

Table 1. The status of some recent research projects in Jamaica.

Project	Status	Participants ¹	Institution
Inventory of birds in the Blue and John Crow Mountains	Completed	Marcia Mundle ¹	Gosse Bird Club (Jamaica)
Censusing Swainson's Warblers	Completed	Gary Graves ¹ Kevin Winker	National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution (US)
Habitat fragmentation effects on bird communities in the buffer zone of the BJCMNP	Results pending	Suzanne Davis	University of the West Indies (Jamaica)
Biology & distribution of psittacines in Jamaica	In progress	Susan Koenig ¹ Jimmy Basant Herlitz Davis	Wildlife Preservation Trust International (US) and Gosse Bird Club (Jamaica)
The impact of human disturbance on tropical dry limestone forest of Jamaica on resident & migrant bird communities	In progress	Leo Douglas	University of the West Indies (Jamaica)

¹Leader

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

GERARD ALLENG

GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES

- *Habitat Conservation*

The Wildlife Section of the Forestry Division of the Ministry of Agriculture, Lands and Marine Resources has an on-going wetlands programme aimed at the conservation of wetlands in Trinidad and Tobago. Through this programme, the Section attempts to monitor some components of the waterfowl and shorebird populations within these habitats. Regular bird surveys are conducted within four wetlands of national importance: Caroni Swamp (western coast of Trinidad), Nariva Swamp (eastern coast of Trinidad), Godineau Swamp (western coast of Trinidad), and Icacos Swamp (southwestern coast of Trinidad). The surveys focus on population trends and threats to certain species, particularly species of national concern such as the Scarlet Ibis (*Eudocimus ruber*). Some minimal socio-economic and

habitat assessments are also undertaken at the sites. Concern for the Scarlet Ibis increased because they ceased nesting in the Caroni Swamp a few years ago and only recently resumed after many years of inactivity. This wetland is the main nesting area for the species in Trinidad and Tobago. There have been reports of smaller populations in other wetland areas and the Section has been trying to monitor and manage these areas and, by extension, these populations through the wetlands programme.

- *Education Programme*

The Wildlife Section has initiated an education programme under the RARE Center for Conservation, aimed at conservation education with regard to the

Trinidad Piping Guan or Pawi (*Pipile pipile*). This bird is the only endemic sub-species found on the island and is considered to be endangered as a result of habitat loss and over-hunting. The section has focused its efforts on increasing the awareness of its importance among communities who live close to the habitat of the species.

• *Establishment Of A National Park And Wildlife Authority*

A draft of a bill for the establishment of a National Parks and Wildlife Authority in Trinidad and Tobago was released for public comment in April 1997, by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago. The bill is "an act to provide for the establishment, conservation, management of national parks, strict nature reserves, wildlife management reserves, recreation areas, protected landscapes and other areas; the conservation and management of wildlife in terrestrial, aquatic and marine environments within Trinidad and Tobago, the establishment and operation of a National Parks and Wildlife Authority and for related matters." Part of the bill involves the protection of native species of animals, including birds. A number of birds are listed under endangered, vulnerable and rare species of animals. The bill seeks for example, to remove all seed-eating birds or finches from the list of caged birds allowed to be taken in the wild. It seeks to place them on the protected list because of declining population trends. The bill is presently being reviewed, but a decision has already been taken to separate the two components; there will be a separate wildlife bill.

• *Captive Breeding Programme*

The Wildlife Section is actively pursuing a captive-breeding programme of the Blue-and-Gold Macaw (*Ararauna*) with the aim of re-introducing the species back into the Nariva Swamp, its only natural habitat. The species was extirpated from this area because of over-hunting for the pet trade.

• *Nariva Swamp (Ramsar Site)*

The Government of Trinidad and Tobago has awarded a contract for an environmental impact assessment of activities in the Nariva Swamp. Part of the programme involves the formulation of a management and monitoring plan for the area, which has implications for the bird populations utilizing the system.

RESEARCH INITIATIVES

• *Research Project*

A new research project directly related to the conservation of birds in Trinidad and Tobago was initiated at the Zoology Unit, Department of Biological Sciences, University of the West Indies, St. Augustine. The project started in September 1996 and is a survey of shorebirds and seabirds in Trinidad and Tobago. It is an attempt to investigate the use of coastal habitats by birds, with the aim of improving the coastal sensitivity index of Trinidad and Tobago.

SABA REPORT

MARTHA WALSH-McGEEHEE

SABA, THE SMALLEST ISLAND in the Netherlands Antilles, occupies little more than 5 sq. mi. and has only 27 resident bird species. It has, nevertheless, made significant progress this year toward the preservation of the birds and their habitats.

A proposal to establish a reserve at the upper elevation of Mt. Scenery has been presented to the Lieutenant Governor, and his signature is expected momentarily. This reserve will protect the elfin cloud forest and tree fern zone where the less common species, such as the Brown Trembler (*Cinlocerthia ruficauda*), Bridled Quail-Dove (*Geotrygon mystacea*), Purple-throated Carib (*Eulampis jugularis*), and Scaly-breasted Thrasher (*Margarops fuscus*), are most frequently encountered.

With the assistance of the USDA Forestry Service and a team of volunteers from Canada, Saba's eight nature trails have been greatly expanded and improved. More interpretative signs are being constructed, and local guides are becoming increasingly familiar with the indigenous birds.

The Government of the Netherlands has directed the local governments of Saba, St. Eustatius, and St. Maarten to enact

new wildlife legislation for their respective islands. This legislation must be completed within two years. Traditionally, wildlife legislation has focused on marine life, but Island Conservation Effort and the Saba Conservation Foundation have asked that bird species on Saba be afforded protection under the new law. Both organizations have contacted NGO counterparts on the other two islands to ask their assistance in coordinating protection throughout the three closely situated islands.

In late April 1997, David S. Lee (North Carolina State Museum of Natural Sciences) and Martha Walsh-McGehee (Island Conservation Effort) established a one hectare site for a study of breeding Red-billed Tropicbirds (*Phaethon aethereus*). After circumnavigating the island by boat to survey the coastline and determine areas with a high density of tropicbirds, a breeding colony on the southeastern coast was selected as a study site because of the relatively easy access to the nests. Although only preliminary studies have been completed, 24 nests have been located (last published estimate was less than 20 pairs on Saba; Voous 1983). Approximately 80% of the coastline provides suitable nest