

REPORT OF THE WHITE-CROWNED PIGEON  
(*PATAGIOENAS LEUCOCEPHALA*) WORKING GROUP

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The White-crowned Pigeon (*Patagioenas leucocephala*) Working Group was established in 2003 at the SCSCB meeting in Tobago. At that time the members identified the following focal areas for the work of the group: research, education, conservation, and coordination.

In the absence of the chairpersons, the main objective of the meeting was to bring persons together to brainstorm about the current status and needs of the species and to identify possible activities for the group for 2009–2010.

There was general agreement that the species should continue to be a priority for the SCSCB. Several people reported on what was happening on their islands.

ISLAND REPORTS

PUERTO RICO

Stefani Melvin is working with Frank Milan on distribution, survival, and habitat use in Puerto Rico.

ANTIGUA

Populations in Antigua appear to have increased over the last 5–8 yr, especially after Flora and Fauna International removed rats (*Rattus* spp.) from the offshore islands to protect endemic. Junior Prosper counted nests with the help of high school students on Rabbit and Birds Islands in 2009. The students helped to clear the vegetation making it possible to go into the colony at night and count the birds using night vision binoculars. He found a total of 1,072

nests; about half had one chick, the rest had two. Hunting is not an issue in Antigua; there are only about six persons who hunt.

BARBUDA

The problem of illegal hunting by rich French people from Guadeloupe continues. They come by boat and shoot large numbers of birds, filling their coolers. Large flocks of 1,000–2,000 White-crowned Pigeons fly along the sandbar of Codrington Lagoon, but it is very difficult to shoot them there.

ST. CROIX

The United States Fish and Wildlife Service is doing some work on the species. The species has been nesting on a man-made island for 40–50 years. The vegetation is very dense, however, and it is very difficult to count or estimate the population.

RECOMMENDATIONS

There was consensus that scientists and conservationists on all islands that support the White-crowned Pigeon face the same problems. These include development of standard survey methods to measure population distribution, sizes, and trends and to assess and describe seasonal movements within and between islands. It was agreed that a regional workshop on the species was urgently needed. Stefani Melvin suggested that she might be able to find financial support for a regional workshop on the White-crowned Pigeon.