

Cotinga 23

# Neotropical News



## PAN-AMERICAN

### State of the USA's birds

National Audubon has published the *State of the birds 2004*, a report on the USA's birds which reveals that 30% of species declined significantly between 1966 and 2003. The proportion of grassland birds that declined was particularly high—70%—with, for example, the population of Eastern Meadowlark *Sturnella magna* (an abundant partial migrant to the Neotropics) declining by 66%. The magnitude of declines was very high in worrying numbers of species, another example among Neotropical winterers being the 80% decline (1966–2003) in Cerulean Warbler *Dendroica cerulea*. In response, Audubon advocates improved grassland, forest and wetland protection, stronger pollution controls, partnerships with private landowners, and backyard habitat programmes for homeowners.

- [www.audubon.org/bird/stateofthe-birds/](http://www.audubon.org/bird/stateofthe-birds/) (24 December 2004)
- [www.birdlife.org/news/news/2004/10/state\\_us\\_birds.html](http://www.birdlife.org/news/news/2004/10/state_us_birds.html) (20 December 2004)

### New CD-ROM from BirdLife

*Threatened birds of the world 2004* is available online at [www.birdlife.org/datazone/index.html](http://www.birdlife.org/datazone/index.html). A CD-ROM designed for those in the Neotropical region with difficulty accessing the Internet is available free from the BirdLife Secretariat by e-mailing your postal address to [science@birdlife.org](mailto:science@birdlife.org). By joining a threatened bird discussion forum through the 'Globally Threatened Bird Update' section of the website, you can view discussions on species currently under review and contribute your information and opinion on proposed revisions to the Red Data List. This is a valuable part of BirdLife's programme for updating the Globally Threatened Bird fact sheets.

## CARIBBEAN

### BAHAMAS

#### Kirtland's Warbler on Eleuthera

Last winter was another successful one for the Kirtland's Warbler Training and Research Project in the Bahamas. The Kirtland's Warbler *Dendroica kirtlandii* population is growing thanks to conservation work in the Jack Pine forests of Michigan, and more birds being found on Eleuthera as the skills of trainees increase. At least 60 birds were found at 15 localities in the 2003/04 winter, compared to the 30 known at 12 locations in 2002/03. In addition, birds ringed in the Bahamas have now been observed in Michigan.

- *World Birdwatch* 26 (4): 2 (December 2004)

### BERMUDA

#### Cahow chicks translocated

Ten Bermuda Petrels (Cahow) *Pterodroma cahow* have been translocated from the rocky islets where they were raised to specially constructed concrete nesting burrows on Nonsuch Island. It is hoped that they will establish a colony on the island, which is better protected from high winds and rising sea levels, and holds no introduced predators.

- *World Birdwatch* 26 (3): 5 (September 2004)

### CUBA

#### Threatened Columbiformes project

Proyecto PAIZ has been established through cooperation between the German conservation society, ZGAP, and the Cuban Empresa Flora y Fauna. The remaining populations of Cuba's three threatened columbids, including the endemic Blue-headed Quail-dove *Starnoenas*

*cyanocephala* (Endangered), are being surveyed, particularly within existing protected areas. A rescue and captive-breeding complex will be established in central Cuba, and *in situ* conservation measures will be undertaken, such as an awareness raising campaign.

- Guntram Meier, ZGAP e.V., *in litt.* 2004

### GRENADA

#### Grenada Dove survives

Grenada was devastated by Hurricane Ivan, in autumn 2004, since which initial surveys by the Grenada Dry Forest Biodiversity Conservation Project have confirmed the Critically Endangered Grenada Dove *Leptotila wellsi* has survived.

- *World Birdwatch* 26 (4): 5 (December 2004)

### PUERTO RICO

#### Assistance for Puerto Rican Nightjar

The Puerto Rican Ornithological Society has held workshops for teachers and NGOs to promote the Sierra Bermeja Important Bird Area (IBA). Forty-three participants attended and received materials to take back to their classrooms. Reforestation agreements have also been reached with two private landowners to assist Puerto Rican Nightjar *Caprimulgus noctitherus* (Critically Endangered).

- *World Birdwatch* 26 (4): 5 (December 2004)

### ST VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES

#### New road threatens St Vincent Amazon

The Vulnerable St Vincent Amazon *Amazona guildingii* survives in remnant primary forest on St Vincent, where its population has been gradually recovering due to

20 years of conservation effort by the government. Now that 'exemplary record ... in saving their national bird will be undone' says David Wege, BirdLife International's Caribbean Program Manager. A proposed new road would irreversibly damage part of the forest in the parrot's range and open up the area to marijuana growers (already a severe threat to the species), illegal loggers, and egg and chick thieves. The road would affect other endemic taxa, the island's budding ecotourism industry and an important watershed, and will increase the risk of landslides.

- *World Birdwatch* 26 (4): 9 (December 2004)

#### MIDDLE AMERICA

##### MEXICO

###### Cozumel Thrasher survives

Numbers of Cozumel Thrasher *Toxostoma guttatum* declined dramatically in the wake of Hurricane Gilbert in 1988 and the species had not been seen at all since Hurricane Roxanne struck Cozumel in 1995. An observation, in 2004, by a team from Villanova University and the Mexican counterpart of the Island Endemics Institute, is the first to confirm the continued survival of this Critically Endangered species. Further surveys are being undertaken in January 2005, when the species commences singing, and the considerable tracts of suitable habitat still standing raise hopes that Mexico's most threatened bird may yet recover from the brink of apparent extinction.

- American Bird Conservancy/Conservation International press release (July 2004) [www.abcbirds.org/media/release/cozumel\\_thrasher\\_release.htm](http://www.abcbirds.org/media/release/cozumel_thrasher_release.htm) (24 December 2004)

#### SOUTH AMERICA

##### ARGENTINA

###### Prints for grasslands

Renowned artist Jorge Rodríguez Mata has painted a pair of

Saffron-cowled Blackbirds *Xanthopsar flavus* to help raise funds for conservation. Signed prints of the painting are available for US\$20 plus postage from:

Marisú Lopreiato, Aves Argentinas/AOP, 25 de Mayo 749, 2° piso, Oficina 6, 1002ABO, Buenos Aires, Argentina (e-mail: [lopreiato@avesargentinas.org.ar](mailto:lopreiato@avesargentinas.org.ar)).

- *World Birdwatch* 26 (4): 8 (December 2004)

##### BOLIVIA

###### White-winged Nightjar rediscovered in Bolivia

Sixteen years after a specimen of the Critically Endangered White-winged Nightjar *Eleothreptus candicans* was unwittingly taken in Beni Biological Station, the species has been rediscovered at the site by Tomas Grim, who obtained a photograph of a bird on a termite mound.

- *World Birdwatch* 26 (4): 3 (December 2004)

##### BRAZIL

###### Conserving the caatinga

*Caatinga* is a biome endemic to Brazil: covering over 1,037,518 km<sup>2</sup> (or 12% of the country's land area), these very dry wooded habitats (subject to a semi-desertic climate) stretch discontinuously from northern Minas Gerais north to Maranhão, but in many areas are highly threatened. Whilst the conservation of Amazonian and Atlantic forests, and even *cerrado*, attract public attention, the plight of the *caatinga* has rarely done so. Only 4% of the Brazilian north-east's protected areas incorporate such habitats, despite the *caatinga*'s indisputable biodiversity importance: more than 3,000 plant species (318 endemic) occur there, as do 148 mammals and almost 350 birds, among them such globally threatened flagship species as Lear's Macaw *Andorhynchus leari*. New research and action by the Brazilian government aims to create 82 protected areas within the *caatinga*, whilst the Conselho Nacional de Reserva da Biosfera da Caatinga will also seek oppor-

tunities to recuperate areas already damaged by man, as it is possible to restore such areas through replanting programmes in as little as 15 years.

- *O Globo Revista*, 19 September 2004: 64–67

##### Deforestation in Floresta

###### Nacional do Tapajós

IBAMA (the Brazilian Institute for the Environment and Natural Resources) has revealed that over 3,000 ha of illegal logging took place in the Floresta Nacional do Tapajós in the six months to October 2004. The finding emerged through the institute's six-monthly satellite-image-monitoring programme. Much of the devastation is linked to soya plantation owners, who sell the timber, plant soya and then set in motion a chain of legal procedures in order to safeguard their use of the land.

- Ormano Sousa, [www.amazonia.org.br/noticias/noticia.cfm?id=128601](http://www.amazonia.org.br/noticias/noticia.cfm?id=128601) (20 December 2004)

##### Atlantic Forest corridors in north-east Brazil

BirdLife is working with landowners and sugar producers in north-east Brazil to link up remaining patches of Atlantic Forest through reforestation programmes. Although the agriculturalists recognise the importance of the forest in protecting the water supplies they need, the project will need to find economic alternatives to agriculture in the reforested areas. The reforestation programme has been supported by the Flemish Fund for Tropical Forests, Groenhart and Ministry of the Flemish Community, Administration of Environment, Nature, Land and Water Management, Division of Forests and Green Areas. In the meantime, the remaining forest patches holding Critically Endangered species, such as Alagoas Foliage-gleaner *Philydor novaesi*, are under constant threat of encroachment.

- [www.birdlife.org/news/news/2004/10/brazil\\_green\\_corridors.html](http://www.birdlife.org/news/news/2004/10/brazil_green_corridors.html) (20 December 2004)

**COLOMBIA**

**Serranía de las Quinchas forest purchase**

Colombian NGO ProAves has bought 848 ha of forest in the Serranía de las Quinchas for management as El Paujil Nature Reserve, which takes its name from the Critically Endangered Blue-billed Curassow *Crax alberti* that nests there. The land is part of the last remaining block of humid forest in the Magdalena Valley and holds six Critically Endangered and nine Vulnerable animals. Funding for the purchase was raised through BirdLife International's Rare Bird Club, NBC, the American Bird Conservancy and Conservation International's Global Conservation Fund, and the BP Conservation Programme has awarded a ProAves project, involving Colombian students, universities and local NGOs, US\$17,000 to design a conservation strategy. ProAves' efforts to provide education on conservation have been so well received that a local school has changed its name to El Paujil. Education also forms a key element of plans to secure the reserve's long-term future, since, at five hours from Bogotá and Medellín, the site will be ideal as a field station for research and training, introducing a new source of income to the area.

- *World Birdwatch* 26 (3): 8 (September 2004)

**ECUADOR**

**Buenaventura Forest Reserve land purchase**

A tract of forest favoured by El Oro Parakeet *Pyrrhura orcesi* (Endangered) has been purchased thanks to donations to an appeal, which were matched dollar-for-dollar by Larry & Sara Wan of the Western Alliance for Nature. The land is within the Jocotoco Foundation's Buenaventura Forest Reserve, which is critical to the protection of several threatened bird species.

- *World Birdwatch* 26 (3): 5 (September 2004)

**Oil exploration in Achuar territory**

The government of Ecuador has authorised oil exploration activities in 700,000 ha of Achuar territory. The region has no roads, is inhabited by Achuar peoples who still maintain most of their culture and traditional lifestyles, and economic activity is presently restricted to ecotourism and sustainable projects.

- Andrés Trujillo *in litt.*, 16 November 2004

**Trouble in paradise**

The Galápagos Conservation Trust (GCT) is concerned about the replacement of the respected Edwin Naula by Fausto Cepeda, who becomes the eighth Director of Galápagos National Park within

two years. The appointment is believed to have been political, rather than reflecting technical ability and management skills, the criteria GCT and park wardens would advocate for selection of the director. In order for successful management of the reserve, the directorships should last as long as project life-spans, i.e. around four years. Although essential site protection work continues, the park wardens went on strike in response to these issues and the defaults on many of their pay packages resulting from the Ecuadorian government not transferring funds to Galápagos. Fausto Cepeda was prevented from entering his offices until, on 22 September 2004, he arrived accompanied by 100 fishermen—the implications of which concern GCT. Regrettably, violence broke out with stones and sticks being thrown at the park wardens. The police attempted to calm the situation, but were unsuccessful and had to resort to tear gas. Meanwhile, representatives of Galápagos National Park wardens met with the Minister of the Environment in Quito. It is hoped that a peaceful solution will, by now, have been found and that existing regulations protecting the Galápagos Marine Reserve continue to be enforced.

- Nigel Sitwell, Galápagos Conservation Trust e-news, 23 September 2004

**Advertise with NBC in Cotinga**

Black-and-white advertising rates:

Full page	\$165	£100	14.5	x	20.5	cm
Half page	\$100	£60	14.5	x	10	cm
Quarter page	\$65	£40	7	x	10	cm

Colour advertising is also available in conjunction with fully acknowledged colour sponsorship. Space is also available for short classified advertisements at \$5 (£3) per line (average 6 words) with boxed entries (minimum 2cm2) at \$16 (£10) per cm2, \$2 (£1) extra per insertion. Copy deadlines are 15 December (February issue) and 15 June (August issue). Please post early to avoid disappointment.

All advertisements must be sent prepaid (cheques made payable to the Neotropical Bird Club) to:

Advertising Officer, The Neotropical Bird Club,  
c/o The Lodge, Sandy, Bedfordshire, SG19 2DL, UK