

Ambos experimentos indican que las Palomas Sabaneras producidas en cautiverios son vulnerables a depredadores, principalmente halcones. Por otro lado tenemos que reconocer que la cacería ilegal sigue siendo un problema en el área de Cidra. Un problema técnico es el que las palomas salen fuera del alcance del equipo de radiotelegrafía y no pueden detectarse por períodos prolongados.

Las Palomas Sabaneras criadas por nodrizas o que son manipuladas durante su crecimiento aparentan ser de poco valor para un programa de liberación. Sin embargo, éstas resultan ser de gran valor al momento de reproducirlas en

cautiverio. Al presente algunas de las palomas criadas por nodrizas y a mano se están reproduciendo de manera natural en nuestras nuevas facilidades. En el próximo experimento se van a liberar cinco palomas criadas por sus propios padres (**natural**) y tres criadas por Palomas Collarinas (**nodriza**). Ambos grupos se van a acondicionar por un período de ocho semanas en la jaula de vuelo y a la presencia de depredadores como el Guaraguao. Dentro de este tiempo se llevará a cabo una campaña educativa con miras a reducir la cacería ilegal en el área de Cidra y pueblos circundantes.

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AFRICANIZED HONEYBEES IN THE GREATER ANTILLES

FRANCISCO J. VILELLA

U. S. National Biological Survey, Mississippi Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit, P. O. Drawer BX, Department of Wildlife and Fisheries, Mississippi State University, Mississippi State, Mississippi 39762 U. S. A.

In June 1994, the Puerto Rico Department of Agriculture confirmed that Africanized honeybees (*Apis mellifera* var. *scutellata*; AHB) had become established in Puerto Rico. Within six months, all honeybees in Puerto Rico had been Africanized. AHB probably reached Puerto Rico in contaminated cargo ships from Central or South America. They can only be distinguished from European honeybees (*Apis mellifera* var. *ligustica*) through morphometric analysis by qualified entomological laboratories. AHB first appeared in South America in the 1970s, and have now spread to the southwestern United States. In contrast with European honeybees, they are generalists in their requirements for nest sites, have a greater tendency to disperse, and are much more

aggressive. Whereas a colony of European honeybees will swarm 1-3 times a year, AHB colonies will swarm up to 30 times a year. They also have a defense radius of 30 m, compared with European honeybees with a defense radius of 1 m.

The effect of AHB on cavity nesting birds in Puerto Rico is yet to be determined, but there has already been a marked increase in honeybee occupation of tree cavities managed for the endangered Puerto Rican Parrot (*Amazona vittata*) within the Caribbean National Forest. Wildlife technicians from the U. S. Department of Agriculture-Forest Service report honeybees have occupied up to 70 percent of the cavities managed for parrots in some areas, including those currently used

Africanized Honeybees in the Greater Antilles (continued)

for nesting. Cavities are being constantly monitored and beehives destroyed as rapidly as possible, given the limitation of manpower. As the 1995 parrot nesting season approaches, managers can not help experiencing a feeling of distress. Following the passage of Hurricane Hugo, the wild parrot population had been exhibiting signs of increased productivity as well as a limited expansion in range and use of historical cavity-producing tree species (*Dacryodes excelsa*). We will have to wait to determine if the additional threat to parrot nesting pairs imposed by AHB will be cause for major concern.

Given the high degree of commercial shipping between Puerto Rico and the rest of the Caribbean, members of the Society of Caribbean Ornithology should communicate this matter to their respective government agriculture agencies. A brochure with information on AHB for apiculturists and the general public can be obtained from the Puerto Rico Department of Agriculture (P. O. Box 21120, San Juan, Puerto Rico 00928-1120). Society members with E-mail capabilities can access a bulletin board maintained exclusively for AHB information by the U. S. Department of Agriculture (E-mail address: twillis@esusda.gob).

FORUM

SOCIETY OF CARIBBEAN ORNITHOLOGY MEETINGS AND AGENDA: SOME PROBLEMS AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO REFLECT ON

FRANK F. RIVERA-MILÁN, ROSEMARIE GNAM, AND HERBERT A. RAFFAELE
*U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Office of International Affairs,
4401 N. Fairfax Dr., Suite 860-ARLSQ, Arlington, Virginia 22203*

The Society of Caribbean Ornithology (SCO) is facing new challenges and problems to conduct its annual meetings and promote its goals and objectives successfully. Here we identify some of the problems and provide a series of recommendations for the consideration of the Executive Board. It is hoped that our points of view are used constructively by the Board to improve the ways in which the Society serves to promote the conservation of birds and their habitats in the region. The problems and recommendations are the following:

(1) The annual meeting is too long and is not interactive enough.

Recommendation.—To arrange oral presentations by theme (say, population ecology, wildlife and habitat management, avian genetics and taxonomy, etc.) and conduct sessions simultaneously in different rooms to finish in one day; and, then, dedicate two days to conduct round-table discussions about local and regional conservation issues, resolutions, policy statements, and action plans.

(2) The participation of local individuals (researchers, managers, administrators, educators, policymakers, etc.) should always be a priority for the SCO. How many persons from Martinique attended the meeting and/or the monitoring and conservation education workshops this year? Which are the major conservation problems affecting the avifauna of Martinique and can we assist in addressing them? Is there a Minister of the Environment in Martinique and can we help train its personnel? Are there school teachers interested in environmental education and conservation issues? To whom we can offer additional skills? The coordination of activities

was not an easy task this year, but we could have done a better job in assuring enough local participation and discussing local and regional conservation issues affecting birds and their habitats. Once more, we have not been interactive enough.

Recommendation.—Each year the SCO's Local Committee should write an article for *El Pitirre* providing information about the most important environmental and conservation problems affecting the avifauna of the country/island in turn. Since experts from around the Hemisphere will spend almost a week in their island, special attention should be given to enabling individuals from the host island/country to get training, share experiences, and receive orientation to solve applied problems. This level of interaction is badly needed to meet the goals of the SCO.

(3) The SCO is not merely a "scientific" organization. Nevertheless we continue conducting our meetings as if our major concern was the science of birds ("ornithology"). We need to explore new alternatives to make the annual meetings less science-oriented and more country/island- and people-oriented.

Recommendation.—To change the structure of the meeting and spend more time promoting fruitful interactions among members (see above).

(4) To this day, the SCO has not developed financial sustainability.

Recommendation.—To develop fund raising strategies and generate some savings each year. For example, we can