

"Why conserve forests?" A recently held workshop on environmental education for secondary school teachers was well attended. This is an annual event and participation keeps increasing.

A total of 3976 children participated in the zoo education

program. Over 4000 persons from 20 communities participated in various education activities ranging from eco-tourism to reptile conservation to solid waste management. Over 5000 persons visited our five rain forest trails.

GUIDELINES FOR DUTIES OF ISLAND REPRESENTATIVES

The following are the guidelines for duties of Island Representatives agreed on at the SCO meeting in Nassau; August, 1996.

1. Promote the SCO in their island:
 - a) encourage membership
 - b) disseminate information
 - c) encourage paid members to vote
2. Provide and coordinate three contributions to coincide with the publication of *El Pitirre*, one of which will be the annual report.
3. Representatives who attend the annual meeting will be expected to give a written report of the meeting,

especially on issues which are important to their particular country.

4. Serve as contact persons for visiting scientists and research groups.

Island Representatives are asked to send a communication to the Treasurer by 15 March to say if they have secured or have applied for funding to attend the meeting.

Representatives who need funding are also asked to apply by 15 March. Priority will be given to representatives who can secure matching funds; e.g., airfare or accommodations. Applicants must be Caribbean nationals or are residing in the region.

RESOLUTIONS DEVELOPED AT SCO MEETING IN NASSAU

DRAFT RESOLUTION:

CONSERVATION OF THE WHITE-CHEEKED PINTAIL IN THE WEST INDIES

WHEREAS a recent survey has shown that the White-cheeked Pintail (*Anas bahamensis bahamensis*) has declined precipitously in numbers over much of its range during the last century;

WHEREAS this decline is caused by human factors including overhunting, poaching, introduction of non-native predators, and habitat destruction;

WHEREAS the White-cheeked Pintail is one of only several waterfowl species resident in the West Indies;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Society of Caribbean Ornithology urges governments of all West Indian islands to:

1. Inform the public (through educational programs) of the decline of the White-cheeked Pintail in the West Indies in order to increase awareness of, and support for, their islands;
2. Establish a monitoring program of White-cheeked Pintail populations inhabiting their islands;
3. Establish reserves encompassing all wetland types utilized by White-cheeked Pintails throughout the year;
4. Monitor and control predator populations on offshore cays and other areas used by females for nesting;
5. Establish legal protection (if not already available) and employ wardens to ensure that hunting laws are enforced.

Submitted by Lisa G. Sorenson and Bethany L. Woodworth

RECOGNIZING that tourism plays a vital role in the economies of most Caribbean countries and contributes greatly to the financial stability of this region;

OBSERVING that nature tourism or "eco-tourism" is a growing component of the Caribbean tourism industry and that its promotion is increasing within the region;

RECALLING that the mission of the Society of Caribbean Ornithology is to promote the study and conservation of birds and their habitats in the Caribbean;

THE SOCIETY OF CARIBBEAN ORNITHOLOGY

AGREES that nature tourism in the Caribbean can play a role in the conservation of birds and their habitats; but to do so, RECOMMENDS THAT

- (a) Mechanisms must be put in place to ensure that the wildlife resource will continue to exist and be protected from developmental pressures [to ensure sustainable use]. For example, prime birdwatching areas need to be protected as National Parks, Nature Reserves, or protected areas.
- (b) Environmental impacts to ecosystems where these resources live need to be minimized to ensure that the wildlife resource can survive. For example, pollution, solid waste management practices, and drainage of wetland areas may affect waterbird populations that are attractive to birdwatchers.
- (c) Partnerships among wildlife resource and environmental agencies, non-government conservation organizations, tourism ministries and industry, scientists, and local communities are vital in ensuring that nature tourism meets its objective of conserving biodiversity. Resource management plans and national tourism strategies need to be cooperative, multi-disciplinary, and integrative efforts.
- (d) Nature tourism should enhance and facilitate conservation benefits to the wildlife resource. For ex-

ample, landscaping and planting efforts around hotels or tourist areas should be of native species to encourage their use by native birds.

- (e) Nature tourism needs to provide direct economic benefits to wildlife resource agencies, conservation organizations, and local communities to ensure the conservation of the wildlife resource. For example, visitors could be required to pay a visitor's fee to enter National Parks and such user fees should be returned to the agency managing the resource and the local community.
- (f) Local communities should be involved in the process at all levels: such as decision-making and providing trained guides, and they should derive conservation and economic benefits as well.
- (g) Nature tourism ventures initiate *in-situ* public education campaigns.
- (h) The establishment of training programs for local and community residents as nature tour guides become a critical component of any nature tourism venture.
- (i) Governments, tour agencies, and non-government organizations should quantify the benefits and results of nature tourism and monitor the effects of such tourism on the wildlife resource.

Submitted by: Rosemarie S. Gnam, Ph.D. and Catherine Levy; Supported by: Gosse Bird Club

Targeted to:

Government ministries (tourism and natural resource)
 The Caribbean Tourism Organization
 UNEP regional program in the Caribbean
 The World Bank and Inter-American Development Bank
 Appropriate conservation organizations working in the Caribbean
 Caribbean bird tour operators and businesses.

RESOLUTION: APPRECIATION TO THE ORNITHOLOGY GROUP OF THE BAHAMAS NATIONAL TRUST AND THE MEMBERS OF THE LOCAL COMMITTEE

The Society of Caribbean Ornithology wishes to express its deepest appreciation to the Ornithology Group of the Bahamas National Trust and the members of the Local Committee for their assistance with the Annual Meeting. SCO gratefully acknowledges the dedication of these workers in planning and hosting the meeting. A special note of thanks to the Local Committee Chair, Ms. Carolyn Wardle, who worked diligently to make things "better in the Bahamas" for the SCO.

SCO was heartened by the spirit of hospitality within the Bahamas. South Ocean extended us a warm welcome and

made our meeting arrangements feel like we were at home. We were especially gratified to see the commitment of the Ministry of Agriculture, Tourism, the Bahamas National Trust, other local organizations, the College of the Bahamas, and the Bahamian people toward the conservation of birds and their habitats.

SCO hopes to assist the Bahamas in their future conservation efforts and to establish a long, cooperative relationship with the Bahamas.

DRAFT RESOLUTION:

CAÑO TIBURONES

WHEREAS Caño Tiburones, located between Río Grande de Arecibo and Río Grande de Manatí, is the largest natural freshwater wetland in Puerto Rico;

WHEREAS the Puerto Rico Department of Natural and Environmental Resources has recognized the unique conservation values of Caño Tiburones and recommends its designation as a Natural Reserve;

WHEREAS at least 45 species of aquatic birds have been recorded in Caño Tiburones;

WHEREAS Caño Tiburones has been drained by means of pumping since 1949, thus depleting severely the wetland's avian populations;

RECOGNIZING that protection of Caño Tiburones is of great conservation significance for populations of the locally threatened or endangered White-cheeked Pintails, Masked Ducks, Caribbean Coots, and West Indian Whistling-Ducks, and the federally endangered Brown Pelican;

OBSERVING that in 1995, when the pumps were not operating and water reached its natural levels, waterbird populations and the reproductive activity of native waterfowl species increased markedly;

OBSERVING that in 1996, after pumping operations were resumed, waterfowl breeding attempts were disrupted, brood survival was adversely affected, and waterbird populations were displaced;

RECALLING that the mission of the Society of Caribbean Ornithology is to promote the study and conservation of birds and their habitats in the Caribbean;

THE SOCIETY OF CARIBBEAN ORNITHOLOGY

AGREES that Caño Tiburones is unique, irreplaceable, and represents important habitat for migratory and resident avian

species in Puerto Rico;

RECOMMENDS THAT

- (a) All draining activities be suspended immediately.
- (b) All wetlands be transferred from the Puerto Rico Land Authority to the Puerto Rico Department of Natural and Environmental Resources, as it was done in the case of the Humacao Wildlife Refuge, southeastern Puerto Rico.
- (c) Caño Tiburones be designated and managed as a Wildlife Refuge by the Puerto Rico Department of Natural and Environmental Resources.
- (d) The local communities surrounding Caño Tiburones be informed through an education campaign of the benefits to conservation and the economic benefits to the local economy from the ensuing ecotourism.

Submitted by: José Colón, Pablo Torres-Báez; Society of Puerto Rican Ornithology

Target to:

Honorable Pedro Rosello
Governor of Puerto Rico
La Fortaleza, Apartado 82
San Juan, Puerto Rico 00901

Honorable Pedro Gelabert
Secretary
Puerto Rico Department of Natural and Environmental Resources
Apartado 5887
Puerta de Tierra, Puerto Rico 00906

Ramsar Office, Switzerland
U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service

DRAFT RESOLUTION:

ESPECIES EXÓTICAS

POR CUANTO las especies exóticas representan un riesgo ecológico a la flora y fauna nativa de Puerto Rico;

POR CUANTO esta reconocido por la comunidad científica mundial que las especies exóticas representa un peligro substancial a las especies y ecosistemas nativos;

POR CUANTO está reconocido por la comunidad científica mundial que los sistemas isleños son más vulnerables a los efectos adversos de las introducción de exóticos;

POR CUANTO en Puerto Rico se han reportado aproximadamente 70 especies de aves exóticas en el estado silvestre de las cuales ninguna fue introducida por acción oficial;

POR CUANTO el costo de remediar los impactos ecológicas adversos a la flora, fauna y bienestar del pueblo de Puerto Rico y otros ecosistemas a nivel mundial son onerosos;

REAFIRMANDO que la misión de la Sociedad Ornitológica Caribeña es promover el estudio y la conservación de las aves y sus hábitats en el Caribe;

ESTA DE ACUERDO que el mercadeo de aves exóticas consituye un peligro inminente a la integridad de la biodiversidad Isleña;

POR TANTO RECOMIENDA QUE:

- (a) Que el Departamento de Recursos Naturales y Ambientales de Puerto Rico prohíba la entrada de aves exóticas a la Isla;
- (b) Que se implante una campaña de educación ambiental para informar al público en general de los beneficios de fomentar la conservación de la flora y fauna de la Isla y las consecuencias adversas a nuestra fauna y flora por la presencia de aves exóticas en Puerto Rico.

Presentada por: José Colón, Pablo Torres-Báez; Sociedad Ornitológica de Puerto Rico

Enviar a:

Honorable Pedro Gelabert
Secretary
Puerto Rico Department of Natural and Environmental Resources
Apartado 5887
Puerta de Tierra, Puerto Rico 00906

Honorable Pedro Rosello
Governor of Puerto Rico
La Fortaleza, Apartado 82
San Juan, Puerto Rico 00901

DRAFT RESOLUTION:

CABO ROJO SALT FLATS

WHEREAS the Cabo Rojo salt flats is the largest system of its kind in Puerto Rico;

WHEREAS wetland and shoreline habitats are under increasing pressure from human encroachment in the Caribbean;

WHEREAS the Cabo Rojo salt flats serve as a migratory stopover and wintering site for at least 24 species of migratory shorebirds and breeding habitat for 4 shorebird species;

WHEREAS the Cabo Rojo salt flats also serves as breeding and wintering grounds for at least another 70 terrestrial and aquatic avian species, including some designated as threatened or endangered;

RECOGNIZING that the Cabo Rojo salt flats support a salt extraction operation important to the economy of the local communities of Pole Ojea and El Combate;

RECALLING that the mission of the Society of Caribbean Ornithology is to promote the study and conservation of birds and their habitats in the Caribbean;

THE SOCIETY OF CARIBBEAN ORNITHOLOGY

AGREES that the Cabo Rojo salt flats are unique, irreplaceable, and represent important habitat for migratory and resident avian species locally and regionally;

RECOMMENDS THAT

- (a) The United States Congress appropriates to the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service from the Land and Water Conservation Fund the necessary funds to acquire and protect the Cabo Rojo salt flats.
- (b) The Commonwealth of Puerto Rico Department of Natural and Environmental Resources and the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network designate the Cabo Rojo salt flats as a site of local and regional importance for resident and migratory shorebirds.
- (c) Management of the Cabo Rojo salt flats should be coordinated with other Commonwealth and Federal management units abutting or in close proximity to the salt flats to maximize wildlife conservation benefits.
- (d) The local communities of Pole Ojea and El Combate be informed through an education campaign of: 1) the

benefits to conservation, 2) the economic benefits to the local economy from the ensuing ecotourism, and 3) that the salt extraction operation is a compatible activity with envisioned conservation goals for the salt flats.

Submitted by: José Colón, Society of Puerto Rican Ornithology

Targeted to:

Honorable Bruce Babbitt
Secretary of the Interior
U. S. Department of the Interior
Washington, D. C. 20240

Senator Slade Gordon
Chairman, Interior Appropriations Subcommittee
United States Senate
Washington, D. C. 20510
Attn.: Kathleen Wheeler

Representative Ralph Regula
Chairman
Interior Appropriations Subcommittee
U. S. House of Representatives
Washington, D. C. 20515
Attn.: Deborah Weatherly

Senator Robert C. Byrd
Ranking Member, Interior Appropriations Subcommittee
United States Senate
Washington, D. C. 20510
Attn.: Sue Masica

Representative Sydney Yates
Ranking Member
Interior Appropriations Subcommittee
U. S. House of Representatives
Washington, D. C. 20515
Attn.: Del Davis

Representative José Serrano
House Appropriations Committee
U. S. House of Representatives
Washington, D. C. 20515

Honorable Carlos Romero Barcelo
Resident Commissioner
U. S. House of Representatives
Washington, D. C. 20515

DRAFT RESOLUTION: CONDOLENCES ON THE DEATH OF ROGER TORY PETERSON

WHEREAS the Society of Caribbean Ornithology learned of the death of Roger Tory Peterson only a few days before our annual general meeting in August; and
WHEREAS R. T. Peterson has been recognized as the instigator of the movement which popularized bird watching as a driving force in ornithology research and conservation through his illustrated field guide concept;

RECOGNIZING that this organization might not even exist without his pioneering contribution;
BE it resolved that the members of the Society of Caribbean Ornithology wish to acknowledge his immense contribution and extend their deepest sympathy and appreciation to his family.

ABSTRACTS OF PAPERS PRESENTED AT THE 1996 ANNUAL MEETING OF SCO AT NASSAU, BAHAMAS

IMPORTANCIA DE LOS ECOSISTEMAS URBANOS EN LA CONSERVACION DE LA AVIFAUNA INSULAR

SIMÓN GUERRERO

Laboratorio de Conducta Animal, Universidad Autónoma de Santo Domingo

En esta trabajo se insiste en la importancia de manejar los ambientes urbanos con criterios ecologicos, particularmente en el Caribe insular, debido a la fragilidad inherente a los ecosistemas isleños y al desarrollo caótico de sus ciudades. Se describen algunas de las tareas realizadas con el fin de mejorar los ecosistemas urbanos, tales como la siembra de

árboles y arbustos nativos en parques y áreas verdes, inventarios de aves silvestres en áreas urbanas, distribución de nido artificiales con el fin de mejorar las poblaciones de aves que crían en la ciudad y propuestas de creación de mini-refugios de vida silvestre. Finalmente, se discuten las implicaciones educativas del proyecto.

LOGROS RECIENTES EN EL PROYECTO DE RECUPERACION DE LA COTORRA PUERTORRIQUEÑA (AMAZONA VITTATA)

PABLO TORRES-BÁEZ

U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Río Grands Field Office, P.O. Box 1600, Río Grande, PR 00745

La cotorra puertorriqueña (*Amazona vittata*), el último psitácido endémico a las islas de la plataforma insular de Puerto Rico, está considerada entre las 10 especies de aves en mayor peligro de extinción en el mundo. Las razones principales para estar al borde de la extinción fue debido a la deforestación masiva de la isla a principios de siglo y a que anteriormente era cazada y se hurtaban los piciones de las cavidades para su venta como mascotas. En 1968 se inician los esfuerzos de conservación y se estimaba una única población silvestre de 24 individuos en el Bosque Nacional del Caribe en la Sierra de Luquillo. En 1972 se inician los

esfuerzos de propagación en cautiverio. Para agosto de 1989 se estimaba la población silvestre en 45-47 individuos. En septiembre de 1989 el huracán Hugo impactó severamente la Sierra de Luquillo provocando una pérdida aparente de 50% de la población silvestre. A partir de esta merma se intensificaron los esfuerzos de conservación y manejo, aumentando las observaciones de la población y modificando la vigilancia de nidos para maximizar la producción. Las nuevas técnicas de manejo que han sido implantadas han llevado la población silvestre a 40 individuos luego del paso del huracán.