The Latin American Bird Reserve Network

Stopping Extinction in Its Tracks
AMERICAN BIRD CONSERVANCY (ABC)

was founded in 1994, and is the only not-for-profit organization that works solely to conserve native wild birds and their habitats throughout the Americas. ABC acts to safeguard the rarest birds, conserve habitat for declining species, eliminate threats to bird populations, develop innovative solutions to conservation problems, and to build capacity in the bird conservation movement.

ABC tracks all bird issues, responds rapidly to the highest conservation priorities, and works constructively with stakeholders to seek win-win solutions that will be effective in the long-term. ABC takes a flexible approach to problem solving, and its programs range from land purchase and restoration to advocacy and education.

To help develop the reserve network, ABC identifies priority sites, provides technical support and training, raises funds, monitors and evaluates the progress of conservation action at each site, and provides project management assistance to partners. ABC’s goal is to expand the reserve network to conserve all endangered bird species in the Americas, for each reserve to attain ABC’s Gold Standard of Operational Excellence, and to achieve long-term financial sustainability.

www.abcbirds.org

PHOTOGRAPHIC CAPTIONS

After each bird species’ name we state whether it is an Alliance for Zero Extinction (AZE) species (see page 107); we include its IUCN status (CR: critically endangered; EN: endangered; VU: vulnerable; NT: near-threatened; LC: least concern); if it is a country endemic or probable endemic (prob.) the country; and the number of ABC-supported reserves where the species occurs.
The Latin American Bird Reserve Network
Protecting 35 Reserves, >250,000 Acres, >2,000 Species

STOPPING EXTINCTION IN ITS TRACKS

Marvelous Spatuletail (AZE, EN, Peru, 1): Roger Ahlman
**KEY**

**BIRDS**
1. White-tufted Sunbeam
2. Ash-breasted Tit-tyrant
3. White-browed Tit-spinetail
4. Royal Cincodes
5. Andean Condor
6. Gray-breasted Seedsnipe
7. flamingoes (could be Chilean, James's, or Andean)
8. Streaked Tuftedcheek
9. Golden-plumed Parakeet
10. Andean Cock-of-the-Rock
11. Golden-headed Quetzal
12. Flame-faced Tanager
13. Golden Tanager
14. Masked Flowerpiercer
15. Purple-throated Sunangel
16. Barred Antthrush
17. Sword-billed Hummingbird
18. Green Jay
19. Barred Fruiteater
20. Pale-naped Brush-finch

**MAMMALS**
1. Vicuña
2. Llama
3. Andean Fox

**HABITAT and PLANTS**
1. *Polylepis* woodland
2. Puna grassland (bunchgrass)
3. Cloud forest
4. Bromeliad

**OTHER ITEMS**
1. Reforestation
2. Ecoodge
3. Deforestation
4. Parrot nest box
5. Melting glaciers

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This Huichol yarn painting was produced by indigenous Mexican communities in the area of El Carricito. The painting is inspired by the Peyote ritual and produced with colored yarn embedded in beeswax. Animals are totemic to the Huichol people, and every young man has a feather or part of a pelt of his spirit animal tied to his traditional hat. The spirit animal comes to him in a dream. This bird represents the spiritual connection that the communities have with the land and biodiversity. Photo: Mike Parr

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ABC's goal is to expand the reserve network to conserve all endangered bird species in the Americas, for each reserve to attain ABC’s Gold Standard of Operational Excellence, and to achieve long-term financial sustainability.
Thank You!

American Bird Conservancy and its partners are deeply grateful to the donors who are helping to build the Latin American Bird Reserve Network. We are especially grateful to the Jeniam Foundation, the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, Alan Weeden, Robert Wilson, Jeff and Connie Woodman, and our partners Conservation International and the World Land Trust. Each of these individuals and organizations have provided very significant support, without which this entire effort would have been greatly diminished.

We would also like to extend our thanks to the Beneficia Foundation, the Regina Bauer Frankenberg Foundation, the Garfield Foundation, and to Joan Hero, for supporting American Bird Conservancy’s work on the Alliance for Zero Extinction, which has been the science bedrock behind our reserve selection process.

Thanks also to Josep del Hoyo and Lynx Edicions for allowing us to use the fantastic illustrations from the Handbook of the Birds of the World (www.hbw.com) in the Quick Facts boxes, to the many photographers who have allowed us to use their work for this book (see credits on individual images), and to the artist Chris Vest, who created the marvelous vistas of the Andes and Brazilian Atlantic forest.

This book provides a snapshot in time, describing the reserve network as it stands in 2009. We anticipate adding additional reserves and expanding existing ones as we move forward with our conservation work. For example, we have just received stop press news that the first ABC-supported reserve in the Caribbean has been finalized (see p. 88), and we are also currently working on two new reserves in Bolivia. Ultimately, we aim to protect a significant population of every endangered bird species in the Americas as a contribution to the future of biodiversity on Earth.

We look forward to working with you to accomplish this goal.

George H. Fenwick, PhD.
President
American Bird Conservancy
The Latin American Bird Reserve Network

The creation of the bird reserve network featured in this book was made possible through an extraordinary collaboration between conservation groups, government agencies, and financial supporters. Although American Bird Conservancy (ABC) played a role in conserving each of the 35 featured reserves, the scale of that role varied, but in all cases, the lion’s share of the credit must go to the donors and to the implementing partners, without whom none of this would have been possible.

The 35 current reserves span 12 countries, protecting habitat from sea level to above the Andean tree line. From coastal flats to cloud forests, from the seasonally flooded savannas of Bolivia to Brazil’s Atlantic Forests and the short-grass prairies of northern Mexico, the network spans some 3,000 miles north to south, and a similar distance east to west. The total land area under conservation management, including reserves, associated easements, and other lands managed for conservation is presently 260,403 acres. Five of the reserves have already gained official endorsement by the respective national governments, adding an additional layer of protection. This status is pending for several more.

In total, 2,025 bird species have so far been recorded from the reserves (some reserves have only been partly surveyed to date). This is nearly half of the bird species recorded from the entire Americas. Of these species, 14 are considered critically endangered under IUCN-World Conservation Union criteria, 44 are considered to be endangered, 80 vulnerable, and 107 near-threatened. This is more than a quarter of all threatened bird species in the Americas.

One hundred and forty-eight of the birds are endemic to single countries, and many of these are further restricted to tiny areas or unique habitats. Two hundred and thirty two of the species are neotropical migrants. Seven of the very rarest species are already showing measurable population increases due to management actions. Habitat loss for many others has been halted, and habitat is already being expanded through reforestation at twelve of the reserves.

Seventeen of the reserves protect Alliance for Zero Extinction (AZE) sites (see page 107). Each of these AZE sites is selected to protect the last known location for one or more of the world’s most endangered species (those classified as either endangered or critically endangered according to IUCN). These 17 AZE reserves protect more than one quarter of all Latin American bird-triggered AZE sites, and provide habitat for 25 of the 78 AZE bird species from the region (several sites have multiple AZE species). Two of the reserves are also home to a combined total of seven AZE frog species. It is estimated that there may be 2,000,000 total animal and plant species represented in the reserves.
Enough clean fresh rainwater falls on the reserves each year to provide for the annual needs of more than one million people. These watershed forests also control erosion and siltation, reduce landslides and flooding, help to regulate local climates, protect downstream fisheries, and ensure a reliable source of irrigation for agriculture and pastures on the slopes below.

Sufficient carbon is stored in the reserves’ forests to offset the annual CO₂ footprint of more than 800,000 Americans. A new study by Dr. Frank W. Larsen of Conservation International confirms that AZE sites are not only extremely important as watersheds and carbon stores, but that they also exhibit especially high diversity among rare human languages and wildlife genera, indicating that they are also important for indigenous cultures and potentially for the discovery of new medicines.

So far, partners have planted 1,022,000 native trees to restore habitat and create reserve buffer zones. Several of the reserves lie adjacent to large public protected areas, helping to create corridors of wildlife habitat across the wider landscape. These reserves also encourage the development of regional ecotourism, and their staff collaborate in the conservation of the public parks (such as through joint guard training programs).

Several of the reserves are already on their way to financial self-sufficiency, and seventeen have accommodation for birding or nature tourists. The Vilcanota Reserve Network in southern Peru is developing an endowment fund for community conservation projects, Abra Patricia in northern Peru is to be the site for a model carbon finance project, and the Cerulean Warbler Reserve in Colombia owns and manages a coffee plantation with profits paying for reserve staff and maintenance costs. Several reserves are implementing green technologies such as solar panels, fuel-efficient stoves, and micro-hydro projects. We have directly created more than 300 conservation-related jobs, and provided training in ecotourism, reforestation, and handicrafts) and other benefits (such as fuel-efficient stoves) for more than 7,000 local people.

The total land value of the reserve system is estimated to be more than $25 million, based on comparable prices paid by ABC and its partners for titled land across Latin America (averaging $110 per acre). However, the actual cost was considerably less, thanks to a number of conservation management agreements with local authorities and communities that have allowed the partners to protect far more land than has been purchased outright. It is the policy of ABC and its partners to pay fair market value for all purchased properties.

This small golden figurine of a toucan was found near Santa Marta, Colombia. It is likely a bell that would have been attached to the costume of a traditional Tairona dancer whose culture flourished in this area from AD 800 until the Spanish conquest. Photo: Fundación ProAves, www.proaves.org
USING THIS BOOK
This book provides information on each of the 35 Latin American reserves that ABC has supported. This includes a list of globally threatened birds (and other interesting wildlife where known) per site, a description of visitor facilities, and details on conservation projects underway. Reserves appear alphabetically by country. Each account also includes a descriptive text written by an ABC staff member or close partner, which we hope will capture the flavor of the site for potential visitors.

More details on the sites can be found at ABC’s website: www.abcbirds.org; the Conservation Birding website: www.conservationbirding.org; or by contacting ABC at 1–888–BIRDMAG. A list of major supporters appears with each reserve, and a list of ABC donors also appears at the back of the book, along with partner details. Bird species included are those recognized by IUCN-World Conservation Union.

BIRD SPECIES IN THE AMERICAS - 4,415 TOTAL

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CR: critically endangered
EN: endangered
VU: vulnerable
NT: near-threatened
LC: least concern
Enough clean fresh rainwater falls on the reserves each year to provide for the annual needs of more than one million people.
Can the reserves save the rare species they are designed to protect?

It is widely believed that small populations of rare species frequently reach a “point of no return” where their remaining habitat is too small to support their long-term survival, and that genetic “bottlenecking” will cause problems for any animals that might remain. This is by no means universally true.

Take for example the Aleutian subspecies of the Cackling Goose. After fur trappers introduced foxes to the Aleutian Islands, these once abundant geese became increasingly rare, until by the early 1960s they were feared extinct. After just 800 birds were rediscovered in 1962, an intensive program to remove foxes helped the species recover to the point that today, management measures are being considered to contain the growing population. Species such as the Whooping Crane and Laysan Duck have recovered from even smaller populations—approximately fifteen individuals in the case of the crane, and perhaps fewer than seven in the case of the duck. There are many more examples.

While the ability of species to rebound from reduced populations provides hope for birds such as parrots and curassows that have been trapped or hunted, others, such as many passerine birds protected by the reserves, have never occupied large tracts of habitat. The high Andes for example, are characterized by ecosystems that occupy niches across the altitudinal transect. Unlike Harpy Eagles and other wide-ranging Amazonian species, birds that inhabit these high altitude zones, such as some antpittas, hummingbirds, and tanagers, have evolved in patchworks of forest, páramo, and areas cleared by landslides. Territory sizes for such species can be as small as a few acres, so that a single reserve can support hundreds of pairs.

It has also been suggested that small reserves will be more vulnerable to climate change than larger areas. While experts disagree on the precise effects that climate will have on Andean forests, most believe that the current tree line will eventually move higher. The Andes have experienced a number of cooling and warming events associated with past glaciations, yet pollen core studies show that they have remained forested for millennia. While climate change will likely affect these reserves in the future, it will affect much larger protected areas too. Ultimately, it is not size of the area that is critical, but whether the ecosystem and its species are able to adapt to change. In the case of the Andes, protecting habitat at various altitudes, connecting reserves in corridors, and reforesting critical areas is the key to ensuring maximum survivability for each ecosystem. Habitat loss is a more imminent threat to most species, and if we do not act now to secure habitats, it will make little difference if we are able to stem or mitigate the impacts of climate change in the future, since many species will already have become extinct due to habitat destruction.

Ultimately, we must protect the best and most representative biodiversity currently found on our planet and pass it on to the next generation with all the knowledge, skills, and passion that we can. We must also encourage our children to take responsibility for preserving all life on Earth. This network of reserves will be an important part of our generation’s legacy to them.
Andean reserves are shown as an example due to the wide range of elevations and habitats they represent. The Andean reserves cover the full altitudinal transect of ecosystems, including significant tracts of habitat above the current tree line, providing a measure of resiliency against future climate changes.
GLOBALLY THREATENED BIRD SPECIES FOUND in the RESERVE SYSTEM

Species are listed taxonomically within threat category, starting from critically endangered (CR) through endangered (EN) to vulnerable (VU).
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Gold-plumed Parakeets (VU, 3): Franco Morocho

Three-toed Jacamar (VU, Brazil, 1): Nick Athanas/Tropical Birding
**Bird-Triggered AZE Sites in Latin America**

Countries are arranged alphabetically, and sites are arranged alphabetically within them. **Trigger Species** refers to the Alliance for Zero Extinction (AZE) species for which the site has been selected. **Other ABC Conservation Action** includes both species in ABC-supported reserves, and those which ABC works to conserve at other locations.

1. Not recently recorded in the wild.
2. Currently exists only in captivity.
3. Originally at one site, since found at more.
4. Protects two AZE sites.
5. Introduced at Guapí Assu.

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**Color Key**

This is provided as a guide to indicate the status of field conservation efforts per species.

- **Red:** Most urgent need for new action
- **Orange:** Urgent need for new action
- **Green:** Need for expanded conservation

![Isla Robinson Crusoe (AZE, CR, Peru, 1) - ECOAN](image)
<table>
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<th>Country</th>
<th>Site Name</th>
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¹: Endemic to the site

Juan Fernandez Firecrown (AZE, CR, Chile, 1): Peter Hodum
Long-whiskered Owlet (AZE, EN, Peru, 1): ECOAN
Reserve Locations - Mexico and Central America

**Mexican Reserves**
1. Thick-billed Parrot Reserve
2. El Cercado *AZE*
3. Mitsubishi Shorebird Reserve
4. El Carricito

**Central American Reserves**

**Guatemala**
1. Sierra de las Minas

**Honduras**
1. Honduran Emerald *AZE*
   Management Area

**El Salvador**
1. Río Sapo

**Costa Rica**
1. Osa Peninsula *AZE*

**Panama**
1. Audubon El Chorogo
**Reserve Locations - South America**

**Colombia**
1. El Dorado
2. Arrierito Antiqueno
3. Pauxi Pauxi
4. Cerulean Warbler
5. Cucarachero de Chicamocha
6. Colibrí del Sol
7. El Paujil
8. Parrot Corridor
9. Mirabilis-Swarovski

**Ecuador**
1. Río Canande
2. Río Silanche
3. Yanacocha
4. Narupa
5. Yunguilla
6. Buenaventura
7. Jorupe
8. Utuana
9. Tapichalaca

**Peru**
1. Abra Patricia
2. Huembo
3. Vilcanota

**Bolivia**
1. Barba Azul Nature Reserve

**Brazil**
1. Canudos
2. Stresemann's Bristlefront
3. Guapi Assu

**Paraguay**
1. San Rafael

**Key**
- **Lodge**
- **Canopy Tower**
- **Basic accommodation**
- **Trails**
- **Tree nursery/ reforestation**
- **Alliance for Zero Extinction site**
Barba Azul Nature Reserve

Quick Facts

Date established: 2008
Location: Beni Department, Bolivia (13° S, 66° W)
Elevation: 500 feet
Flagship species: Blue-throated Macaw
Habitat: Seasonally flooded savanna with palm forest islands
Partner/owner: Asociacion Armonia
Current size: 8,783 acres
Target size: 15,000 acres
Bird list: 222 species
Threatened: Four
Endemic: One
Visitor facilities: None so far
Best time to visit: June to October
Jobs created: One so far

Reserve and biodiversity summary: This reserve protects a tract of seasonally flooded palm savanna in the lowlands of northeastern Bolivia. It provides nesting and foraging habitat for 20% of the world’s critically endangered Blue-throated Macaws (the highest global concentration of the species). Three other globally threatened birds are found here: the Cock-tailed Tyrant, Sharp-tailed Tyrant, and Black-masked Finch. Greater Rheas and Giant Anteaters patrol the grasslands, and Orinoco Geese can be found on small pools and ephemeral wetlands.

Major supporters: Warren and Cathy Cooke, David and Patricia Davidson, Cathy and George Leder, Marybeth Sollins, Lucy Waletzky, Weiden Foundation, Lynn and Stuart White, Robert Wilson, World Land Trust-US.
Waiting at dawn as the light mist rises off the savanna, the excitement is beginning to build. You came a long way to this place, and any minute now you will see one of the world’s rarest and most spectacular macaws for the first time. You hear a distant indistinct sound, it could be a macaw, or perhaps the groaning of some unseen and unknown mammal. Then in the still twilight, an unforgettable moment as two long-winged, long-tailed parrots fly from one palm to another right in front of you. The sunrise does the rest as you enjoy amazing close-up views. Soon you’ll be able to fly straight to the reserve to see this, one of the world’s rarest birds.

—Mike Parr

This site protects 20% of the world’s Blue-Throated Macaws.

Cock-tailed Tyrant (VU, 2): Peter Morris

Rufous-tailed Jacamar (LC, 8): Greg Lavaty

Blue-throated Macaw (CR, Bolivia, 1): Joe Tobias
Quick Facts

Date established: 1993
Location: Interior of northern Bahia State, Brazil (10° S, 39° W)
Elevation: 1,300 feet
Flagship species: Lear’s Macaw
Habitat: Arid red sandstone canyons with caatinga and licuri palms
Partner/owner: Fundação Biodiversitas
Current size: 3,611 acres
Target size: 3,611 acres
Bird list: 98 species
Threatened: One
Endemic: Eight
Visitor facilities: Basic accommodation
Best time to visit: Any time of year
Jobs created: Five

Reserve and biodiversity summary: This is one of the only two nesting sites for the endangered Lear’s Macaw (AZE - since the two populations intermingle). Thanks to conservation measures, the known global population of the macaw has increased approximately tenfold to more than 900 since the nesting grounds were discovered and subsequently protected. Conservation measures include patrols to reduce macaw poaching, and the planting of macaw food plants.

Red and blue is a great color combination. A flock of a hundred big, deep blue Lear’s Macaws perched on their red sandstone nesting cliffs is an even better combination. The cliffs at Canudos Biological Station, where about half the world’s population of the macaw nests and roosts, are spectacular in their own right. The deep red sandstone canyons are eroded into striking, odd forms, clothed in caatinga scrub. Add to the scene a band of solid indigo macaws, not quite the world’s largest but near it, and the scene becomes enchanting. The macaws scream from their roosts before dawn, and begin to circle and visit to chat with their friends and family in the early light, their calls beating against the vaulty heaven high over our heads.

—David Wiedenfeld

The Macaw population has grown more than tenfold, and was downlisted from critically endangered to endangered as a result.
Quick Facts

Date established: 2001
Location: Upper Guapiaçu River basin adjacent to Três Picos State Park, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (22° S 42° W)
Elevation: 100-720 feet
Flagship species: Red-billed Curassow
Habitat: Tropical Atlantic forest
Partner/owner: Reserva Ecológica de Guapi Assu
Current size: 16,000 acres
Target size: 26,000 acres
Bird list: 433 species
Threatened: 12
Endemic: 51
Visitor facilities: Lodge, trail system
Best time to visit: April to December
Jobs created: 25

Reserva Ecológica de Guapi Assu

Reserve and biodiversity summary: This is a large remnant of Brazilian Atlantic forest. The site hosts twelve globally threatened birds: the Red-billed Curassow (recently reintroduced at this site), Black-fronted Piping-guan, White-necked Hawk, Brown-backed Parrotlet, Golden-tailed Parrotlet, Bare-throated Bellbird, Russet-winged Spadebill, White-bearded Antshrike, Salvadorí’s Antwren, Buffy-fronted Seedeater, Temminck’s Seedeater, and Black-backed Tanager.

So nice to come back from a great day’s birding to a meal, warm shower, and maybe even a dip in the pool. The best part, though, is having spent your day in one of the finest remnants of the fast-disappearing Atlantic forest of Brazil, and only a couple of hours from Rio! And the birds are great, no mistake about it. Yes, Hooded Berryeater (it is a real bird)—that’s a good one. How about the Brazilian Ruby? The hiking can be steep, but oh, so worth it. These birds are only from the Atlantic forest, nowhere else. This is a beautiful place to find them.

— David Wiedenfeld

51 endemics – the most for any reserve in the system; most total species of any reserve.

Black-backed Tanager (VU, prob. Brazil, 1): Elise Rotenberg, Ubatuba, Brazil

Hooded Berryeater (NT, Brazil, 1): Nick Athanas/Tropical Birding

Spot-billed Toucanet (LC, 3): Nick Athanas, Tropical Birding
Quick Facts

Date established: 2007
Location: On the border between the state of Minas Gerais and Bahia, Brazil (15°S, 40°W)
Elevation: 2,300-3,000 feet
Flagship species: Stresemann’s Bristlefront, Yellow-breasted Capuchin monkey
Habitat: Tropical Atlantic forest
Partner/owner: Fundação Biodiversitas
Current size: 1,468 acres
Target size: To be determined
Bird list: 245 species
Threatened: 17
Endemic: 37
Visitor facilities: None so far
Best time to visit: May to September
Jobs created: Two

Reserve and biodiversity summary: This reserve protects a key fragment of northeast Brazilian Atlantic forest. This is the only currently known site for the critically endangered Stresemann’s Bristlefront (AZE), and a key site for the Yellow-breasted Capuchin monkey. Sixteen other globally threatened bird species are found here: the White-necked Hawk, Blue-throated Parakeet, Brown-backed Parrotlet, Red-browed Amazon, Hook-billed Hermit, Three-toed Jacamar, Black-headed Berryeater, Banded Cotinga, Bare-throated Bellbird, Bahia Tyrannulet, Fork-tailed Pygmy-tyrant, Plumbeous Antvireo, Band-tailed Antwren, Bahia Spinetail, Striated Softtail, and Pink-legged Graveteiro. The site has 37 national endemics.

This is a wet place, and the bamboo grows thick and slippery with moss. The trees here are big, some of the last in this area. We’re looking for the Stresemann’s Bristlefront. That’s a tapaculo—a real skulker. It’s hard to notice birds, here in the rain, all the leaves shivering under the drips. Don’t forget to look up sometimes, though—look, there went a Banded Cotinga! That’s nice….but we’re here for the bristlefront, because it can be found only here. Oops, slippery spot in the trail. Drip down my neck doesn’t help the concentration. Movement. Was it? Something dark; it could have been. There it goes again – it is! Let’s get a better look. Around behind those fallen branches – sneak closer, around the trunk. There it is! Good ID. Now we can find a dry spot….and start looking up again.

—David Wiedenfeld

This site most likely has the most threatened species per acre in the Americas.
Reserve and biodiversity summary: This reserve protects a beautiful patch of subtropical forest in the central Andes. The site hosts seven globally threatened bird species: the Black Tinamou, Chestnut-capped Piha (AZE), White-mantled Barbet, Cerulean Warbler, Red-bellied Grackle, Black and Gold Tanager, and Multicolored Tanager. Conservation measures include a reforestation program.

What would it be like to discover a previously undescribed bird species? Not many people know, but some of them were on a 2007 birding tour to one of ProAves’ reserves in the Santa Marta mountains. It is a rare event—the birding equivalent of getting two holes in one on the same day, or winning the lottery twice. If it is ever going to happen to you, it will probably be at a place like the Arrierito Antoqueño Bird Reserve, where the Chestnut-capped Piha hid from ornithologists for more than a century. Parts of Colombia, now safe to visit, are still among the least explored areas for birds on Earth. Even if you don’t have months to spend in the field, you could still be part of such a discovery at a reserve like this.

—Mike Parr

The flagship species was only discovered in 2001; what other mysteries remain to be uncovered?
Quick Facts

Date established: 2005
Location: Serranía de las Yariguíes, Río Chucurí basin of Santander, Colombia (6° N, 73° W)
Elevation: 5,250-8,200 feet
Flagship species: Cerulean Warbler and Gorgeted Wood-quail
Habitat: Subtropical and montane Colombian oak forest
Partner/owner: Fundación ProAves
Total size: 545 acres with 180 acres of adjacent easements
Target reserve size: 2,960 acres
Bird list: 386 species
Threatened: Ten
Endemic: Seven
Visitor facilities: Lodge, trail system
Best time to visit: November to June
Jobs created: 45

Reserve and biodiversity summary: The reserve protects an important piece of oak forest, and also includes a 45-acre coffee plantation with profits paying for reserve management. The site hosts ten globally threatened bird species: the Gorgeted Wood-Quail (AZE), Rusty-faced Parrot, Chestnut-bellied Hummingbird, Black Inca, White-mantled Barbet, Recurve-billed Bushbird, Upper Magdalena Tapaculo, Cerulean Warbler, Mountain Grackle (AZE), and Turquoise Dacnis. Conservation measures include a reforestation program partly funded by ecotourism and coffee production.

Although you were able to enjoy an in-flight movie and beverage service on your way here, the tiny ball of feathers with which you share this forest enjoyed no such luxury, confronting predators, storms, sea crossings, confusing lights and buildings, and pesticides. It is really remarkable that the Cerulean Warbler made it here at all, but they are tough little birds for such dainty and beautiful creatures. Imagine as you fly home if you had to fly under your own power the whole way at 40 miles per hour. With our conservation help, Cerulean Warblers will still be doing that when our children’s children come to watch them.

—Sara Lara

First South American reserve for a neotropical migrant. Reserve operations are paid for by an operating coffee farm.


Black Inca (VU, Colombia, 2): Fundación ProAves, www.proaves.org

Cerulean Warbler (VU, 8): Frode Jacobsen

**Colibrí del Sol Bird Reserve**

**Reserve and biodiversity summary:** Lush montane cloud forest, páramo, and upland lakes. The reserve plays host to three globally threatened bird species: the Rusty-faced Parrot, Dusky Starfrontlet, and Chestnut-bellied Flowerpiecer. Two new bird species to science were recently discovered at the reserve and are being described.

**Major supporters:** George and Rita Fenwick, Joan Hero, Jeniam Foundation.

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**Quick Facts**

**Date established:** 2005

**Location:** Páramo de Frontino, northwest Antioquia, Colombia (7°N, 76°W)

**Elevation:** 9,000-12,800 feet

**Flagship species:** Dusky Starfrontlet

**Habitat:** Upper montane cloud forest and páramo

**Partner/owner:** Fundación ProAves

**Total size:** 11,322 acres

**Target reserve size:** 19,760 acres

**Bird list:** 180 species (anticipated, not yet fully surveyed)

**Threatened:** Three

**Endemic:** Two

**Visitor facilities:** Lodge, trail system

**Best time to visit:** June to September and December to March

**Jobs created:** Three
Mountains have their secrets. Climbing up the 300 steps cut by our guide Luis through dense cloud forest draped with ferns and wet with mist, we emerged onto one, the Páramo of the Sun. This is a fairy land of strange-shaped plants — the woolly espeletia with its rosette patterns, cushion plants, and dwarf bamboos. Scattered along the crest of mountain ridges, páramos often hold unique species, and this site had kept its secret until recently — an iridescent hummingbird called the Dusky Starfrontlet that lives only here. We search for the bird in this area of discovery and beauty, as well as another secret of these mountains — a rare antpitta, yet to be named, as modestly colored in brown and gray as the hummingbird is brilliant, an inhabitant of the forest floor. In the same way that some Asian cultures offer part of each meal to the mountain spirits, I feel touched by the mountain’s presence, and now privileged to have experienced some of its secrets.

—Byron Swift

The reserve facilities are powered by a micro-hydro plant at the most magnificent volcanic massif in Colombia.
Quick Facts

Date established: 2009
AZE: Yes
Location: Chicamocha valley, Eastern Cordillera of central Colombia (6° N, 73° W)
Elevation: 1,000-7,000 feet
Flagship species: Niceforo’s Wren
Habitat: Dry forest
Partner/owner: Fundación ProAves
Total size: 3,217 acres
Target reserve size: 9,800 acres
Bird list: 165 species
Threatened: Two
Endemic: Five
Visitor facilities: Lodge
Best time to visit: All year
Jobs created: Two

Cucarachero de Chicamocha
Bird Reserve

Reserve and biodiversity summary: A unique area of dry forest in the eastern Andes of Colombia. The reserve hosts two globally threatened birds: the Chestnut-bellied Hummingbird, and the Niceforo’s Wren (AZE). The rare Chicamocha cavanillesia tree also occurs here.

Major supporters: Robert Wilson, World Land Trust-US.
I lost the gold pen and pencil my father gave me before he died. He’d used them every day for the forty years of his career and wanted me to have them. By the time he retired I mostly used a keyboard, so I really didn’t need them as much as he did. I put them in a nice wooden box, but when we moved they must have gotten lost in the shuffle. When I came to look for them again they were gone. In a way, the critically endangered Niceforo’s Wren is the human race’s version of that pen and pencil. Somewhere along the way we picked up the responsibility to look after it, but we didn’t need it all that much, so we didn’t really pay much attention. One day we’ll remember it though and someone will come looking. Will it still be there? Did anyone care enough to make sure it didn’t get lost in the shuffle? You bet they did.

— Mike Parr

Like most of the flagship species in this book, the Niceforo’s Wren was not found in any protected area until this private reserve was created.
Quick Facts

Date established: 2006
Location: Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, northern Colombia (10° N, 73° W)
Altitude: 3,100-8,500 feet
Flagship species: Santa Marta Parakeet
Habitat: Montane cloud forest
Partner/owner: Fundación ProAves
Total size: 1,729 acres
Target reserve size: 6,900 acres
Bird list: 364 species
Threatened: 11
Endemic: 17
Visitor facilities: Lodge, trail system
Best time to visit: All year
Jobs created: 18

Reserve and biodiversity summary: This reserve protects the key forest tract in the isolated Santa Marta massif known for its threatened endemics. The site hosts eleven globally threatened birds: the Black-fronted Wood-quail, Military Macaw, Santa Marta Parakeet (AZE), Santa Marta Sabrewing (AZE), Blossomcrown, Santa Marta Bush-tyrant (AZE), Santa Marta Antpitta, Rusty-headed Spinetail, Santa Marta Wren, Cerulean Warbler, and Santa Marta Warbler. In 2007, participants on an ABC birding tour discovered a new species of screech-owl here. There are also four species of AZE amphibians found in the reserve. Conservation measures include a successful artificial nest box program for the parakeet, and a reforestation program.

I am standing inside one of those spectacular scenes you see on postcards that you send your friends to make them envious. From my mountaintop roost, tendrils of cloud swirl around my feet as I gaze from my bedroom porch at the Jeniam Lodge and watch the sun set upon the world-famous Santa Marta beaches and resorts, forming a crescent of lights far below. I am not even a little tempted to leave the cloud forest paradise I find myself in, with its cooler temperatures, no biting insects, and world-class birding and nature viewing opportunities, to play in the surf. In an hour, I have a date with fellow birders to walk down the wide trail listening, looking and hoping for a glimpse of the newly discovered Santa Marta Screech Owl, or the troop of night monkeys that frequent the trees surrounding the lodge. It is hard to believe that over a four-day weekend I have amassed a list of well over 200 species – old friends (Blackburnian Warblers, Rose-breasted Grosbeaks) and new (Santa Marta Parakeet, Band-tailed Guan). I leave tomorrow and will have to plan another trip to see the other 160 species. Who has time to swim?

—Rita Fenwick

The most endemic species for any reserve outside of Brazil’s Atlantic Forest.

*Eleuchia longwing butterfly: George Jett*
Quick Facts

Name: El Paujil Bird Reserve
Date established: 2004
Location: Serranía de las Quinchas, Magdalena Valley, Colombia (6° N, 74° W)
Elevation: 500-2,600 feet
Flagship species: Blue-billed Curassow
Habitat: Lowland tropical forest
Partner/owner: Fundación ProAves
Total size: 12,441 acres
Target reserve size: 51,900 acres
Bird list: 330 species
Threatened: Five
Endemic: Five
Visitor facilities: Lodge, trail system
Best time to visit: All year
Jobs created: 35

Reserve and biodiversity summary: This is a critically important forest remnant in the now largely deforested Magdalena Valley. The site hosts five globally threatened bird species: the Blue-billed Curassow (AZE), White-mantled Barbet, Antioquia Bristle-tyrant, Cerulean Warbler, and Turquoise Dacnis. Other threatened species include the variegated spider-monkey, South American tapir, spectacled bear, and the Magdalena bocachico fish. Conservation measures include an anti-hunting campaign aimed at protecting the curassow, which has resulted in a 20% annual population increase.

Major supporters: John Baur, Magalen O. Bryant, Anthony Collerton, Warren and Cathy Cooke, Donald and Jackie Dann, Sally Davidson, Robert Giles, Gulf Coast Bird Observatory, Dr. Gwenda Brewer and George Jett, Warren King, Ted Reissing, Steven and Barbara Rockefeller, Ted Rouse, Pradip Sahdev, Tania Schoennagel, Nigel Simpson, Jocelyn Sladen, Susan Snettsinger, Lucy Waletzky, Alan Weeden, Jeff and Connie Woodman, Robert Wilson, World Land Trust, World Land Trust-US.
Being large and tasting good never helps your survival prospects. Like other curassows, the blue-billed has suffered from over-hunting throughout its limited range. These birds are wary, and with good reason. The only survivors are those that have learned to avoid people. Pre-Columbian gold figurines of the curassow were easier to find than the bird itself, which was virtually unknown until being rediscovered in the reserve in 2003. Read Delacour and Amadon’s classic 1973 cracid monograph before you come to this reserve though.

—Mike Parr

Since the reserve was established, hunting of the curassow and spider-monkey has stopped, and the curassow population has begun to increase.
Quick Facts

Date established: 2005
Location: Near Popayán, Cauca Department, Colombia (2°N, 75°W)
Altitude: 5,000-10,000 feet
Flagship species: Colorful Puffleg
Habitat: Wet montane forest
Partner/owner: Fundación ProAves
Total size: 4,893 acres
Target reserve size: 6,900 acres
Bird list: 272 species
Threatened: Ten
Endemic: Seven
Visitor facilities: Basic accommodation
Best time to visit: June to September and December to March
Jobs created: Two

Reserve and biodiversity summary: Critically important tract of Cauca cloud forest. The site hosts ten globally threatened bird species: the Baudo Guan, Plumbeous Forest-falcon, Colorful Puffleg (AZE), Long-wattled Umbrellabird, Bicolored Antvireo, Hooded Antpitta, Munchique Wood-wren, Tanager Finch, Chestnut-bellied Flowerpiercer (AZE), and Multicolored Tanager. The site also provides habitat for three endangered amphibians, for which it is also the AZE site.

Major supporters: Swarovski Optik.
Malaria pills $70, water bottle $12, anti-venom kit $500, GPS unit $150, satellite phone $1,750, mosquito net $10. Telling your friends and family that you never needed any of them, but saw Colorful Puffleg anyway: priceless. The reason the Andes have been densely settled for centuries is that it is nice up here, few bugs, cool days, no malaria. If you take your cell phone you can call your birding friends from the wildest places to gloat. There again, might be best just to leave it at home so you’re not busy gloating when the antpitta makes its only brief appearance.

—Mike Parr

Discovered in 1967 and previously known from just a handful of records, the Colorful Puffleg can now be seen at the reserve’s feeders!
Quick Facts

Date established: 2007
Location: Magdalena Valley, Colombia (6° N, 73° W)
Elevation: 2,000-5,000 feet
Flagship species: Helmeted Curassow
Habitat: Lower subtropical/tropical forest
Partner/owner: Fundación ProAves
Total size: 3,531 acres
Target reserve size: 16,000 acres
Bird list: 248 species
Threatened: Six
Endemic: Seven
Visitor facilities: Shares a small lodge with Cerulean Warbler reserve
Best time to visit: All year
Jobs created: Five

Reserve and biodiversity summary: Key piece of lowland subtropical Magdalena Valley forest. The reserve plays host to six globally threatened bird species: the Helmeted Curassow, Chestnut-bellied Hummingbird, Black Inca, White-mantled Barbet, Cerulean Warbler, and Turquoise Dacnis. Conservation measures include an anti-hunting campaign aimed at protecting the curassow, and a reforestation program.

If you made a curassow six feet tall and gave it teeth, wouldn’t it look a bit like a Velociraptor? Actually, most curassows would be more reminiscent of the crested Lambeosaurus, or perhaps the shield-headed Protoceratops. So did birds originate from dinosaurs? Were crested dinosaurs colorful? Take a look at a Helmeted Curassow and the answer to both questions seems intuitive. The problem is, taking a look at a Helmeted Curassow isn’t all that easy, but if you want to do it, there’s no better place than this reserve. This rare, striking species sports a strange bluish shield above its red bill, and smart black and white attire over the rest of its body. Once considered conspecific with the Horned Curassow, which itself is likely two species, the mysterious life of this little-known cracid may soon be revealed in far greater detail than seemed possible just a few years ago, thanks to conservation efforts at this reserve.

—Mike Parr
Quick Facts

Date established: 2005
Location: Central Cordillera, Quindío and Tolima Departments, Colombia (4° N, 75° W)
Elevation: 8,000-13,000 feet
Flagship species: Fuertes’s Parrot and Yellow-eared Parrot
Habitat: Montane forest and paramo
Partner/owner: Fundación ProAves
Current size: 14,488 acres
Target size: 25,000 acres
Bird list: 303 species
Threatened: Eight
Endemic: 12
Visitor facilities: Lodge
Best time to visit: All year
Jobs created: 12

Reserve and biodiversity summary: This reserve protects two AZE sites and encompasses three adjacent protected areas: the Loro Coroniazul Bird Reserve, the El Mirador Municipality Reserve, and the Loros Andinos Bird Reserve. It holds more than 95% of the known Fuertes’s Parrot (AZE) population and 70% of the Yellow-eared Parrot (AZE) population. There has been a significant, recent increase in the nesting success of both species thanks to the provision of artificial nest boxes. Other threatened birds include: the Golden-plumed and Rufous-fronted Parakeets, Rusty-faced Parrot, Dusky Starfrontlet, Blossomcrown, Brown-banded Antpitta, Moustached Antpitta, Masked Mountain-tanager, Tanager Finch, Cerulean Warbler, Chestnut-bellied Flowerpiercer, Chestnut-bellied Cotinga, Mountain Grackle, and Red-bellied Grackle.

As our search was about to end, a Colombian who had seen the campaign poster reported a sighting of the parrot. We followed up. Wandering through glades of majestic wax palms on the late afternoon of the 18th of April, 1999, we heard the faint but distinctive raucous screams of parrots. Then, descending from the clouds above a breathtaking alpine-like landscape, two flocks of Yellow-eared Parrots swooped down in tightly synchronized barrel rolls into palm-studded pasture fields. After almost a year of depressingly unsuccessful searches, we were delirious with ecstasy as a total of 61 Yellow-eared Parrots alighted in the towering wax palms overhead and began clambering down the fronds in chattering masses to gorge on bundles of ripening thumb-sized palm fruits.

—Paul Salaman

**Significant increase in parrot populations; Yellow-eared by tenfold, Fuertes’s close to double.**

*Golden-plumed Parakeet (VU, 3): Fundación ProAves, www.proaves.org*

*Fuertes’s Parrot (AZE, CR, Colombia, 1): Fundación ProAves, www.proaves.org*
Quick Facts

Date established: 2008
Location: Southern end of the Osa peninsula, Costa Rica (8° N, 83° W)
Elevation: Sea level to 2,100 feet
Flagship species: Black-cheeked Ant-tanager
Habitat: Pacific coastal tropical rainforest
Partner/owner: Friends of the Osa
Total size: 4,300 acres
Target reserve size: 20,000 acres
Bird list: 159 so far (incomplete)
Threatened: Two
Endemic: One
Visitor facilities: Basic accommodation, trail system
Best time to visit: All year. June to November is the rainy season and sea turtle nesting season.
Jobs created: Three

Reserve and biodiversity summary: This reserve is a beautiful example of lowland Pacific rainforest, linked to Corcovado National Park. The site hosts two globally threatened birds: the Black-cheeked Ant Tanager (AZE) and the Turquoise Cotinga. The rare Central American subspecies of Scarlet Macaw is also abundant at this location. The Harpy Eagle is present but rare. Humpback whales calve in offshore bays, and there are globally important sea turtle nesting beaches nearby. Populations of large cats (jaguars, pumas, ocelot) also occur.

Conservation measures include habitat restoration in degraded areas.

An Indo-Pacific sailfish, a pantropical spotted dolphin, a humpback whale, a Three-wattled Bellbird, and a Scarlet Macaw all within a mile of each other? Only at the Osa. Here the Pacific rainforest reaches the cliff edge where waterfalls cascade into bays used by calving humpbacks. Sea turtles nest along sandy beaches which are patrolled by millions of hermit crabs. American Crocodiles laze in the shallows, and endangered Black-cheeked Ant-tanagers await serious birders. Great accommodation, unspoiled lowland rainforest, and the largest mangrove forest in Mesoamerica. Only at the Osa.

— Mike Parr
Quick Facts

Date established: 1999
Location: Near Piñas, El Oro province, Ecuador (3° S, 77° W)
Elevation: 1,500-3,600 feet
Flagship species: El Oro Parakeet
Habitat: Lower montane tropical forest
Partner/owner: Fundación Jocotoco
Total size: 3,700 acres
Target size: 10,000 acres
Bird list: 336 species
Threatened: 14
Endemic: Two
Visitor facilities: Lodge, trail system
Best time to visit: All year
Jobs created: 28

Reserve and biodiversity summary: Excellent example of lower montane tropical cloud forest. The site hosts fourteen globally threatened birds: the Rufous-headed Chachalaca, Gray-backed Hawk, Ochre-bellied Dove, El Oro Parakeet, Gray-cheeked Parakeet, Cloud-forest Pygmy-owl, Little Woodstar, Long-wattled Umbrellabird, Gray-breasted Flycatcher, Ochraceous Attila, Gray-headed Antbird, Ecuadorian Tapaculo, Rufous-necked Foliage-gleaner, and Saffron Siskin. Mammals include puma, ocelot, mantled howler monkey, and two and three-toed sloths. Conservation measures include a successful artificial nest box program for the El Oro Parakeet and the planting of more than 200,000 saplings.

Major supporters: IUCN-NL/SPN sponsored by the Netherlands Postcode Lottery, Jeniam Foundation, Loro Parque Fundación, Simpson Trust, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-NMBCA, Robert Wilson, World Land Trust-US. Reforestation at Jocotoco reserves is part of World Land Trust’s Carbon Balanced Program.
Welcome to one of the greatest hummingbird shows on Earth! Bring your camera and stay all day. We’ll feed you while you get the photos of a lifetime. Later, you can search for the Long-wattled Umbrellabird. The male’s inflatable, feathered wattle is a foot long, and he dangles it from below his chin to impress the female. If you are quiet he’ll keep grunting while you sneak in right below with your telephoto... he’s too enthralled with the lek to bother with you. “Dude, my wattle’s more resplendent than yours,” “maybe it is, but I’m grunting louder than you are,” “the heck you are,” etc. The endemic endangered El Oro Parakeet, only discovered in 1980, should be ready to welcome you early the next morning as you head out and on towards Tapichalaca...

—Mike Parr

Best place on Earth to see the El Oro Parakeet, which is rebounding thanks to a nest box program.
Quick Facts

Date established: 2004
Location: Near Macará, Province of Loja, Ecuador (4° S, 79° W)
Elevation: 1,700-6,500 feet
Flagship species: Henna-hooded Foliage-gleaner
Habitat: Tumbesian tropical dry forest
Partner/owner: Fundación Jocotoco
Total size: 4,073 acres
Target size: 10,000 acres
Bird list: 193 species
Threatened: 12
Endemic: One
Visitor facilities: Lodge, trail system
Best time to visit: All year except December and November
Jobs created: 15

Reserve and biodiversity summary: This site includes habitat for a suite of threatened Tumbesian dry forest endemics as well as some wider-ranging threatened species, including: the Rufous-headed Chachalaca, Gray-backed Hawk, Ochre-bellied Dove, Gray-cheeked Parakeet, Little Woodstar, Slaty Becard, Gray-breasted Flycatcher, Gray-headed Antbird, Blackish-headed Spinetail, Rufous-necked Foliage-gleaner, Henna-hooded Foliage-gleaner, and Saffron Siskin. Conservation measures include the planting of more than 40,000 saplings.

It's the dry season in the Tumbesian dry forests of Jorupe. Crunch, crunch, crunch. Your feet crush dried leaf litter as you walk along a trail underneath towering green Ceiba trees that emerge from the dry forest canopy. They offer little shade, though, as they are leafless at this time of year. You stop and admire their bulbous green trunks that look like giant aliens from Mars landed here in Ecuador and decided to take root. You hear crunch, crunch, crunch again, but your feet are not moving. Turn around and a Henna-hooded Foliage-Gleaner is tossing leaves on the ground beyond the next bush, searching for its next meal, oblivious to your presence. Soon, you notice a Blackish-headed Spinetail above it. Just like that, two of Jorupe's many endangered birds reveal themselves!

—Dan Lebbin
Quick Facts

**Date established:** 2006

**Location:** Between the volcanoes Antisana and Sumaco, Napo Province, Ecuador (0° S, 77° W)

**Elevation:** 3,600-4,800 feet

**Flagship species:** Military Macaw

**Habitat:** Lower montane tropical forest

**Partner/owner:** Fundación Jocotoco

**Total size:** 500 acres

**Target size:** 5,000 acres

**Bird list:** c. 300 species

**Threatened:** Three

**Visitor facilities:** None so far

**Best time to visit:** All year

**Jobs created:** One

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**Narupa Reserve**

**Reserve and biodiversity summary:** A great example of foothill forest with Amazonian influences. The site supports three globally threatened birds: the Military Macaw, Coppery-chested Jacamar, and Cerulean Warbler.

**Major supporters:** March Foundation.
Ecuador is a birder’s paradise, and in the mountains, there are a dazzling variety of micro-habitats. To be comprehensive in conservation we have to protect more than just the birds that make for a great two-week birding vacation. So you may visit Narupa, or you may not, but either way, you can rest assured that Military Macaws and Coppery-chested Jacamars have their place carefully set aside in the conservation hierarchy, along with all the other species. This place may not be at the top of everyone’s birding trip list, but it is still a vital part of the matrix of habitats that makes up a really solid conservation design for Ecuador’s rarest birds.

—Mike Parr
Río Canande Reserve

Quick Facts

Date established: 2000
Location: Chocó region of northwest Ecuador (0° S, 79° W)
Elevation: 1,600 feet
Flagship species: Great Green Macaw
Habitat: Lowland Chocó forest
Partner: Fundación Jocotoco
Total size: 3,160 acres
Target size: 10,000 acres
Bird list: 354 species
Threatened: 12
Endemic: One
Visitor facilities: Lodge, trail system
Best time to visit: July through February
Jobs created: Six

Reserve and biodiversity summary: Excellent example of wet lowland Chocó forest. The globally threatened birds are: Baudo Guan, Rufous-headed Chachalaca, Plumbeous Forest-falcon, Gray-backed Hawk, Brown Wood-rail, Great Green Macaw, Banded Ground-cuckoo, Long-wattled Umbrellabird, Ochraceous Attila, Cerulean Warbler, Scarlet-breasted Dacnis, and Yellow-green Bush-tanager. Mammals include puma, jaguar, ocelot, margay, peccaries, mantled howler monkey, capuchins, and spider monkeys. Several plant species new to science have been discovered in the reserve, and four species of globally threatened amphibians have also been found.

Major supporters: Barakat Foundation, IUCN-NL/SPN sponsored by the Netherlands Postcode Lottery, Jeniam Foundation, family of Dr. Bernard F. Master, Simpson Trust, Swarovski Optik, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Robert Wilson, World Land Trust-US.
One senses that discovery could be just around the next corner along the trails at Canande. Perhaps a Banded Ground-Cuckoo will emerge, clacking its bill in excitement as it follows a swarm of army ants. Maybe a pair of Yellow-green Bush-tanagers will peek out from understory bushes. Or perhaps a black *Chironius* whipsnake, unnamed and unknown to science, will calmly peer down at you as you walk by. Today’s prize: a trio of Great Green Macaws perched in an emergent tree 150 feet above ground, grooming and drying their feathers after a mid-day rain shower. Celebrate it with your feet up, back at the lodge near the hummingbird feeders, knowing that there is more to find tomorrow.

—Dan Lebbin

The best site for Chocó endemics in Ecuador.

Swallow Tanager (LC, 8): Fundación ProAves, www.proaves.org

Jaguar: wikipedia.com

Great Green Macaw (EN, 1): A. Morris/VIREO
Quick Facts

Date established: 2005
Location: Close to Mindo, further down the western slopes of Volcan Pichincha (0° N, 79° W)
Elevation: 1,000 feet
Flagship species: Scarlet-breasted Dacnis
Habitat: Humid lowland forest
Partner/owner: Mindo Cloudforest Foundation
Total size: 210 acres
Bird list: 279 species
Threatened: Seven
Visitor facilities: Trail system, canopy tower
Best time to visit: All year
Jobs created: Three

Río Silanche Bird Sanctuary


Major supporters: Paul and Joan Armer, Nancy Delaney, Henry Doll, Robert Kleiger, Nancy Kitzmiller Taylor, Sharon Lynn.

Photo: Gemma J. Radko

Ecuador


Major supporters: Paul and Joan Armer, Nancy Delaney, Henry Doll, Robert Kleiger, Nancy Kitzmiller Taylor, Sharon Lynn.

Photo: Gemma J. Radko


Major supporters: Paul and Joan Armer, Nancy Delaney, Henry Doll, Robert Kleiger, Nancy Kitzmiller Taylor, Sharon Lynn.

Photo: Gemma J. Radko
As we drove west from the Mindo area into the surrounding lowlands, all I could see were farm fields and palm tree plantations. We were on our way to a forest, supposedly, but I couldn’t see a trace of one anywhere. We turned off on an unmarked road, passing by more cut-over fields, and even a mining operation in full swing. As we crossed a narrow bridge, I saw forest remnants – getting warmer! Eventually the road rolled up to a scrap of humid lowland forest, saved from the uncontrolled settlement that has devoured the rest of this region. Only 200 acres, but wow! Birds everywhere: Bronze-winged and Rose-faced Parrots, Scarlet-browed Tanager, Orange-fronted Barbet, Purple-chested Hummingbirds battling White-whiskered Hermits for flower rights, and many more—too many to see in just one visit. This “island” of forest is a key refuge for these birds. I find myself thinking, could we save even more?

—Gemma Radko

Key mix of mix of Chocó and Tumbesian habitats with seven threatened bird species.

Canopy tower at Rio Silanche. Photo: Gemma J. Radko

Orange-fronted Barbet (NT, 2): Doug Wechsler/VIREO

Crested Owl (LC, 4): J. Gozansky/VIREO

Rose-faced Parrot (LC, 3): Steve Blain
**Quick Facts**

*Date established:* 1998  
*Location:* East slope of the Andes in Zamora-Chinchipe Province, Ecuador (3° S, 79° W)  
*Elevation:* 6,500-11,000 feet  
*Flagship species:* Jocotoco Antpitta  
*Habitat:* Montane cloud forest  
*Partner/owner:* Fundación Jocotoco  
*Total size:* 12,350 acres  
*Target size:* 15,000 acres  
*Bird list:* 385 species  
*Threatened:* Ten  
*Endemic:* One  
*Visitor facilities:* Lodge, trail system  
*Best time to visit:* All year  
*Jobs created:* 18

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**Tapichalaca Reserve**

**Reserve and biodiversity summary:** A beautiful tract of montane cloud forest adjacent to Podocarpus National Park. The site hosts ten globally threatened birds: the Bearded Guan, Golden-plumed Parakeet, White-breasted Parakeet, Spot-winged Parrotlet, Little Woodstar, Coppery-chested Jacamar, Bicolored Antvireo, Jocotoco Antpitta (AZE), Cerulean Warbler, and Masked Mountain-tanager. Mammals of note include the woolly mountain tapir and spectacled bear. Two frog and four plant species have recently been discovered at the reserve.

Suddenly, a familiar silhouette appears on a bromeliad. As the wind blows the mist aside for a moment, an almost unbelievably cosmic Gray-breasted Mountain-toucan is revealed for a split second …just long enough for you to utter an indescribable noise that is unfortunately untranslatable as “look on the bromeliad right behind the large trunk” by the birder behind you. The toucan and the tree are again swallowed by the mist, and you move on. Pretty soon it will be just you and the antbird as you point deep into the bamboo clump, hoping that others will glimpse the movement too. Just be careful not to trip over an endangered Jocotoco Antpitta at the feeding station next to the lodge!

—Mike Parr
Quick Facts

Date established: 2001
Location: Close to the Peruvian border in Loja province, Ecuador (4° S, 80° W)
Elevation: 8,200 feet
Flagship species: Piura Hemispingus
Habitat: Hilltop evergreen forest
Partner/owner: Fundación Jocotoco
Total size: 83 acres
Target size: 1,000 acres
Bird list: 104 species (incomplete)
Threatened: Four
Endemic: One
Visitor facilities: None so far
Best time to visit: All year
Jobs created: One

Utuana Reserve

Reserve and biodiversity summary: A small but important tract of evergreen hilltop forest. Threatened birds are: the Ochre-bellied Dove, Ochraceous Attila, Gray-headed Antbird, and Rufous-necked Foliage-gleaner.

Major supporters: Barakat Foundation, family of Hane Bloch, Danish Bird Club, World Land Trust-US.
High in the hills of the Hanne Forest in the Utuana Reserve, a cool mountain breeze blows and a kettle of Swallow-tailed Kites forms in the drier valley below. The first bird to greet you might be a Rainbow Starfrontlet hovering in front of you for just a moment, just long enough to satisfy its curiosity that you are not offering it nectar. Zip, off it goes. As you venture into the forest of tree trunks cloaked in green moss, a Golden-headed Quetzal flushes. A Gray-headed Antbird calls from a Chusquea bamboo thicket in a ravine below — tantalizingly out of view.

—David Wiedenfeld

Small reserve that protects a key area of a rare habitat and bird community.
**Quick Facts**

*Date established:* 2001  
*Location:* On the northeastern slope of Pichincha Volcano northwest of Quito, Ecuador (0° S, 78° W)  
*Elevation:* 10,000-14,700 feet  
*Flagship species:* Black-breasted Puffleg  
*Habitat:* Upper montane cloud forest and *Polylepis* forest  
*Partner:* Fundación Jocotoco  
*Total size:* 2,380 acres  
*Target size:* 5,000 acres  
*Bird list:* 122 species  
*Threatened:* One  
*Endemic:* One  
*Visitor facilities:* Trail system  
*Best time to visit:* October to July  
*Jobs created:* Eight

**YANACOCHA RESERVE**

**Reserve and biodiversity summary:** Excellent example of highland *Polylepis* forest and páramo. This is the AZE site for the Black-breasted Puffleg. Conservation measures include the planting of 30,000 saplings.

**Major supporters:** Barakat Foundation, Benjamin Olewine, Simpson Trust, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, NMBCA, World Land Trust-US.

*Photo: Gemma J. Radko*
At 11,000 feet in the Andes, one’s first impression is of the labor of slowly walking up the ancient road along the Indian aqueduct. Fortunately the grade is gentle and the footing good. These thoughts are quickly banished by the sight of a Barred Fruiteater, and then a Plate-billed Mountain-toucan. A Sickle-winged Guan is missed by some, but no one can miss the hummingbirds. More than a dozen species buzz around the feeders, including the incredible Swordbill – and now a Black-breasted Puffleg, here at the only place it is known in the world: incredible! But your eyes keep veering back to the Swordbill. You may have mild altitude sickness, but it doesn’t matter right now.

—George Fenwick
Quick Facts

Date established: 1999
Location: Yunguilla Valley in Azuay province, Southern Ecuador (3° S, 79° W)
Elevation: 5,100-6,000 feet
Flagship species: Pale-headed Brush-finch
Habitat: Deciduous and semi-evergreen scrub
Partner/owner: Fundación Jocotoco
Total size: 395 acres
Target size: 1,000 acres
Bird list: 148 species
Threatened: Three
Endemic: Two
Visitor facilities: Closed to protect site
Jobs created: One

Reserve and biodiversity summary: Critical tract of scrub forest that is still facing serious threats. Threatened birds are: the Rufous-headed Chachalaca, Little Wood-star, and Pale-headed Brush-finch (AZE). The brush-finch has a tiny population, but conservation efforts, including fencing and cowbird control, have increased numbers ten-fold to more than 200 individuals since the reserve was established.

Major supporters: Barakat Foundation, John V. Moore, Robert Wilson, World Land Trust-US.
The last and only spot on Earth to find the Pale-headed Brush-finch is the Yunguilla Reserve. The prime area to search is a small patch, about the size of a soccer field when viewed from a dusty overlook above. It is an oasis of somewhat lusher vegetation in a stream valley surrounded by open and arid lands that offer the brush-finch little cover. Entering the trail with its dense walls of vegetation is a bit like entering an Iowa corn maze. Wander around, and you might catch a glimpse of this most rare bird.

—Dan Lebbin

The only place on earth to see the Pale-headed Brush-finch; numbers have increased ten-fold since the reserve was established.
Quick Facts

Date established: 2004
Location: Río Sapo watershed in eastern El Salvador, department of Morazán (13° N, 88° W)
Elevation: 2,150 feet
Flagship species: Golden-cheeked Warbler
Habitat: Oak forest
Partner/owner: SalvaNatura
Total size: 50 acres
Target size: 500 acres
Bird list: 120 species (incomplete)
Visitor facilities: Interpretive trail
Best time to visit: October to February

Reserve and biodiversity summary: The two reserves profiled on this and the opposite page are flagship sites that protect small areas of non-breeding habitat for the Golden-cheeked Warbler. Río Sapo is part of an extensive private natural area of several thousand acres. Sierra de Las Minas is now part of the Guatemalan System of Protected Areas, and is also included in the National Association of Private Natural Reserves of Guatemala.

Major supporters: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service-NMBCA.
Sierra de las Minas

Silence and stillness in the forest canopy overhead, punctuated by the dry crackling of leaves underfoot. The first ten minutes of your hike have been uneventful. But then a soft “chip” up ahead—and another. Hurry! But it’s “just” a Townsend’s Warbler. There’s another one. You also see a Black-throated Green Warbler, and below that in the smaller pine is a Hermit Warbler. Wait—you might have one! In that tall tree below the main canopy—moving through the foliage in the outermost branches.

You see the bold eye-line on the yellow face, a black throat and all-white belly, plus steaks on the bird’s side. Another winter record of the Golden-cheeked Warbler on its Central American wintering grounds.

—Bob Altman
Honduran Emerald Management Area

**Reserve and Biodiversity Summary:** This federally-protected reserve protects a key tract of dry tropical forest in the Aguán Valley. Within this reserve is a small, but significant, population of the Honduran Emerald (AZE) of which fewer than 1,000 individuals remain. Also present is the critically endangered Honduran paleate spiny-tailed iguana and 11 plant species endemic to the dry forest.


**Quick Facts**
- **Date established:** 2005
- **Location:** Upper Aguán River valley, north-central Honduras (15° N, 86° W)
- **Elevation:** 800–2,700 ft.
- **Flagship species:** Honduran Emerald
- **Habitat:** Dry forest
- **Partners:** Honduran Air Force, Honduran Ministry of Transportation
- **Current size:** 3,000 acres
- **Target size:** 7,500 acres
- **Bird list:** 85 species
- **Threatened:** One
- **Endemic:** One
- **Visitor facilities:** Education center
- **Best time to visit:** June to October
- **Jobs created:** One
The “Poligono”, as this site is also known, is a former Honduran Air Force bombing range where the military still maintains a presence and assists in the patrolling of the reserve. Arising from the need to offset potential impacts from a road project planned for the Aguán Valley, the decree establishing this reserve represents a cooperative effort between several Honduran government agencies and local NGOs to protect a fragment of Honduras’ rapidly dwindling dry forest. Search the forest of towering Honduran Opuntia cactus for a good patch of pie de niño, one of the Honduran Emerald’s favorite food plants, try your best Ferruginous Pygmy-owl imitation, and you are sure to attract Honduras’ only endemic bird. Other dry forest specialties include a disjunct population of White-bellied Wren which is possibly a separate species, White-lored Gnatcatcher, and the skulking, although sometimes strangely confiding Lesser Ground-cuckoo.

— George Wallace
**Quick Facts**

**Date established:** 1998  
**Location:** Near Bolaños, Northern Jalisco, Mexico (21°N, 103°W)  
**Elevation:** 6,000-8,000 feet  
**Flagship species:** Eared Quetzal  
**Habitat:** Upland pine-oak forest  
**Partner:** Bosque Antiguo  
**Total size:** 1,000 acres with an additional 24,000 adjacent acres protected under a community agreement  
**Bird list:** 162 species  
**Threatened:** Two  
**Endemic:** Nine  
**Visitor facilities:** Trail  
**Best time to visit:** May to September

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**Reserve and biodiversity summary:** One of the last unlogged examples of mesa oak and pine forest in western Mexico. The site has records for two threatened birds: the Thick-billed Parrot and the Military Macaw.

**Major supporters:** Biodiversity Support Program, CONAFOR, Disney Worldwide Conservation Fund, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Northern Virginia Bird Club, Universidad Iberoamericana, World Land Trust-US.
With its vast castles of rock deeply riven by water-hewn canyons, El Carricito rises out of the Mexican sierra like an image from an Ansel Adams poster. The trees here were already grown when the architect of the old colonial church in nearby Bolaños first set foot on the cobbled streets some two centuries ago. Access is by a single-track road cut into the edge of a steep cliff. From here, a seven-hour hike leads to the old-growth forest—60 hours from Washington, DC, by the fastest available route. Fortunately, despite the threat of logging that affects even this remote natural outpost and its birds, the indigenous Huichol people share a close connection with nature, and have made a commitment to conserve large areas of this “sky island’s” most important habitat.

— Mike Parr

With 69 species, this has more recorded neotropical migrants than any of the other reserves.

Red-faced Warbler (LC, 2): Greg Lavaty

Eared Quetzal (NT, 2): Michael Retter, Flickr.com
Quick Facts

Date established: 2007
Location: Near Saltillo, State of Coahuila, Northern Mexico (25°N, 100°W)
Elevation: 7,300 feet
Flagship species: Worthen’s Sparrow
Habitat: Open grassland and scrub
Partner/owner: Pronatura Noreste
Total size: 585 acres with nearby easements of approximately 57,000 acres
Target Size: 5,000 acres with easements of 60,000 acres
Bird list: c. 130 species (incomplete)
Threatened: Two
Endemic: One
Visitor facilities: None so far
Best time to visit: November to February
Jobs created: Two

Reserve and biodiversity summary: A starkly beautiful short-grass prairie surrounded by scrubby hills. The area hosts approximately 15% of the world’s Long-billed Curlews during the winter. Two globally threatened species occur at the site: Sprague’s Pipit and Worthen’s Sparrow (AZE). Other species of interest include the Mountain Plover, and the endangered Mexican prairie dog.

Some see deserts as wastelands, others love the arid lands of the world. One thing about these dry places: you can see far without all those trees to block the view! In the Saltillo grasslands, there aren’t many trees. Worthen’s Sparrows don’t seem to need them though, just low shrubs for nesting and roosting. They like the prairie-dog mowed short grasses, too, and big red-tinged barrel cacti, and creosote bush, and Spanish daggers. In winter it’s cold here with the altitude, but the sparrows are joined by visitors from the north, the Long-billed Curlews and Mountain Plovers, shorebirds that walk in the desert. But it’s year-round home for the sparrow. He hopes for a little green in the spring; green that will bring good bugs for the nestlings, and the promise of seeds for the long winter.

—David Wiedenfeld
**Quick Facts**

**Date established:** 2007  
**Location:** Bahía Santa María Wetlands on the Gulf of California, northwest of Culiacan, Sinaloa, Mexico (25°N, 108°W)  
**Elevation:** 0-10 feet  
**Flagship species:** Western Sandpiper  
**Habitat:** Coastal flats  
**Partner/owner:** Pronatura Noroeste  
**Total size:** 872 acres, with management actions extending to an additional adjacent 7,410 acres  
**Target Size:** 10,000 acres  
**Bird list:** c. 100 species  
**Endemic:** One  
**Visitor facilities:** None so far  
**Best time to visit:** October through March  
**Jobs created:** Ten

**Reserve and biodiversity summary:** Bahía Santa María is among the most important wetlands in western North America for wintering and staging shorebirds and waterfowl. One quarter of the world’s population of Western Sandpipers winters, along with thousands of other shorebirds, and up to 200,000 ducks and geese.

Dense cattail marshes laced by narrow water-passes give way to vast flats of deep mud coated by a thin slick of water stretching to the horizon.

Impassable except by airboat – ungodly loud contrap- tions – what at first sight seems abiotic, actually teems with life. Each square meter of the flats appears to have a Western Sandpiper, and flocks of these little shorebirds peel away in front of us like an avian bow wake. They are innumerable, perhaps a quarter of the world’s population in one place. Later, in slightly deeper water, we observe the same effect, but this time with Marbled Godwits, teal and shovelers, in numbers beyond counting.

—George Fenwick

The reserve protects one-quarter of the world’s Western Sandpipers.
Quick Facts

Date established: 2008
Location: Mesa de las Guacamayas, Sierra Madre Occidental, Chihuahua, Mexico (29°N, 106° W)
Elevation: 7,700 feet
Flagship species: Thick-billed Parrot
Habitat: Upland pine-oak forest
Partner/owner: Pronatura Noreste
Total size: 2,470 acres
Target Size: 7,400 acres
Bird list: c. 200 species (incomplete)
Threatened: One
Endemic: One
Visitor facilities: None so far
Best time to visit: April to October
Jobs created: Two

Thick-billed Parrot Reserve

Reserve and biodiversity summary: Quintessential upland pine-oak forest. One of the few key strongholds for the globally threatened Thick-billed Parrot. The area is also in a corridor that serves as the route of dispersal to Arizona for the jaguar.

Major supporters: David and Patricia Davidson, Comisión Nacional de Áreas Naturales Protegidas, Comisión Nacional Forestal, Tecnológico de Monterrey, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service–NMBCA, Robert Wilson, Jeff and Connie Woodman.
Many people think of Mexico for its deserts or its southern jungles, but the Sierra Madre Occidental is clothed in a conifer forest. The trees here were huge ponderosas, firs and aspens. They grew tall, and with their age, strong and broad. These forests up in the mountains were the summer home, the nesting ground for Thick-billed Parrots, a species that once knew Arizona and New Mexico too. Logging has taken its toll, and now few of the old giants remain. Those old trees are important for the parrots because they house cavities, which provide homes and nest sites for the birds. Mesa de las Guacamayas is one place where some of the old and big trees remain. It’s close to Arizona; if the parrots do well and their population grows, maybe some will wander back to their old lands.

—David Wiedenfeld

One of the very few remaining strongholds for the Thick-billed Parrot.
Quick Facts

Date established: 2003
Location: Southwestern Panama (8°N, 83° W)
Elevation: 500-2,000 feet
Flagship species: Baird’s Trogon
Habitat: Pacific lowland tropical forest
Partner: Panama Audubon Society
Total size: 700 acres
Target Size: 2,500 acres
Bird list: 200 species
Threatened: Three
Visitor facilities: None so far
Best time to visit: February and March
Jobs created: One

Audubon El Chorogo

Reserve and biodiversity summary: Important Panamanian tract of Pacific lowland tropical forest. The site hosts three globally threatened species: the Yellow-billed Cotinga, Turquoise Cotinga, and Three-wattled Bellbird. It also contains important populations of other restricted-range fauna, most notably the globally endangered red-backed squirrel monkey.

Major supporters: Amos W. Butler Audubon Society.
The Three-wattled Bellbird is one of the strangest of the world’s birds. Not only is the song one of the loudest for the bird’s size, it keeps on singing and singing and singing, all day long, nine months a year (and its “song” could be more easily likened to a synthesizer malfunction than to a bird vocalization). But that’s not even what’s so strange about it: what’s up with those wattles? It almost looks like an angler fish, dangling a worm to attract passing prey. The wattles are also prehensile and extendible, and can even get knotted if the bird isn’t careful! These bellbirds are tricky to protect, since reserves are needed at each critical point in their annual cycle. El Chorogo is one of these reserves, and if you come here you may just be treated to a sighting of one of nature’s strangest and coolest birds.

—Mike Parr

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Key tract of lowland Panamanian Pacific rainforest.

Baird’s Trogon (NT, 2): Osa Conservation

Red-capped Manakin (LC, 5): Glen Tepke

Three-wattled Bellbird (VU, 1): Peter Morris
**Quick Facts**

**Date established:** 2002  
**Location:** Itapua Province, southeastern Paraguay (26°S, 55°W)  
**Elevation:** 700 feet  
**Flagship species:** Black-fronted Piping-guan  
**Habitat:** Lowland Atlantic tropical forest  
**Partner:** Guyra Paraguay  
**Total size:** 16,556 acres  
**Target Size:** 29,653 acres  
**Bird list:** 420 species  
**Threatened:** 12  
**Visitor facilities:** Basic accommodation  
**Best time to visit:** May to November  
**Jobs created:** 42

**Reserve and biodiversity summary:** Critical in-holding in the large public San Rafael Resource Management Reserve. The site is a key tract of Paraguayan Atlantic forest and plays host to 12 globally threatened birds: the Black-fronted Piping-guan, Vinaceous Amazon, Helmeted Woodpecker, Bare-throated Bellbird, Russet-winged Spadebill, Cock-tailed Tyrant, Sharp-tailed Tyrant, Strange-tailed Tyrant, Ochre-breasted Pipit, Saffron-cowled Blackbird, Marsh Seedeater, and Chestnut Seedeater. At least 40 species of larger mammals have also been recorded including jaguar, lowland tapir, and bushdog.

One of the jewels of the Americas lies a hot, dusty drive, seven hours south of Asuncion, Paraguay’s capital. Here the soy fields give way abruptly to a wall of green, which protects within the myriad species of an Atlantic rainforest. As soon as we arrive we start seeing birds around the orchards of the Guyra/Procosara headquarters; brilliant cardinals and elegant woodpeckers. Within the deep forest we find even more: aracaris, toucans, and others—secretive inhabitants of the understory. The area’s natural savannas adjacent to the forest add another rich mosaic of life, with their tinamous and flycatchers, including the superb Streamer-tailed Tyrant. What I remember most was returning to camp one evening from a hike, and hearing a South American Snipe displaying above the savannas as the setting sun turned the sky into colors. It is good to know that a piece of this paradise is protected forever.

—Byron Swift
Quick Facts

Date established: 2005
Location: On the border of Amazonas and San Martín, northern Peru (5° S, 77° W)
Elevation: 5,700-8,200 feet
Flagship species: Long-whiskered Owlet
Habitat: Mid-montane cloud forest
Partner/owner: ECOAN
Total size: 7,900 acre reserve; 18,000 acre concession in final stages of completion
Target Size: 10,000 acres plus 18,000 acre concession
Bird list: 212 species
Threatened: Four
Endemic: Six
Visitor facilities: Lodge, trail system, canopy tower
Best time to visit: March to September
Jobs created: 11

Reserve and biodiversity summary: A vital tract of montane cloud forest adjacent to a 450,000-acre protected area, that provides a key watershed for downstream communities. It plays host to four globally threatened birds: the Long-whiskered Owlet (AZE), Royal Sunangel, Lulu’s Tody-tyrant, and Ochre-fronted Antpitta (AZE). The site also has a population of the critically endangered yellow-tailed woolly monkey. The spectacled bear also occurs here. Conservation measures include the planting of more than 100,000 saplings.

Picture yourself, many years from now, in a museum bird collection. Thousands of trays of specimens represent the last examples of species that no longer exist in the wild. Suddenly you hear a sound… a call, a song… the trays open up and the birds start to fly around, the giant cabinets sprout branches and twigs, and the hard corridor floor turns to a mushy peat-like trail. Mist begins to drift across the path, and the flocks of birds vanish deep into the forest, calling as they go. You are now standing in the heart of the cloud forest of Abra Patricia; a living museum that many years from now will still be a haven for the world’s rarest birds, and remain one of the best, if not the only place, to see some of them.

—Mike Parr

Incredible birding at one of the most important sites for bird conservation in northern Peru; the owlet is easier to hear than to see.
**Quick Facts**

**Date established:** 2006  
**Location:** Near Pomacochas, Amazonas department, northern Peru (5°S, 77°W)  
**Elevation:** 4,700-6,500 feet  
**Flagship species:** Marvelous Spatuletail  
**Habitat:** Scrub and small area of ravine forest  
**Partner:** ECOAN  
**Total size:** 100 acres  
**Target Size:** 500 acres  
**Bird list:** 99 species (incomplete)  
**Threatened:** Four  
**Endemic:** Three  
**Visitor facilities:** Small visitor center  
**Best time to visit:** March to December  
**Jobs created:** Four

**Reserve and biodiversity summary:** This flagship reserve aims to interest local people and birding tourists in the conservation of the Marvelous Spatuletail. The site hosts four globally threatened birds: the Peruvian Pigeon, Marvelous Spatuletail (AZE), Little Woodstar, and Speckle-chested Piculet. The area has been restored with 30,000 saplings (trees and bushes) including the native food plant of the spatuletail.

The chupacabra, the chimera, bigfoot, the Loch Ness monster, and the Marvelous Spatuletail. Which is the odd one out? The spatuletail, of course—nobody would have believed you after you described it to them. Fortunately, now we have photos and film, and as strange as it is, it is undeniable. There are three main reasons that the spatuletail is one of the most sought-after bird species in South America. It is endangered, only found well off the beaten path, and is as spectacular as all get-out—the ultimate bling bird. Probability of success: high. Live shows daily. What are you waiting for? Don’t make your life list mad at you.

—Mike Parr

First conservation easement with a Peruvian community to protect an endangered species.

Constantino Aucca, President of ECOAN, at reforestation site in Huembo, 2007. Photo: Mike Parr

Marvelous Spatuletail (AZE, EN, Peru, 1): Roger Ahlman

Seedlings at Huembo tree nursery. Photo: Mike Parr
Quick Facts

Date established: 2009
Location: Cusco region of southeastern Peru (13°S, 72°W)
Elevation: 14,500 feet
Flagship species: Royal Cinclodes
Habitat: Polylepis forest
Partner: ECOAN
Total size: 5,655 acres
Target Size: 10,000 acres
Bird list: 88 species
Threatened: Four
Endemic: Five
Visitor facilities: None so far
Best time to visit: March to December
Jobs created: Four

Reserve and biodiversity summary: This network of community reserves protects critical fragments of remaining Polylepis forest in the high Andes of Cusco. These include the well-known birding site at Abra Malaga. The reserves host four globally threatened birds: the Ash-breasted Tit-tyrant, White-tailed Shrike-tyrant, Royal Cinclodes, and White-browed Tit-spinetail. Conservation measures include the planting of more than 400,000 saplings, the distribution of fuel-efficient stoves, and the provision of alternative fuel-wood plantations.

The people of the Vilcanota gaze down on the Sacred Valley of the Incas like condors from their high perches. They share the rarefied air with an elfin moss forest of *Polylepis* trees that cloak the slopes like giant bonsais. The few bird species that eke out a living here are among the rarest on Earth, and as the forests dwindle, so do their hopes for survival. For the first time since colonization, these forests are now expanding thanks to a reforestation campaign that provides a new chance for the birds, and for the children of Vilcanota, the last descendants of the Incas.

—Mike Parr

Largest indigenous people’s reforestation campaign in Peru — first government-recognized private conservation area on community lands in the high Andes of Peru.
**QUICK FACTS**

**Date established:** 2009  
**Location:** Northwestern Sierra de Bahoruco, southern Dominican Republic (18° N, 71° W)  
**Elevation:** 1,500-2,500 feet  
**Flagship species:** Bay-breasted Cuckoo  
**Habitat:** Semi-deciduous, dry forest  
**Partner/owner:** Grupo Jaragua  
**Current size:** 43,025 acres  
**Target size:** 43,025 acres  
**Bird list:** 80 species (estimated)  
**Threatened:** Four  
**Endemic to Hispaniola:** Seven  
**Best time to visit:** All year  
**Jobs created:** Two expected

**Loma Charco Azul Reserve**

**Reserve and biodiversity summary:** This public protected area conserves an important tract of dry forest habitat adjacent to Sierra de Bahoruco National Park in the Dominican Republic. The threatened birds are: Bay-breasted Cuckoo (AZE), Hispaniolan Parrot, Hispaniolan Parakeet, and White-necked Crow. Additional endemics include Least Pauraque, Narrow-billed Tody, and Flat-billed Vireo. With the reserve just established, the highest priorities now are to initiate protection measures through the hiring and training of guards, construction of a guard station, and working with local communities and farmers to reduce impacts to the forest.

Heading south from Duverge and the huge, saline lake, Lago Enriquillo, we arrive in Puerto Escondido, the last village before we head up into the new biological reserve and then Sierra de Bahoruco. The village gives way to avocado farms and clearings, some inside the new protected area. The road follows a dry stream bed in places, and we snake our way among piles of stones. Stopping to listen in the dry forest, we are lucky to hear a distant u-ak-u-ak-ak-ak-ak-ak-ak-ak ak-ak. It’s a Bay-breasted Cuckoo, or Cua, as it is known in Spanish. We would be even luckier to see it, a huge cuckoo, nearly two feet in length; but not today. Instead, we hear the chopping of axes and machetes in the distance, and soon a truck rolls by laden with wood destined to be turned into charcoal. It is clear that this important Cua population will not persist without a dedicated effort to enforce its protection.

—George Wallace
**THE PARTNERS**

**AMERICAN BIRD CONSERVANCY**
**Mission:** To conserve native wild birds and their habitats throughout the Americas.
**Web site:** www.abcbirds.org

**ASOCIACIÓN ARMONÍA**
**Mission:** A not-for-profit Bolivian organization dedicated to the conservation of birds and their natural habitats, whose principal objective is to prevent the extinction of any bird species in Bolivian territory.
**Web site:** www.birdlife.org/worldwide/national/bolivia

**ASOCIACIÓN ECOSISTEMAS ANDINOS**
**Mission:** To involve local communities in the preservation of biodiversity by promoting the sustainable use of natural resources, thus conserving flora, fauna, and natural ecosystems in Peru.
**Web site:** www.ecoanperu.org

**BOSQUE ANTIGUO**
**Mission:** The conservation of El Carricito, Mexico.
**Web site:** In development.

**DEFENSORES DE LA NATURALEZA**
**Mission:** Dedicated to the conservation and sustainable management of nature in Guatemala.
**Web site:** www.defensores.org.gt

**FRIENDS OF THE OSA**
**Mission:** To preserve the globally significant biodiversity of Costa Rica’s Osa peninsula.
**Web site:** www.osaconservation.org

**FUNDACIÓN BIODIVERSITAS**
**Mission:** To promote the conservation of biodiversity in Brazil.
**Web site:** www.biodiversitas.org.br

**FUNDACIÓN JOCOTOCO**
**Mission:** To protect the habitat of globally threatened species of birds in the Andes of Ecuador, together with all associated biodiversity.
**Web site:** www.fjocotoco.org

**FUNDACIÓN PROAVES**
**Mission:** To protect birds and their habitats in Colombia, through research, conservation actions and community outreach.
**Web site:** www.proaves.org

**GRUPO JARAGUA**
**Mission:** To conserve the biodiversity of the Dominican Republic through the development of projects to resolve conservation problems.
**Web site:** www.grupojaragua.org.do/index.html

**GUYRA PARAGUAY**
**Mission:** To work for the defense and protection of the biological diversity of Paraguay, organizing community action with the goal of securing representative samples of the natural richness of Paraguay, so that future generations may benefit and appreciate them.
**Web site:** www.guyra.org.py
MINDO CLOUD FOREST FOUNDATION
Mission: Innovative, community-based conservation in Ecuador.
Web site: www.mindocloudforest.org

PANAMA AUDUBON SOCIETY
Mission: Conserving bird diversity in Panama.
Web site: www.panaudubon.org

PRONATURA NORESTE
Mission: The conservation of flora, fauna, and priority ecosystems in northeastern Mexico, to promote the development of society in harmony with nature.
Web site: www.pronaturane.org

PRONATURA NOROESTE
Mission: The conservation of flora, fauna, and priority ecosystems in northwestern Mexico, to promote the development of society in harmony with nature.
Web site: www.pronaturanoroeste.org

RESERVA ECOLÓGICA DE GUAPI ASSU
Mission: To protect one of the last stands of tropical rainforest left in the severely depleted Atlantic rainforest, or Mata Atlántica, in Brazil.
Web site: www.regua.co.uk/index.html

SALVANATURA
Mission: Nonprofit organization dedicated to the preservation of natural parks in El Salvador.
Web site: www.salvanatura.org


Javier Robayo holding Podocarpus saplings, Ecuador, 2005. Photo: Mike Parr

Bob Altman, American Bird Conservancy’s Northern Pacific Rainforest Bird Conservation Region Coordinator, has a degree in wildlife biology from Eastern Kentucky University with graduate coursework at Oregon State University. He has been active in Partners in Flight since its inception, and before joining American Bird Conservancy, worked for seven years as an independent ornithologist. He is author of the Olive-sided Flycatcher species account for *Birds of North America*, and lead author on a book chapter on wildlife-habitat relationships in western Oregon and Washington.

Rita G. Fenwick, American Bird Conservancy’s Vice President of Development, received a B.A. from the University of Virginia where she was a Latin American Studies Major. From 1986 to 1992, Rita worked for the Virginia Chapter of The Nature Conservancy where she filled many roles including Director of Development and Communications.

George H. Fenwick, President of American Bird Conservancy, received a Ph.D. from the Department of Pathobiology at Johns Hopkins University, studying the effects of alien species on native avifauna. He founded American Bird Conservancy in early 1994. He previously worked in a variety of capacities during 15 years with The Nature Conservancy including Vice President and Director of Ecosystem Conservation, Acting Director of Science, and Chair of the Steering Committee for the Last Great Places Campaign. Prior to that, he worked for the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, Earthsatellite Corporation, and was an instructor at the University of Virginia.

Sara Lara, American Bird Conservancy’s Director of International Programs, graduated in 1997 from the University of Cauca in Colombia with a degree in civil engineering. She worked in the engineering field in Colombia and the UK before joining Fundación ProAves in 2004 as Executive Director. For more than five years she oversaw the transformation of ProAves from an amateur group of bird conservationists with few projects to an effective professional conservation organization. Important accomplishments include the establishment of a reserve trust fund, receiving the Partners in Flight Award in 2006, and the National Energy Award in 2009 for the LoroBus.

Daniel J. Lebbin, Conservation Biologist with American Bird Conservancy, received a B.A. degree in Biology and Environmental Science and Policy from Duke University, and a Ph.D. in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology from Cornell University. His dissertation research investigated habitat specialization among Amazonian birds in Peru, where he spent a year as a Fulbright Scholar. A birder since childhood, he also enjoys bird illustration and photography, and his images appear in a variety of publications and exhibits.

Michael J. Parr, American Bird Conservancy’s Vice President, graduated from the University of East Anglia, U.K., in 1986. He worked at BirdLife International as Development Officer before joining American Bird Conservancy in 1996. His first book, *Parrots—A Guide to the Parrots of the World* was published by Yale University Press in April 1998. He is a member of the Advisory Committee of ProAves Colombia, and acts as Chair to the Alliance for Zero Extinction.

Gemma Radko, American Bird Conservancy’s Communications and Media Manager, graduated from Allegheny College in 1985 with a degree in Art and Biology. At ABC, she is a graphic designer and writer, but is also an avid birder, and member of the Maryland Ornithological Society, where she often leads field trips for members. She has operated a MAPS banding station, and has begun to teach classes on birding.
Paul Salaman, World Land Trust-US’s Director of Conservation, led a series of undergraduate expeditions across Colombia, spending more than three years in the field that culminated in a new national park and four private protected areas being formed. In 1992, Paul won the first BP Conservation Award. He has described four bird species new to science, including the Chocó Vireo, and has helped rediscover several other species. In 1998, Paul assisted the establishment of Fundación ProAves, and after receiving his Ph.D. from the University of Oxford in 2001, he joined Conservation International based in Quito and Bogota. In 2005, Paul joined American Bird Conservancy as the Director of International Programs, and since 2008 has been working for the World Land Trust-US.

Byron Swift has dedicated much of his career over more than 20 years to help establish and support private reserves in Latin America, and to strengthen the institutions responsible for managing them. Internationally, he has worked in over 15 countries on environmental and natural resources policy, and has published widely on issues involving biodiversity and natural resources management, climate change and industrial pollution. Currently he directs World Land Trust-US and Nature and Culture International. Formerly he headed the Energy and Innovation Center at the Environmental Law Institute in Washington, D.C., focused on improving environmental law, policy, and management.

George E. Wallace, American Bird Conservancy’s Vice President for Oceans and Islands, has been active in bird research and conservation for 20 years. Most recently, George served as Executive Director of the Rocky Mountain Bird Observatory, a close and long-standing ABC partner. Prior to that, he worked for the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission first as a Nongame Wildlife Biologist, and then as Florida’s state Bird Conservation Coordinator. He has also worked for Bird Studies Canada, The Nature Conservancy, Point Reyes Bird Observatory, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. George received his M.S. in Zoology from the University of Guelph in Ontario, Canada, and his Ph.D. in Biology from the University of Missouri, where he focused on the wintering ecology of neotropical migrant and Cuban resident birds.

David A. Wiedenfeld, American Bird Conservancy’s Assistant Director of International Programs, received a Ph.D. from Florida State University, and an M.S. from Louisiana State University. His work has focused on bird population ecology and conservation biology. He served for five years as Director of Research at the Sutton Avian Research Center, working primarily on prairie-chickens. Returning to the neotropics, he served for more than three years as Head of the Department of Vertebrate Ecology at the Charles Darwin Research Station in the Galapagos Islands.
The White-bellied Woodstar is one of 165 species of hummingbird found in the reserve network.
Visit a Reserve!

ABC has launched a new web site, Conservation Birding (www.conservationbirding.org) that has been designed to help you navigate around the reserve network in cyberspace, and to preview birding routes that might be of interest to you. Each route is designed to ensure that your birding travel contributes to bird conservation by including ABC-supported reserves and lodges, or sites where we are aiming to develop projects in the future. The routes are also presented on Google Earth, with visitor information provided for each site, links to trip reports and other useful websites for birders, and to tour companies that include these reserves and routes in their regular itineraries. Further sites will be added in the future. For more information you can also call ABC at 1-888-BIRDMAG.
We have directly created more than 300 jobs, and provided training and other benefits (such as fuel-efficient stoves) for more than 7,000 local people.
BECOME A RESERVE PATRON!

ABC and its partners depend on the financial support of people like you to ensure the success of the reserve network. Please consider helping with a donation (tax deductible for U.S. taxpayers) to support a reserve or a conservation project at a reserve.

- **Reserve Patron $100,000** (provides core funding to establish a new reserve)

- **Lodge Patron $25,000** (provides core funding to establish an ecolodge)

- **Community Patron $10,000** (provides annual funding to a community reforestation program)

- **Project Patron $5,000** (supports annual conservation work at a reserve e.g. a nest box or education campaign)

- **Trail Patron $1,000** (provides annual support to maintain a trail system); have a trail named in your honor!

Please contact Dr. George H. Fenwick, President, ABC at: gfenwick@abcbirds.org, or call 1-888-BIRDMAG to help.

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**Robert Wilson** is one of the leading philanthropists and conservationists in the U.S., whose support for ABC has come in the form of two extremely important challenge grants for land acquisition, primarily designed to support the conservation of Alliance for Zero Extinction and other sites with extremely high biodiversity value. Robert’s support has helped to leverage significant additional resources that have enabled us to greatly expand the reserve network. ABC is deeply appreciative of all that Robert is doing to help us move forward with this vitally important work.

**Jeff and Connie Woodman** are two of ABC’s most active supporters, having visited several ABC projects in recent years. They have helped to finance a number of land purchase projects and community conservation and reforestation efforts in Peru and elsewhere. Jeff currently serves on the ABC Board of Directors, is a keen birder, and is helping ABC develop its first carbon project at Abra Patricia in northern Peru. We are extremely grateful to Jeff and Connie for their fantastic support and energy.
It is estimated that 2,000,000 species of animals and plants may be found in the reserve network.

_Hyla picturata_ Photo: Fundación ProAves, www.proaves.org
American Bird Conservancy (ABC) is extremely grateful to all those who have contributed to the reserve network. Listed below are those who have made gifts of $1,000 or more to specific reserves and those with whom ABC has worked closely to obtain grants for partners. Thank you also to the many others who donated to the reserves. Finally, we are deeply appreciative of ABC’s Falcon Club members and foundations whose unrestricted gifts provide crucial ongoing support. The reserve network would not be possible without their generosity.

$1,000,000+
Anonymous
Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service/Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act Fund (NMBCA)
Robert Wilson
World Land Trust

$500,000+
Robert Giles
Jeff and Connie Woodman

$100,000+
Amos W. Butler Audubon Society
Beneficia Foundation
Blue Moon Fund
ConocoPhillips
Conservation International
Warren and Cathy Cooke
David and Patricia Davidson
Disney Worldwide Conservation Fund
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IUCN-NL/SPN sponsored by the Netherlands Postcode Lottery
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World Parks Endowment

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Paul Bristow

Emerald Toucanet (LC, 9) Fundacion ProAves, www.proaves.org
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Cornell Lab of Ornithology/NFWF
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The Hummingbird Society
Inter-American Foundation
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Los Angeles Audubon Society
Sharon E. Lynn
Maple Hill Foundation
March Foundation
Margot Marsh Biodiversity Foundation
The Marshall-Reynolds Foundation
Maryland Ornithological Society
James R. Mellon II
Missouri Department of Conservation
The Mohamed Bin Zayed Species Conservation Fund
Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin
NatureViewing.com
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Heidi Nitze
Northern Virginia Bird Club
Ellen Paul
Cary R. Paynter
The Philanthropic Collaborative
Alexander M. Power

White-tipped Quetzal (LC, 2) : Fundación ProAves, www.proaves.org
$1,000-$100,000
Ted Reissing
Beverly S. Ridgely
April and Mark Sapsford
Tania Schoennagel
SeaWorld and Busch Gardens Conservation Fund
Nigel Simpson
The Simpson Trust
Jocelyn and William Sladen
Marybeth Sollins
Tatnall Starr
State of Wisconsin
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World Wildlife Fund
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Estate of Sally Reahard
Christine Sant/Ivorybill Foundation
Bishop and Lynn Sheehan
The Stephen and Mary Birch Foundation
George A.P. and Joan H. Wallace
Wolf Creek Foundation
Atlantic Forest Vista Key

Key

Birds
1. Black-fringed Piping-guan
2. Red-breasted Toucan
3. Mantled Hawk
4. Bare-necked Bellbird (pair)
5. Three-toed Jacamar
6. Blue-chested Parakeet
7. Spot-breasted Antvireo
8. Stresemann’s Bristlefront (female)
9. Pink-legged Graveteiro
10. Fork-tailed Pygmy-tyrant
11. Crested Oropendola
12. Red-browed Parrot
13. Great Kiskadee
14. Plush-crested Jay

Mammals
1. Jaguar
2. Golden Lion Tamarin

Habitat and Plants
1. Cecropia
2. Erythrina
3. Guadua bamboo

Other Items
1. Habitat loss to slash and burn
2. Habitat loss to grazing
3. Habitat loss to plantations

Donated source material:
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The Alliance for Zero Extinction (AZE) is the science bedrock of the reserve system. American Bird Conservancy (ABC) and its partners use priorities established by AZE to help identify key sites for conservation action. ABC was one of the pioneers of AZE, and currently acts as its Chair.

AZE is a joint initiative of 67 biodiversity conservation organizations that aims to prevent species extinctions by identifying and safeguarding key sites, each of which is the last remaining refuge for one or more endangered or critically endangered species. AZE’s goal is to create a front line of defense against extinction by protecting as many of these sites as possible. Because time is running out, our science must be iterative: it must begin with the crises we know about, and expand its focus as new information emerges on the status of species and their habitats.

AZE scientists, working in collaboration with an international network of experts, have so far identified 595 such sites that must be effectively protected to prevent the extinction of 794 of the world’s most endangered species of mammals, birds, some reptiles (crocodilians, iguanas, turtles, and tortoises), amphibians, and conifers. Other taxa will be added as data become available. Of the sites identified so far, 60% are found in Latin America with the majority of these in tropical moist, montane forests. Approximately half of the AZE sites identified globally are so far unprotected.

Now that we have begun a systematic effort to conserve these sites, ABC and its partners are expanding their focus to identify and protect “Strongholds” for wider-ranging, highly threatened species, as well as other Key Biodiversity Areas. In addition to the AZE sites, ABC also focuses on reserves for neotropical migrants, and for some wider-ranging threatened birds.

www.zeroextinction.org