

REPORT OF THE CARIBBEAN WILDLIFE ART WORKING GROUP

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THE CARIBBEAN WILDLIFE ART Working Group (CWAAG) had been increasing its activities, members and results on behalf of bird conservation in the Caribbean region through art, thereby contributing to Society for the Conservation and Study of Caribbean Birds's (SCSCB) objectives and funding needs. Membership in the group has grown, mainly from recently graduated students from a Scientific Illustration course in the Academy of Fine Arts.

ACTIONS 2005-2007

1. Presentations in art shows, where one acrylic painting with a bird theme, called "Blue Illusion" by Nils Navarro, received an award with a prize (City Award).
2. Organization of two Caribbean Endemic Bird Festivals (CEBF), "Festival Comunitario de Aves Endémicas," which took place during one week in 2006 and 2007 in Gibara Village, Cuba. Many of the activities that were carried out linked bird conservation and education with art, including: art competitions, birdwatching trips involving students, teachers, and other members of the local community, freeing wild native birds from cages, celebration parties, bird art expositions and workshops with students, ecological games, conferences and workshops about local biodiversity for the local people in Gibara's Museum of Natural History, video presentations, and other actions.
3. Presentation of artwork and results in eight national and international events, congresses, and meetings, with three awards won during competitions.
4. The working group's project was presented during the American Ornithologists' Union's meeting in Veracruz, Mexico, in October 2006.
5. A new SCSCB website was designed by members of the Wildlife Art Working Group to promote and communicate the programs and activities of the SCSCB, and provide links with other organizations and projects.
6. Four Scientific Illustration courses were taught during 2006-2007 (6 mo each), with students from the Academy of Fine Art in Holguín, Cuba.
7. Thirteen posters about conservation, important bird areas, and protected areas, were designed by members of the working group. The poster designed and painted by Rolando Rodríguez Atta to raise awareness about impacts of global warming on birds and habitats in the Caribbean for the 2007 CEBF was one of the more important ones. The poster was printed in three languages and distributed throughout the region.
8. A total of nine pieces of art created by six Cuban artists have been donated to raise funds for SCSCB through raffles, auctions, or direct sales; four of them were donated for the 2007 raffle, which was launched at the SCSCB meeting in Puerto Rico. Over US\$8,000 was raised for SCSCB from the sales of these nine items, funds that will help SCSCB carry out its programs and activities. A seed fund awarded to the CWAAG by the SCSCB helped the CWAAG to purchase art supplies, sponsor art students, organize festivals, and travel as needed for workshops and other activities. We are happy that we could provide a good return on the investment.
9. A new *Field Guide to the Birds of Cuba and Other Caribbean Endemics* has been prepared. It is sponsored by BirdLife International, the British Bird Watching Fair, and SCSCB, and is the first book in a series that will cover all the endemic birds of the Caribbean islands. Some books will be donated to Cuban Institutions, including museums, protected areas, universities, libraries, and to projects such as the CEBF that take place every year in the whole region. The illustrations from the books will be available for use in bird conservation projects, posters, and educational materials.
10. Seven presentations about Cuban birds were delivered.
11. Plans are underway to make lithographic prints of bird artwork to sell and raise funds for SCSCB. Currently we are waiting to finish the restoration of the studio where this work will be completed.
12. The conference "Cuban Scientific Illustration through Time" was presented in "Humboldt House" in Havana, Cuba, during "Festival la Imagen de la Naturaleza," in May 2007.

13. Three Bird Photography Expeditions were made, involving photojournalists belonging to different institutions.

14. Bird photographs were presented in the “Photographic Saloon of the City” Arts Center Gallery, Holguín City, Cuba, including two pieces by Amaury Betancourt (14 July 2007).

15. The CWA WG helped organize the “Anthological Exposition About Cuban Illustration from 1700 to 2007,” showed in “Humboldt House” in Havana, May-June 2007.

16. Presentations were made on television programs (Espiral in Cristal Television Station in Holguín City and other local television station programs in Gibara) and radio station programs (La Isla Como Casa, Café Milenio, and CWI New England Station [which broadcasts a program conducted by Mark Lynch for New England states in the USA]).

17. Design and editing of the magazine “Birama” of the Delta del Cauto Faunal Refuge (a RAMSAR site), to promote conservation efforts in protected areas.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Promote and arrange the sale of artwork and other items created by working group members on SCSCB’s website. Artists of the group (painters and photographers) agree to donate a percentage of the sales to raise funds for SCSCB and to maintain a number of paintings and photographs available for sale on the website. This will be a good way to raise additional much-needed funds for SCSCB.

2. Promote Wildlife Art courses for artists on other Caribbean islands and invite other artists from around the region to join our group to better assist SCSCB in carrying out its bird conservation activities and program.

3. Obtain funds from SCSCB to support the Wildlife Art Working Group’s actions during the next two years.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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