

Birdwatching in Cuba: a need for change

Vladimir Mirabal

A volunteer-run project in Cuba is seeking to raise awareness of birds and increase domestic participation in birdwatching. Here is some of what it has achieved so far.

Cuba is an enticing, exciting birding location, with more species than other Caribbean countries and a high number of endemics (28 species: BirdLife International 2023a). Over half of Cuban vertebrate species are feathered, with 398 bird species so far recorded, grouped across 72 families in 27 orders (González Alonso *et al.* 2012, 2017; Navarro 2022). Of these, 155 species (39%) breed, 47 (12%) species are under some category

of national threat and 67% are migratory (Navarro 2022). According to BirdLife International (2023a), 18 species are globally threatened and 23 Near Threatened. Little wonder then, that Cuba is very much on the map for global birders; six years ago, this magazine published an informative article about where to find the island's most sought-after species (Sharpe 2017).



1 A meeting of Havana birdwatchers, Havana, Cuba, October 2021 (Frank G. Batista).