserving the parrot have been developed. This includes: the production of tree nurseries by small farmers, the planting of these trees by students who are doing internships at ProAves, the fencing-off of cleared forest patches (to avoid that cows ruin the new growth), the installation of



artificial nests (because of the low incidence of naturally occurring cavities for the parrots), and coordination of workshops aimed at raising awareness among small land owners. The success of these activities would not have been possible without strong, environmental conscious raising efforts and good management; in the end, this has awakened the interest among local land owners to conserve birds and their habitats.

Paul Salaman (salaman@ognorhynchus.com).

AMERICAS

Alliance for Zero Extinction (AZE)

Extinction is a rule of life on earth, but human activities have accelerated this process and have increased the rate of extinction 100 to 1000 times the normal rates that have occurred in past millennia. The member organizations of the Alliance for Zero Extinction (AZE) have defined as their goal to identify the areas that urgently need to be conserved to prevent the immediate extinction of certain species.

AZE focuses its efforts on sites that provide habitat for those mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibians whose ranges and status meet certain, strict criteria. The species should have been named critically threatened or in danger of extinction on the Red List of the IUCN and their global population should be limited to one single functional population in a discrete area. The designated areas contain species that represent the highest risk of species in

danger of extinction and these sites are the priority ones requiring immediate action to avoid future extinctions.

AZE is focused primarily on terrestrial vertebrates. By the end of 2003, they will have systematically evaluated birds, mammals, and amphibians and will turn their attention to other groups like reptiles.

The organizations who make up the alliance include: American Bird Conservancy, BirdLife International, Conservation International, Guyra Paraguay, la Asociación de Conservación de los Ecosistemas Argentinos, Island Conservation and Ecology Group, ProAves Colombia, The Nature Conservancy, Wildlife Conservation Society, Wildlife Trust, World Parks and the World Pheasant Association.

An AZE site should meet the following criteria:

- 1. Endangerment.** Have at least one species classified as Critically Threatened or Endangered as listed by IUCN - World Conservation Union.
- 2. Irreplaceability.** Should only be designated if it is the sole area where an EN or CR species occurs, or contains the overwhelmingly significant known resident population of the EN or CR species, or contains the overwhelmingly significant known population for one life history segment (e.g., breeding or wintering) of the EN or CR species.
- 3. Discreteness.** Have defined limits and the habitats and biological communities inside should have more in common with each other than in the adjacent areas.

Mike Parr (mparr@abcbirds.org), Alliance for Zero Extinction Secretary

News from the Americas

MEXICO

Current state of the Military Macaw in the Oaxaca Gully, 2001-2003

The Military Macaw (*Ara militaris*) is found from the north of Mexico to the northeast of Argentina. In Mexico, it is a resident species of the Pacific Coast and can be found in isolated populations on the Gulf and in the central portion of the country. (Howell and Webb, 1995, Inigo-Elias; 2000).

The total population is estimated at a little over 10,000 individuals (BirdLife International, 2003) but has not been studied extensively. In South America the populations range from just over a few individuals in Ecuador to more than 60 in Peru and Bolivia (Juniper and Parr, 1998; Enkerlin-Hoeflich *et al.* 2000). In Mexico known populations include between 60 and 96 individuals in the Biósfera de Sierra Gorda, Manantlán, El Cielo, and Tehuacán-Cuicatlán (Inigo, Elias 2000; Enkerlin-Hoeflich *et al.*, 2000; Loza-Salas, 1997; Aguilar *et al.* 2003); regardless, this is not a guarantee for their future conservation considering that in the late 80's, 80 individuals were decimated in the Sierra Gorda reserve, Queretaro and in 2002, 50 individuals were killed in Durango (Enkerlin-Hoeflich *et al.*, 2000). The species is considered by IUCN as Vulnerable and is found in CITES, Appendix I and is defined as endangered by the Mexican government (Hilton-Taylor, 2000; CITES, 2003; SEMARNAT, 2002). Since 2001, a study has been underway to investigate and conserve this macaw in the IBA-Biosphere Reserve Tehuacán-Cuicatlán, Oaxaca (see map) which is backed by the Secretaría del Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales and by Instituto Politécnico Nacional.

The historic ranges of the Military Macaw in the region 100 years ago could have occupied an area four times as large as its actual range. The current study has found approximately 100 individuals with 14 reproductive pairs and 22 more potentially

reproductive pairs; thus exhibiting the largest population studied to date (Aguilar *et al.*, 2003).

The nesting was restricted to one canyon in cavities made in the vertical walls of a 100-meter cliff during the months of January to June. The data collected show that at least in the last two years, the reproductive population has remained stable.

The populations shows daily movements from their resting places to the feeding areas and show seasonal migration from the south to the north, exhibiting a marked adherence to the use of certain sites that contain, in total, an approximate area of 740 km². There are two sites where the entire population meets, one to the south of the study area between the months of September and December and another to the north between the months of January and July.

Twenty one plant species have been identified upon which the Military Macaw feeds within the reserve, three of which has been directly or indirectly confirmed but, much data still needs to be obtained dealing with macaw's feeding preferences. The principal threat faced by the Military Macaw is the loss of habitat caused by agricultural activities, infrastructure construction for electricity and hunting which, although slight, is a danger because of the reduced population size.

The results obtained from this project to date, have given way to concrete recommendations for the conservation and management of this species. It has been proposed that local residents be involved in conservation and management actions to ensure success; it has also been proposed that hunting be regulated and environmental education activities be promoted. Future activities include eco-tourism activities and legal action to modify an electricity



project in feeding grounds to prevent damage of this important area.

Authors:

- ^{1,4} Carlos Bonilla-Ruz, ² Gladys Reyes-Macedo, ¹ Remedios Aguilar, ³ Hector Aguilar Reyes y ³ Rufina García
1. Centro Interdisciplinario de Investigación para el Desarrollo Integral Regional unidad Oaxaca. Apdo. Postal 24 Admó. 3, Oaxaca, Oaxaca, Mexico. cbonill@hotmail.com
 2. Instituto Tecnológico Agropecuario de Oaxaca. Exhacienda de Nazareno Xoxocotlán, Oaxaca, Mexico. grema15@hotmail.com
 3. Centro de Investigación y Gestión Ambiental A.C. Calle 25 Mz. 33 No. 7 Fracc. El Rosario, Sta. Lucía del Camino, Oaxaca, Mexico. cigaac@yahoo.com
 4. Becario COFAA

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Events in the Americas



Mexico: Extinction of the Imperial Woodpecker

After 10 years of expeditions in search of the Imperial Woodpecker (*Campephilus imperialis*) undertaken by BirdLife International and by various Mexican organizations, BirdLife has concluded that this species is probably extinct; this was confirmed after a last expedition to Durango in the Sierra Madre Occidental. This woodpecker will be included in the IUCN's Red List of 2004 as Critically Endangered and Possibly Extinct. (david.wege@birdlife.org.uk).



El Salvador: Sustainable Development in Coffee Farming

SalvaNATURA have met their goals of promoting sustainable development in El Salvador as a member of the Sustainable Agriculture Network (RAS) and in the use of the Rainforest Alliance Certified seal in promoting sustainable development in coffee farms thus highlighting the role these areas play as refuges for wildlife. They have found that coffee plantations in El Salvador can provide habitat to more than 188 species of birds. Juan Marco Álvarez (jmalvarez@saltel.net).



Bolivia: Investigation of Rollandia microptera

With the support of George Jet and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), Ari Martinez and Omar Martinez are performing a census of the Short Winged Grebe (*Rollandia microptera*) on Lake Titicaca to determine its distribution range. This species is classified as Near Threatened by BirdLife International. Bennett Hennessey (tangara@unete.com).



Paraguay: Funding for the San Rafael IBA

Guyra Paraguay has obtained \$300,000 USD from the Global Conservation Fund (GCF). This funding will be used in the conservation of the biodiversity and sustainable use of the San Rafael area, one of the largest remaining portions of the Atlantic Forest of Paraguay. Congratulations Guyra! Alberto Yanosky (ayanosky@guyra.org.py).



Canada: In search of Bicknell's Thrush

Bird Studies Canada (BSC) and the High Elevation Landbird Program (HELP) has begun field work in the 2003 season with staff members and volunteers in the high elevations in the north of New Brunswick and Brittany Cape in search of one of the rarest North American birds, the Bicknell's Thrush (*Caetharus bicknelli*). The program hopes to collect data on other species also found at high elevations. <http://www.bsc-eoc.org/organization/bscnews.html>



Dominican Republic: Endemic Bird Festival

As part of the Dominican Republic's Endemic Bird Festival, held between the 22nd April and 22nd May, the Grupo Jaragua, together with other organizations, held nature walks, lectures, exhibitions, photography expositions and other activities focused on endemic species with hopes of raising awareness of the important bird life of the island of Hispanola. Yvonne Arias (ibasdominicanas@yahoo.com).



Brazil: New Species of Owl

A new species of Critically Endangered Pygmy Owl (*Glaucidium mooreorum*) has been discovered in Pernambuco. Adrian Long (adrian.long@birdlife.org.uk).



Argentina: Aves Argentinas in Antarctica

Between March and May 2003, Pablo Reggio and Eduardo Haene worked towards the creation of the "Reception Plan for visitors to Base Esperanza," which models eco-tourism on the harmonious balance of tourism, conservation of wild areas and the development of scientific projects. Esperanza is an Argentinean base in the North of the Antarctic Peninsula. The annual arrival of boats bring 900 tourists to areas that are nesting grounds to 170,000 pairs of penguins. Conserving this international declared natural reserve with the arrival of visitors to witness this spectacle is a challenge. Eduardo Haene (info@avesargentinas.org.ar).

Opportunities

Upcoming Meetings and Events

BirdLife International Americas Regional Partnership Meeting "Climate Change and site conservation in the Americas" (August 23-30, 2003) Asunción, Paraguay
For more information contact Ximena Casares (xcasares@birdlife.org.ec).

Annual Meeting of the Raptors Investigation Foundation (September 3-7, 2003) Anchorage, Alaska
Information at:
<http://www.alaskabird.org/ABORaptorResearchHome.html>

Annual Meeting of the Aquatic Bird Society (September 24-27, 2003) Cuiba, Brasil
Information at: <http://www.nmnh.si.edu/BIRDNET>
or contact Silvia del Lama dsdl@paoer.ufscar.br

Seventh Congress of Neotropical Ornithology (October 5-11, 2003) Parque Nacional Puyehue, Chile
More information can be found on the web site:
<http://www.nocchile.cl>

Second National Workshop of Bolivian IBAs (September 12-13, 2003) Cochabamba
Information from Bennett Hennessey (tangara@unete.com).

First National Workshop of Peruvian IBAs (October 20-24, 2003) Arequipa
Please contact Irma Franke (ifrankej@unmsm.edu.pe).

Fifth National Ornithological Workshop (October 19-24, 2003) Arequipa, Peru
The general information are available at:
www.v-jornadanacionalornitologiaperu.com

VII Mesoamerican Congress of the Society of Conservation Biology. (November 2-7, 2003) Chiapas, Mexico
More information can be found at the society's web site at: <http://www.socmesoamericana.org>

BirdLife International World Conference/ Global Partnership Meeting (March 7-13, 2004) in Durban, Africa
For more information please contact Lisa Canessa (Lisa.Canessa@birdlife.org.uk).

Training

Census and banding of marine and shore birds of the National Park Sanquianga - Pacific Coast of Colombia (up July, 2003)
The CALIDRIS Association has implemented various posts for volunteers (ideally for experience in ornithological work) interested in being a part of a research team to carry out this investigation. For more information and to download the application material, visit:
<http://www.calidris.org.co/voluntarios.htm>

BioAcoustic Workshop (October 20th - November 1st, 2003)
This workshop will be part of the pre-congress activities of the VII Mesoamerican Conference of the Mesoamerican Conservation Biology Society in Tuxtla Gutierrez, Chiapas. All those interested can learn more in the Library of Sounds of Mexico.
<http://www.ecologia.edu.mx/sonidos/cursos.htm>

Funding

British Petroleum Conservation Program
BP announced the recipients of the conservation program's grants. In total, 32 projects in 21 countries for a total of \$565,000 USD were awarded. The winning projects covered themes as diverse as the protection of Andean parrots of Colombia, the monitoring of globally threatened species in Kazajstan to the conservation of marine tortoises in Kenya. Whoever would like to apply for the 2004 program should send in the application form before October 31, 2003. More information on the projects that have been financed can be found at:
<http://conservation.bp.com/applications/default.asp>
If you would like a guide on applying, check out:
<http://conservation.bp.com/pdfs/Guidelines%202004.doc>

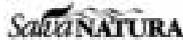
Conservation International's grants for Projects dealing with Threatened species of the Tropical Andes
The program is projected for an initial phase of three years and awards a number of grants whose basic value is \$1,100 USD with a maximum award of up to \$2,500 USD based on the projects characteristics and the conditions of each country. The new program gives grants for study or threatened species conservation in Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia with an emphasis on critically endangered species. 50 grants are available. With 23 species in critical status and 68 endangered species of birds in the region, there are many possible projects.
The end date for applying is April 30th, 2003 and September 30th, 2003. For more information, visit <http://www.andescbc.org>



The American Partnership



Argentina
Aves Argentinas (AOP)
www.avesargentinas.org.ar
info@avesargentinas.org.ar
Partner



El Salvador
Asociación SalvaNatura
www.salvanatura.org
salvanatura@saltel.net
Affiliate



Brazil
Programa del Brasil
Jaqueline Goerck
birdlifebrasil@uol.com.br



United States
National Audubon Society (NAS)
www.audubon.org
Partner designate



Bahamas
Bahamas National Trust
www.bahamasnet.com/w.ecohome.html
bnt@bahamas.net.bs
Affiliate



Falkland Islands
Falklands Conservation
www.falklandsconservation.com
conservation@horizon.co.fk
Affiliate



Belize
Belize Audubon Society
www.belizeaudubon.org
base@btl.net
Partner

HONDURAS

Honduras
Ms. Sherry Thorne
pilar_birds@yahoo.com
Affiliate



Bolivia
Asociación Armonía
www.birdbolivia.com
armonia@scbbs-bo.com
Partner



Jamaica
BirdLife Jamaica
www.birdlifejamaica.com
birdlifeja@yahoo.com
Partner



Canada
Bird Studies Canada
www.bsc-eoc.org
mbradstreet@bsc-eoc.org
Partner



Mexico
Consejo Internacional para la Preservación de las Aves
www.cipamex.org.mx
cipamex@campus.iztacala.unam.mx
Partner designate



Canada
Canadian Nature Federation
www.cnf.ca
cnf@cnf.ca
Partner



Panama
Sociedad Audubon de Panamá
www.panamaaudubon.org
Partner



Chile
Unión de Ornitólogos de Chile (UNORCH)
www.unorch.cl
unorch@entelchile.net
Partner designate



Paraguay
Guyra Paraguay
www.guyra.org.py
guyra@guyra.org.py
Partner designate

CUBA

Cuba
Dr. Martin Acosta
macosta@fbio.uh.cu
Affiliate



Suriname
Foundation for Nature Conservation in Suriname
www.stinasu.sr
stinasu@sr.net
Affiliate



Ecuador
Corporación Ornitológica del Ecuador (CECIA)
www.cecia.org
cecia_de@uio.satnet.net
Partner



Uruguay
Aves Uruguay (GUPECA)
www.avesuruguay.org.uy
gupeca@adinet.com.uy
Affiliate



Venezuela
Sociedad Conservacionista Audubon de Venezuela (SCAV)
www.audubondevenezuela.org
audubondevenezuela@cantv.org
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.

AMERICAS DIVISION

Vicente Cardenas E-5 75 y Japon
TEL : (593-2) 245-3645
227-7399, 227-7497
Fax: (593-2) 227-7059
Casilla 17-17-717, Quito, Ecuador
E-mail: birdlife@birdlife.org.ec

BRAZIL PROGRAM

Alameda Grecia 297, 06474-010 Sao Paulo, Brasil
E-mail: birdlifebrasil@uol.com.br

CARIBBEAN PROGRAM

Wellbrook Court, Girtton Road
Cambridge CB30NA, United Kingdom
E-mail: birdlife@birdlife.org.uk

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Contributions:

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www.birdlife.org