

| 2010

Annual Report

*Rainforest Biodiversity Group
Annual Report
January 1, 2010 to December 31, 2010*



OUR MISSION

Rainforest Biodiversity Group's mission is to protect biological diversity, including migratory bird species, through the protection of habitat for the Great Green Macaw and the creation of local conservation initiatives. We accomplish our goals through the creation and support of public, as well as, private conservation initiatives. This annual report covers our activities for the calendar year of 2010.

ANNUAL SUMMARY

Rainforest Biodiversity Group (RBG) continued to focus its efforts on the third phase of the Costa Rican Bird Route (CRBR) project in 2010. The focus of Phase III has been establishing self-sustainability of the Costa Rican Bird Route with education and training for the communities involved, and on expanding promotion of the CRBR. To help fund these efforts, RBG, in conjunction with one of its partners, the Sarapiquí Conservation Learning Center, was awarded a new grant in the amount of \$60,000 through the Programme for South-South Cooperation (PSC) with funding from the Kingdom of the Netherlands. Both the PSC 2009 grant (September 2009 – June 2010) and our second Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act grant (June 2008 – June 2010), allowed RBG to maintain Raquel Gomez as the CRBR Coordinator until August 2010. Duties of the CRBR Coordinator included maintaining communication and outreach activities with reserve communities, owners, and tour operators; and coordinating sustainable tourism, conservation, and guide training workshops with landowners and local guides. RBG continued to have Andrew Rothman serve as Director of the Bird Route project for 2010, and Holly Robertson serve as project assistant.

In order to support bird monitoring efforts in the region of the Costa Rican Bird Route, RBG continued to organize an annual Christmas Bird Count within the Maquenque Bird Count Circle on January 2010. The Maquenque circle encompasses seven of the Bird Route sites, and on January 9, 16 volunteer ornithologists and bird guides banded at five of these seven sites logging 241 species and 3,662 individuals. RBG hopes to continue this annual birding effort.

In 2010 Rainforest Biodiversity Group conducted its first monitoring visit of the easement property in Matapalo, Costa Rica. In 2009, the organization expanded its habitat conservation efforts into land trust work by negotiating and accepting the donation of a conservation easement on 292 acres of land on the Pacific coast of Costa Rica. In October of 2010, RBG hired Andrea Herrera of CEDARENA to conduct the monitoring visit to ensure that conservation purposes of the land are intact. CEDARENA (Center for Environmental and Natural Resource Law) is a Costa Rican organization that specializes in easements within the country. The report found nothing amiss with the property. Rainforest Biodiversity Group will continue to monitor the property at least once every 12 months.

Rainforest Biodiversity Group continued to carry out promotional and fundraising activities in 2010 to further build the capacity of the organization, through networking, fundraising events, and a presence at local festivals. RBG held its fourth annual Bird-a-Thon fundraiser, enjoying the best turn out to date, with 11 birders and 47 donors for a total raised of \$2,702.20 falling just short of our goal of \$3,000.

RBG also continued to provide and expand education and outreach services to its members via newsletters, email updates, social networking sites on the web, and educational presentations.

2010 ACTIVITIES

The Rainforest Biodiversity Group completed the following during the 2010 Annual Cycle.

1. Maintained staff and operational needs for the Costa Rican Bird Route project:
 - a. RBG maintained the services of Raquel Gomez as Bird Route Coordinator in Costa Rica from January to August.
 - b. RBG maintained the services of Holly Robertson and Andrew Rothman as project assistants to the Costa Rican Bird Route in the United States.
2. Continued with the sale and distribution of the Costa Rican Bird Route Map and Guide:
 - a. In 2010, 74 Map and Guides were sold for a net profit of \$917.16. Approximately 50-100 more were distributed at presentations and talks.
3. Organized a Bird Identification Workshop at Chilamate Rainforest Eco-Retreat for local and regional guides.
 - a. The workshop, conducted by Margherita Botazzi, had 20 participants in attendance, eight of which were from Costa Rican Bird Route sites. The other participants were free-lance bird guides from the Sarapiquí region.
 - b. The course included both practical and classroom sessions. During the practical sessions, the participants went birding in the early morning, afternoon and evening to observe different local species. *Pictured below: participants in workshop.*



4. Four private reserves were added to the Costa Rican Bird Route:
 - a. Eco-Lodge Yatama, CRBR's 15th site, is only 2 hrs from San Jose and 1 hour from Puerto Viejo de Sarapiquí. At 470 meters elevation and located in the buffer zone of Braulio Carrillo national park, is a wonderful getaway with a large diversity of plants, insects, amphibians, mammals and of course birds.

- b. Aguas Silvestres, CRBR's 16th site, is owned by Edgar Corrales. The forest of Aguas Silvestres itself protects the Bijagual River and its watershed. Two precious waterfalls and multiple swimming holes make Aguas Silvestres (or "Wild Waters" in English) a very special place to visit, bird watch and explore.
 - c. Tapiria National Refuge, CRBR's 17th site, is located just outside the bustling town of Puerto Viejo de Sarapiquí. The lake and surrounding forest is now managed together by the Ministry of Energy and Environment and the community of Rojamaca to protect these natural resources.
 - d. Catarata del Toro, CRBR's 18th site, is a hidden gem of Costa Rica. The top of the canyon offers great views, and pre-montane wet forest with lots of hummingbirds and other mid-elevation species.
5. Completed second site visit for each Costa Rican Bird Route site and completed evaluations for site performance and sustainability based on the action plans.
 6. Awarded grant through the Program for South-South Cooperation titled "Supporting Conservation through Tourism Development in the Forest Areas of Benin and Costa Rica".

WITH FUNDS FROM THIS GRANT, ITEMS 7-17 WERE ACCOMPLISHED:

7. Held a community meeting in Chilamate, Costa Rica on February 5 and 6 with the theme of "Moving Towards a Sustainable Rural Ecotourism." 18 people attended, nine of which were from five bird route sites, and the remainder of participants were from surrounding communities.
 - a. The objective of the meeting was to facilitate a sharing of experiences from existing projects and to learn about ways to make projects more sustainable.
8. In conjunction with the Sarapiquí Conservation Learning Center, hosted delegates from partner organization, Eco-Benin, from February 9-16. The visit consisted of:
 - a. A tour of some of the Costa Rican Bird Route sites.
 - b. Meetings with key personnel in Costa Rica to discuss sustainable tourism operations in Costa Rica.

Pictured below: Andrew Rothman with Benin delegate, Nadine Worou, and to the right, Benin delegate Maxim Djondo.



9. Conducted a workshop on the administration of a sustainable business on March 20 and 21 in Chilamate, Costa Rica.
 - a. Objectives of the workshop were to analyze the current state of small business enterprises in the region; learn basic accounting principles for organizing bank accounts and managing budgets; approach basic marketing concepts; and learn the principles of creating business plans.
 - b. 18 people from at least 8 different communities participated in the workshop.
10. Conducted an environmental interpretation workshop in two locations within the Costa Rican Bird Route during the month of May.
 - a. Conducted by Jon Kohl, an interpretation specialist, at Tirimbina Rainforest Center for those in the Sarapiquí region, and at Maquenque Eco-Lodge for those in the San Carlos region.
 - b. The workshop introduced participants to what a “message” is, why it is important for guided tours to have an interpretive message, and how to develop an interpretive theme.
11. Conducted a workshop on Sustainable Architecture and Ecological Gardens on June 5 and 6 at Selva Verde Lodge, Chilamate, Costa Rica.
 - a. Objectives of the workshop was to present participants with basic information on sustainable architecture and the relationship between human constructions and the natural world as well as: how to utilize resources efficiently; how to implement energy systems that save money; how to design strategically for personal health and the utilization of natural materials; and how to design ecological gardens and productive landscapes.
 - b. 19 people from 8 different communities participated.
12. Designed and printed 1,500 copies of the second edition of the Costa Rican Bird Route Map and Guide.
 - a. Second edition of the Map and Guide is in spiral booklet format and is in both Spanish and English.
 - b. The second edition also features a fold out map, site information, bird check list and perforated “birding calling cards” to be left at businesses within the Costa Rican Bird Route.
13. Conducted an environmental education workshop at the Sarapiquí Conservation Learning Center (CECOS) in Chilamate, Sarapiquí for the sites of the Costa Rican Bird Route and other participants from the local community.

- a. The purpose of the workshop was to demonstrate a variety of environmental education activities that can then be conducted with school groups and children in the community. Participants were also given a booklet containing detailed instructions of all the activities.



14. Four representatives from Rainforest Biodiversity Group (RBG) and the Sarapiquí Conservation Learning Center (CECOS) of the Costa Rican side of the Program for South-South Cooperation project visited the Benin partner Eco-Benin in Benin.

- a. The objectives of this visit were to conduct reciprocal activities in Benin that had been conducted in Costa Rica, as well as learn about the opportunities and obstacles for sustainable tourism development in Benin, how these are faced and how they might relate to ecotourism development in Costa Rica.
- b. The main activities during the visit were trips to the Lama Forest Reserve and possible sites on the Benin Eco-Route and presentations to local communities on tools and ideas for developing environmental education and economic development within the local communities within the Lama Forest.
- c. The following results were achieved:
 - Provided update to PSSC secretariat in Benin on advancements of projects
 - Provided the Lama Forest communities with an environmental education activity to conduct with local schools and visitors
 - Provided the Lama Forest communities with ideas for tourism promotion, sustainable tourism development, environmental education and souvenir production.
 - Provided the Lama Forest communities with examples of possible art and souvenirs to sell to visitors
 - Developed a list of tourism and sustainable development recommendations for Lama Forest
 - Developed an “action plan” to implement recommendations developed by

Costa Rican representatives.

- Developed an outline for development of Benin Eco-Route
- Developed an outline for a Benin Eco-Route tour
- Obtained contact information from various persons who work in tourism and sustainable development in Benin to continue information distribution and communication between the two countries
- Provided Eco-Benin staff with copies of Costa Rican Bird Route Map and Guide, promotional materials and sustainable standards used in Costa Rican Bird Route project



Pictured above: Andrew Rothman, Gerardo Vega and Ussy Ortiz in Benin

15. Held a second community meeting on June 26-27 where three of the participants from the Costa Rica mission to Benin were able to give presentations about their experiences in Benin. Community participants were able to draw some comparisons about the state of “eco-tourism” in each country and develop a list of ideas that could be of benefit to projects in both countries.
16. Designed and printed Costa Rican Bird Route hats and pencils for distribution within the Costa Rican Bird Route communities.
17. Developed and printed an environmental education packet for distribution with the Costa Rican Bird Route.
18. Conducted the inaugural Maquenque Christmas Bird Count on January 9th with the help of the Costa Rican Ornithological Society:
 - a. A total of 16 volunteers, made up of ornithologists and experienced bird guides, counted 241 species and 3,662 individuals at eight sites within the Maquenque Bird Count Circle.
19. Completed Costa Rican Bird Route Operation Plan.

20. Created a CRBR Steering Committee for future leadership and development of the Costa Rican Bird Route.

- a. Steering committee was nominated and voted on by sites of the Costa Rican Bird Route and included: Alvaro Lopez, Willy Pineda, Davis Azofeifa, Ussy Ortiz and Raquel Gomez.

21. Promotion of Costa Rican Bird Route:

- a. The Costa Rican Bird Route and the Bird Route site Selva Verde Lodge were featured on an episode of Birding Adventures TV.
- b. Costa Rican Bird Route mentioned in Costa Rican publication newspaper *La Nacion*.
- c. The Costa Rican Bird Route mentioned in U.S. publications including the *New York Times* and AAA World Magazine.
- d. The Costa Rican Bird Route website was updated (www.costaricanbirdroute.com).

22. Conducted first monitoring visit of conservation easement property in Matapalo on the Pacific Coast of Costa Rica:

- a. This property consists of mostly undisturbed very humid tropical forest and some agricultural lands, and is surrounded by land that is rapidly being developed for housing, tourism, and palm oil plantations. Preservation of this property will provide critical habitat for many species of birds and mammals.
- b. Monitoring visit conducted by local organization CEDARENA; nothing untoward was found on property.

23. Added new member, Lauren Barlow, to the Advisory Committee.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

Associations:

- Maintained membership within Executive Committee of San Juan – La Selva Biological Corridor.
- Became a member of Alliance for Zero Extinction.
- Maintained membership in the International Ecotourism Society and Bird Conservation Alliance.
- Maintained partnerships with the Sarapiquí Conservation Learning Center, the Sarapiquí Tourism Board, Partners in Flight, and the Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative.

Grants

- Awarded grant proposal for the amount of \$60,000 to the Programme for South-South

- Cooperation (PSC), funded by the Kingdom of the Netherlands.
- Completed second Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Promotional Activities/ Outreach:

- Held fundraising activities: Spring Bird-a-Thon, and a booth at the Orton Park Festival in Madison, Wisconsin.
- Sponsored the event “Orioles to Ocelots: Wisconsin’s Connection to Costa Rica,” organized by the Natural Resources Foundation and the Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative and held at the Milwaukee County Zoo.
- Conducted presentations about RBG at Ripon College, Horicon Marsh, University of Wisconsin-Madison Vet School, University of Wisconsin-Madison and R.E.I. store.
- Continued the fundraising mechanism of selling customized packages of shade grown coffee supplied through Just Coffee Coop.
- Designed and printed 4th Annual Bird-a-Thon t-shirts to be distributed to birders and to any donor who pledged at least \$50.
- Renewed subscription to Constant Contact, the program used to maintain the distribution list and to create professional emails to constituents.
- Increased activity and postings on The Macaw, the organization’s official blog.
- Maintained a Facebook and Twitter presence.
- In 2010 RBG published 3 newsletters: Issues number 39, 40, and 41. The newsletter list serve contains approximately 600 contacts.
- Continued to use Constant Contact to electronically inform supporters of news and events in addition to the newsletters.

RBG MEMBERSHIP:

Board of Directors:

In 2010 the Board of Directors still maintained two parts, an Executive Board, and an Advisory Board. The Executive Board held voting responsibilities on issues and policies, and the advisory board provided recommendations and oversight of the development and implementation of these same topics, as well as acting as the tie-breaking vote.

The Executive Board 2010:

President: Holly Robertson

Past President: Andrew Rothman
Vice President: Russ Rothman
Secretary: Rebecca Osborn
Treasurer: Daniel Schneider

The Advisory Board 2010:

Lauren Barlow
Bobbie Webster
Bill Volkert

General membership:

In 2010, the board of directors maintained that any person who donated \$25 or more would automatically be granted a membership, regardless of the nature of their donation. Based on this policy, 54 people were considered members of RBG in 2010. Six of these were officially renewing memberships.

2010 Donors/General Members/Bird-A-Thon Participants

Last Name	First Name
Weber	Will
Bargaus	Gretchen
Anderson	Paul
Service Birding	
Dunn	Craig & Cynthia
Trivedi	Avani
Barlow	Lauren
Crossley	Alan
Waters	Jerry
Klinkner	Robin
Jabis	Meredith
Jabis	Diana
Sottili	Barnard & Carol
O'Connor	Mickey
Schneider	Lauren
Baltz	Adam
Osborn	Rebecca
Robertson	Holly
Christopoulos	James
Rothman	Andrew
Petherick	Chris & Sue
Fandel	Sharon & Craig
Fandel	Ray & Mary
Gericke	Steve & Vi
O'Connor	Mickey
Austin	J.

Schneider	Daniel
Heagman	Cheryl
Steinberg	Howard
Sullivan	Linda
Crump	Marty
Hubbard-VanStelle	Lindsay
Nelson	Jan
Nelson	Rick
Nelson	Alexa
Nelson	Aaron
Schneider	Kay
Baltz	Julie
Dorris	Karen
Roethe	Jim
Lopez	Davin
Ryan	Tami
Syverud	Lee
Langenberg	Julie
Osborn	Larry & Paula
Roethe	Judy
Harris	Lillian
Naputi	Vera
Crossley	Alan & Karen
Buser	Hajira
Buser	Art
Christopoulos	Lucy
Riemer	Louise & Davis
Saunders	Shane
Panetti	Dan
Petherick	Richard
Checota	Robin
Faller	Steve
Wood	Mary
Shunta	Sue
Kuhfahl	Ruth
Nolan	Natalie
Shunta	Judy
Burns	Diane
Bermel	Cindy
Lopez del Moral	Judy
Losi	Mary
Ferrer	Chase

Volunteers:

There were many people who were involved with RBG and helped with the development and oversight of the Costa Rican Bird Route and other RBG work. These people and organizations include Holly Robertson, Andrew Rothman, Russ Rothman, Daniel Schneider, Rebecca Osborn, Cassie Jurenci, Lauren Barlow, Raquel Gomez, Guisselle Monge, Olivier Chassot, Jon Kohl, Pablo Elizondo, Darrell and Lorna Smith, Roy May, Terry Rich, Jim Zook, Peter McKeever,

Rodolfo Alvarado, Marisol Mayorga, Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative, Rainforest Alliance, Tropical Science Center, the Costa Rican Ornithological Association, Orlando Vargas, Luis Vargas, Diego Vargas, Gerardo Vega, Adolfo Downs, David Segura, Alberto Segura, Patrick O'Donnell, Paul Murgatroyd, Didier Ortega, Ana V. Wo Ching, Antonio Cortes, Jose Salazar, Magda Araya, Priscilla Hurtado, Rose Marie Menacho, Gustavo Flores Yzaguirre, Guido Quesada, Adilio Antonio Zeledon, Paul Pickering, Jose Fallas, and Esteban Biamonte.

RBG General Accounting (non-grant related)

Cash Donations 2010:

2010 Total Donations: \$10,454.86

Membership total: \$1,625.45
Bird-a-Thon donations: \$2,702.20
Orton Park Festival donations: \$660.75
Easement donations: \$100.00
Donations from volunteers: \$900.00
Other donations: \$134.56
Merchandise Sales: \$1,325.21
Other income (interest, etc): \$3,003.69

In-kind Donations 2010:

Work:

- Volunteer hours:
 - Holly Robertson: \$9,900 (=660 hours@\$15/hr)
 - Andrew Rothman: \$12,600 (=630 hours @\$20/hr)
 - Rebecca Osborn: \$1,300 (=100 hours @\$13/hr)
 - Daniel Schneider: \$2,925 (=225 hours@\$13/hr)
 - Russell Rothman: \$2,253 (=35.5 hours @63.46/hr)
 - Cassie Jurenci: \$500 (=50 hours@\$10/hr)
 - Lauren Barlow: \$400 (=40 hours@\$10/hr)

Non-Work In-Kind:

- Donations for the RBG fundraising event at Orton Park Festival: \$1,042.00
- Consultation from Russell Neelson Marketing: \$4,506.00

TOTAL IN-KIND US 2010: \$35,426

TOTAL DONATIONS US 2010: \$45,880.86 (= IN-KIND + MONETARY)

2010 Total Expenditures: \$12,473.55

Easement (lawyer fees, etc.): \$3,037.54
Accounting fees: \$575.00
Office expenses (postage, office supplies, printing costs, etc.): \$849.65

Promotion/fundraising (coffee, t-shirt, etc.): \$1,312.34

Website maintenance: \$1,104.78

Visits to Costa Rica Bird Route: \$1,343.02

Stipend for work done on grant: \$1,000

Donations to:

- Annual Bi-National Macaw Festival (Nicaragua/Costa Rica): \$200.00
- Natural Resources Foundation: \$35.00
- Wisconsin Bird Initiative – Osa Peninsula Conservation Project: \$200.00

Membership dues to:

- American Bird Conservancy: \$50.00
- The International Ecotourism Society: \$150.00

Other: \$2,616.22

Cash Accounting Totals:

Total donations: **\$10,454.86** LESS total expenditures **\$12,473.55** = **-\$2,018.69**

DIFFERENCE of Income/Expenditures: -\$2,018.69

CASH ON HAND FOR RBG:

Jan. 1, 2010: \$6,460.90

Dec. 31, 2010: \$4,442.21

Difference: -\$2,018.69