

1. Set strategic direction (identification of priorities and targets).
2. Regional coordination (including effective information dissemination).
3. Regional representation (including lobbying, and the building of partnerships and alliances).
4. Facilitation (fundraising, establishment of best practices and use of sound science, dissemination of good models, training and capacity-building).
5. Monitoring and evaluation (defining successes).

Several general concerns were raised regarding the plan. Among them was the need for a broad consensus from across the Caribbean and from many different sectors; in fact, without a broad constituency of stakeholders involved, “plan” may be rather a misnomer. It was also stressed that many smaller islands do not have the “luxury” of dedicated bird conservation people, but rather general wildlife officers. The plan should therefore be flexible enough to adapt to a broader taxonomic approach.

An overall consensus existed that the plan needs to be finalized as soon as possible, to provide a uni-

fying strategy and guiding framework, and to capitalize on the new opportunities that have appeared since Tobago to start implementation (such as the range-wide waterbirds project). To achieve this, the following next steps were identified during a separate meeting of the SCSCB Waterbirds Task Force:

1. Ann Sutton will complete the plan in its current format as a specific product for NFWF (in satisfaction of project requirements).

2. BirdLife range-wide waterbird project staff (Rob Clay and Verónica Anadón) will draft a strategic vision document by the end of October 2005, using the existing draft plan and notes from the Tobago and Guadeloupe meetings. This document will concisely present SCSCB’s strategic framework for waterbird conservation in a style appropriate for “marketing” to potential donors. This document will be reviewed by persons representing the interests and needs of SCSCB, Waterbird Conservation Council, and BirdLife (Lisa Sorensen, Patricia Bradley, Ann Sutton, Jennifer Wheeler and David Wege). The goal is to have this document ready for publication by the end of 2005.

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WEST INDIAN WHISTLING-DUCK AND WETLANDS CONSERVATION PROJECT: SYMPOSIUM REPORT AND PROJECT NEWS

LISA SORENSON¹, PATRICIA BRADLEY², LOURDES MUGICA³, AND KATE WALLACE⁴

¹*Department of Biology, 5 Cummington St., Boston University, Boston, MA 02215, USA; e-mail: LSoren@bu.edu;* ²*P.O. Box 2394 GT, Grand Cayman, Cayman Islands, British West Indies; e-mail: pbrad@CandW.ky;* ³*Facultad de Biología, Universidad de la Habana, Calle 25 entre J e I, Vedado, Ciudad Habana, Cuba; e-mail: lmugica@fbio.uh.cu;* ⁴*Apdo. 3284, Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic; e-mail: cua809@yahoo.com*

THE WEST INDIAN WHISTLING-DUCK (WIWD) and Wetlands Conservation Project of the SCSCB has been working to reverse the decline of the globally threatened WIWD and the continuing loss of wetlands throughout the Caribbean. Crucial to achieving this is increasing the awareness and appreciation by local people for the value of wetlands and wetland biodiversity. Our strategy has been to produce educational materials on birds and wetlands, and through intensive workshops, train enthusiastic teachers and local partner staff, who in turn, teach children and train others. This “multiplier

effect” has helped us to reach a large number of people, in order to develop a network of local people that care about birds and wetlands and become involved in their conservation. The project also develops *Watchable Wildlife Ponds*—wetlands equipped with interpretive signs and viewing areas where local people, school groups, and tourists can easily observe whistling-ducks and other wildlife.

Funding from several sources enabled us to continue our programme of wetlands outreach and education. Since 2002, a total of 2,084 teachers and natural resource staff have been trained in 78 work-

shops in 11 countries (Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, British Virgin Islands, Bahamas, Cayman Islands, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Puerto Rico, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and Trinidad and Tobago). Many teachers, ecotour companies, and partner agencies throughout the Caribbean are using the book and other project materials in their outreach programs (e.g., summer camps) and environmental days (e.g., World Wetlands Day, Caribbean Endemic Bird Festival). The project has had the greatest success in countries with strong partner NGOs and individual leaders and where funding for activities beyond initial training workshops has been available (Bahamas, Jamaica, Dominican Republic, Puerto Rico and Cuba). In this symposium, project partners had the opportunity to describe the unique ways that they are carrying out the WIWD Project locally, share their activities and accomplishments, and discuss the main challenges and difficulties faced and solutions to shared problems. Symposium contributors included: Nadia Watson, Kate Wallace, Lourdes Mugica and Beatriz Hernandez. WIWD Project activities were also presented by Eliezer Nieves, Lynn Gape and Lisa Sorenson in the Education and Awareness Symposium.

Watson reported on the activities of the Jamaican Environment Trust's (JET) Schools' Environment Programme (SEP). SEP is a dynamic education programme implemented in 353 schools across Jamaica. Through SEP, JET conducts two sets of workshops annually which are geared towards increasing environmental awareness of teachers,

NGOs, government personnel and community leaders, providing resource materials and finding opportunities for infusing environmental content into the curriculum. JET and the West Indian Whistling Duck (WIWD) Project collaborated on the delivery of two sets of workshops during 2003-2005 entitled "Wetlands, not Wastelands" and "Wetland Wonders." A total of 20 workshops have been conducted, training over 500 persons. Watson reported on the activities carried out in the workshops and the many positive responses received from participants. Analysis of wetland quizzes taken by participants both before and after the presentations and activities showed that before presentations the quiz results exhibit a distribution skewed to the left, with most individuals obtaining scores between 20% and 30% (Fig. 1). After the presentations, the distribution is skewed to the right, with the majority of persons obtaining between 70% and 80%. This suggests the activities conducted and presentations made during the workshop added to the participants' knowledge.

Wallace, with the support of Sociedad Ornitológica de la Hispaniola, reports great success in implementing the "Yaguaza Project" in the Dominican Republic despite many local challenges. Fifteen wetlands education training workshops have been delivered over the last two years to a diverse group of people including teachers, community leaders, environmental educators, student volunteers, tour guides, children, and institutional technical staff. Settings vary from city locations where the electricity goes off in the middle of a presentation to rural

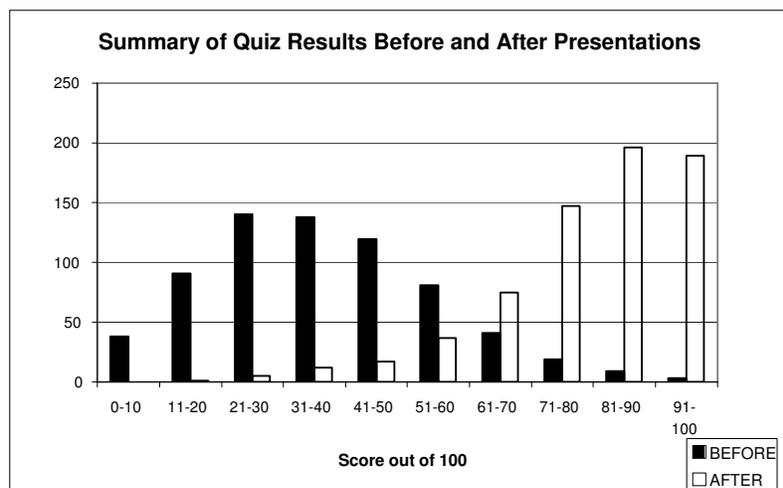


Fig. 1. Summary of wetland quiz results before and after wetland workshop presentations and activities.

settings that never have electricity. The flexibility of the presenters as well as the participants often results in encounters that are fun as well as productive. Wallace describes one memorable workshop: "It was terribly hot, there was no electricity, everyone arrived late, and the group seemed lackluster in their response to the presentations and activities. We were feeling a bit discouraged, yet during the field trip the next day, while having the snack, people began to talk and very soon they expressed the need for a local committee to carry on the conservation work of the community, so they formed a group right then and there!" Wallace and co-facilitators were thrilled with this unexpected result and will continue to support the work of the group. During fall 2005, Wallace also organized the building of an observation platform at a new *Watchable Wildlife Pond* site in Parque Nacional Mirador del Norte in Santo Domingo. The WIWD Project donated 12 pairs of binoculars and spotting scope and tripod to the Park so that they could initiate bird watching activities with visitors to the park as well as form a local birding group.

Mugica and her colleagues in Cuba described the environmental education campaign that was developed in rural communities associated with rice paddies and natural coastal wetlands. Components of the program involved: four workshops with educators and community leaders to launch the Spanish version of the book *Los Maravillosos Humedales del Caribe Insular*, contests in different artistic mediums related to the protection of wetlands, a photographic exhibition on wetlands, and slide shows for different sectors of the population. A community festival was also organized. It included activities with children and a special commemorative stamp. Site Support Groups, "Wetland Friends," were established, which will help continue the work of the project in the future. Additionally, a guidebook to the birds of the Cuban wetlands was written and many materials were donated to the libraries and schools in both localities. Approximately 8,000 people participated directly in one or more activities. According to the questionnaires, the participation in the different activities, and the diverse local initiatives, the objectives of the project had been fulfilled: increasing knowledge about wetlands and the need for their protection. A movement has begun in both municipalities to continue this work, for which the leaders of the project continue offering help in the future on an advisory level.

Although Hernandez was not able to give her presentation due to illness, she reported on the ac-

tivities of the "Chiriría Project" in Puerto Rico. Collaborating with the IBA Program in Puerto Rico and with additional funding from Shell Chemical Yabucoa, three wetlands workshops were organized and delivered as well as slide shows, a puppet show and a first annual Bird Festival hosted by the Shell Corporation. In addition, two bi-annual newsletters were printed and distributed to educators and conservation organizations around the island. More than 150 people were reached by the effort. As a result both the Conservation Trust of Puerto Rico, the largest environmental non-profit organization in the island, and the Puerto Rican Ornithological Society adopted the project in 2005 and will sustain the program into the future.

The Bahamas National Trust sponsored two wetlands workshops in New Providence during 2004-2005 for 29 teachers that are implementing a 10-session curriculum on wetlands (using *Wondrous West Indian Wetlands*) in their schools. Lynn Gape and Lisa Sorenson facilitated the workshops which were well-received. All teachers received 'mini-kits' to carry out their lessons and activities. The BNT continues to do a terrific job delivering performances of their critically acclaimed *Wetlands Are Wild* puppet show; over 400 Bahamian students attended recent performances.

During 2004-2005, seven wetlands education training workshops were also held in the Cayman Islands, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Anguilla, and Tortola, British Virgin Islands. The two-day workshops, facilitated by Sorenson and Michele Kading (Head Interpreter, Oak Hammock Marsh Interpretive Centre), received much positive feedback from participants. Many commented on what an "eye-opener" the workshop was for them and pledged to use the materials and new knowledge in their classrooms and communities. For more details on these workshops, see Birdlife Caribbean Newsletters (No. 02 and 03).

Other project news.—After seeing and learning about WIWDs during a wetlands workshop in Antigua in 2002, Joseph Prosper initiated a WIWD monitoring program which he continues today. He has recruited his colleagues, friends; relatives and residents living near the various wetlands to take part in monthly island-wide simultaneous duck count he organizes. Prosper has amassed a wealth of data on the natural history of WIWDs in Antigua, including information on their numbers, distribution, habitat use, breeding ecology, nesting sites, breeding success, and causes of mortality of adults and ducklings. He has also gathered information on

the status of wetlands in Antigua. Prosper presented results from his research at the past two Society for the Conservation and Study of Caribbean Bird meetings (Tobago in 2003 and Guadeloupe in 2005) and has written a paper on his work for submission to the *Journal of Caribbean Ornithology*. Recognizing that some of the threats to the ducks are from impacts of area users and development, Mr. Prosper has used a participatory approach to WIWD conservation. He works on raising public awareness of the duck's threatened status by talking with community members and hunters about the bird and involving them in his research and monitoring efforts. Prosper, a high school teacher, also shares his knowledge with his students, taking them on wetland field trips whenever the opportunity presents itself. Efforts by citizen scientists like Mr. Prosper are critically important in countries such as Antigua where there are very few trained wildlife professionals. The SCSCB is proud of his dedication and efforts.

A major achievement in 2004 was the completion of the fully revised and updated Second Edition of the English version of the workbook *Wondrous West Indian Wetlands: Teachers' Resource Book*. The Spanish version of the book *Los Maravillosos Humedales del Caribe Insular: Libro de Trabajo para el Maestro*, published in 2003, is available and in use by a number of agencies and organizations in Puerto Rico, Cuba and the Dominican Republic.

The book has been translated into French and the French version will be published this year. Other new outreach materials available include: *Mangroves of the Caribbean Identification Guide*, *Seabirds of the Caribbean* identification card and slide show, and a *Save Our Seabirds* poster (English and Spanish versions). For funding for materials and project activities, we extend our sincere thanks to the US Fish and Wildlife Service (Wildlife Without Borders and Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act Fund), BirdLife International, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. We are also thankful to the many people that have contributed their time and talents to this project in countless ways.

The WIWD Project recently received \$40,000 from EPA's Environmental Education Grant Program for a project entitled *Community Education for the Wise-Use of the Globally Important Caño Tiburones Wetland in Puerto Rico*. The Puerto Rican Ornithological Society, the local project partner in this grant, has already delivered the first workshops. The Conservation Trust of Puerto Rico is another new project partner that has been doing a terrific job delivering workshops to different communities near the Trust's wetland properties. We welcome these two new partners to the project and look forward to hearing more about their activities in the future.

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PROPOSAL TO STANDARDIZE SPANISH NAMES OF BIRDS

SERGIO A. COLÓN-LÓPEZ¹, VERONICA ANADÓN-IRIZARRY², AND SHEYLDA N. DÍAZ-MÉNDEZ³

¹HC-03 Box 20658 Arecibo, PR 00612, e-mail: sergiocolon@yahoo.com; ²Caribbean Program BirdLife International, Rio Canas 2107 Colorado St. Ponce, Puerto Rico 00728-1824; e-mail: nesopingus@yahoo.com;

³Puerto Rican Ornithological Society, PO Box 195166, San Juan, PR 00919-5166; e-mail: otoarina77@yahoo.com

IN RECENT YEARS, birdwatching in the Caribbean (and Latin America) has gained importance and popularity and many people with diverse academic backgrounds and interests in birds have joined professional ornithologists in the study and observation of birds. Increased participation and interest in birdwatching activities has led to increased communication between these non-professional ornithologists ("birders") and ornithologists in Spanish-speaking countries. There is also increased exchange between

Spanish-speaking countries within the Caribbean as well as with other countries outside the region. Standardizing Spanish bird names will facilitate communication between Spanish speakers without using the scientific names. The proposal to standardize Spanish names was submitted by Sergio Colón who pursues the support and implementation of the SCSCB, as well as Cuba, the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico. The purpose of the roundtable discussion (attended by 15 people, mostly from