



RAINFOREST BIODIVERSITY GROUP

Protecting the Great Green Macaw to Protect Biodiversity

Newsletter 29
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Winter 2007

Welcome Back,

Welcome to another edition of the Rainforest Biodiversity Group Newsletter. In 2007 we will bring you quarterly reports on the advances of the Costa Rican Bird Route and the organization. In this issue there a number of advancements to report. On a recent trip to Costa Rica the directors of the Costa Rican Bird Route met for over 30 hours in 3 days. Collectively we were able to advance the project by completing important pieces of our plan, and determine where other pieces fit in to the plan (see below).

Over the years we've learned that to be sustainable you must sustain. So we will continue to work hard to open the Costa Rican Bird Route a year from now, and bring you the news and updates as we go.

You can help us reach this goal by becoming a member of RBG! Please note the membership form at the end of this newsletter. Your dues go a long way in helping sustain our organization! Thanks for your support,

Andrew Rothman
President RBG
U.S. Director CRBR



Bird Route Update

Review of the Vision:

The Costa Rican Bird Route (CRBR) is an innovative approach to conservation and development for local landowners. The conservation goal of the project is to protect an additional 600 hectares of lowland tropical forest through the creation of 6 new private reserves. The economic goal is to bring sufficient income to landowners to allow them to protect this habitat. These 6 reserves will be paired with 6 existing reserves to create the Costa Rican Bird Route.

These 12 sites will be the best birdwatching locations in Sarapiquí and the San Juan-La Selva Biological Corridor, one of the most biologically diverse areas on the planet. The Route will provide premier access to the habitat of the severely endangered Great Green Macaw, making Sarapiquí the absolute best location in the World to see this species.

To further envision the Costa Rican Bird Route please read our [Vision](#) on the web.

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Sustainable Tourism Standards Established



To ensure that the reserves within the Costa Rican Bird Route can use the prefix “Eco” in their tours and products they offer, a set of **sustainable tourism standards** has been developed based on [Rainforest Alliance’s Sustainable Tourism Best Practices Guide](#). These standards will be implemented through a site Action Plan. These Action Plans, in essence mini-management plans, will guide natural resource management and tourism development as well as provide a strategy for implementing the sustainable standards at the six new sites. Recently we have established a partnership with Rainforest Alliance. Together we will provide basic training on sustainable nature tourism to the personnel of the six new reserves.



The Gems of Sarapiquí

Renowned ornithologist Jim Zook, in conjunction with RBG and our own Andrew Rothman developed a list of [emblematic and important bird species](#) that may occur in the region.

These “money birds” are species that may attract birders and/ or donors to the region. Sites where



these species are observed during the Costa Rican Bird Route Bird Count will receive high marks during the evaluation process.

Site evaluations will occur via telephone and personal interviews, site visits and in-office data comparisons. Sites will be selected by the end of April 2007.

Support Shade Grown Coffee



By being conscious consumers we can drive a sustainable food market. Through the purchase of this coffee, you are helping to protect winter habitat for the declining Cerulean Warbler, one of North America’s most beautiful migratory songbirds.

[Click here to purchase!](#)

Bird Route Criteria Determined

To select the 12 reserves of the CRBR we have developed a [set of criteria](#). Among many things, these criteria will evaluate the sites’ natural resources, tourism potential, interest in participation, and attitude toward sustainable development. As we are looking for the best of the best birding locations in Sarapiquí we must evaluate birds. To do this we will not only evaluate habitat at each site, but we will coordinate a single day bird count with the [Ornithological Association of Costa Rica](#) at all 25 of the Bird Route semi-finalist sites. In this way we can objectively observe the differences in bird diversity at each site. The first Costa Rican Bird Route Bird Count will take place in March 2007. We will report the results to you in our next newsletter.

Bird Route Business Plan Under Development

The Costa Rican Bird Route will be operated by a Tourism Agency. This agency will act as the Business Manager for the CRBR. To implement conservation initiatives, education and training programs, and monitor site development within the CRBR a Friends Group Association will be developed. Income generated from CRBR and its tours will be distributed via the Business Manager. A portion of these funds will stay with the Business Manager, a percent will go to the sites, and a percent

will go to fund the Friends Group and their important complimentary projects.

To secure a Tourism Agency (business manager), donors, and to better layout the project we are developing a Business Plan (BP) for the Route. An important part of the BP is analyzing the birding and nature tourism market place.

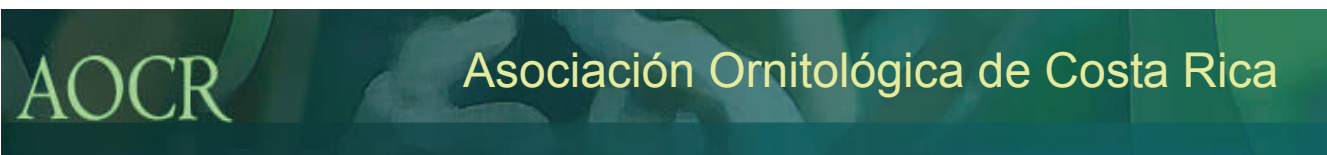
In the next month we will be conducting this analysis in both the US and Costa Rica. As readers and supporters of RBG and the CRBR

we are asking for your assistance.

If you have an interest in helping with this analysis, please [contact us](#). Or if you have existing data on the international bird watching market please [contact us](#). And still yet, we may be contacting some of you directly to conduct interviews to further gather data and information on bird tourism. Thank you in advance for your assistance.

Look for the first version of the Bird Route BP to be published in May 2007.

RBG NEWS



The Costa Rica Ornithological Association has officially renewed their support of RBG and the Costa Rican Bird Route and as mentioned will be helping to conduct the first ever Costa Rican Bird Route Bird Count in March.

Rainforest Biodiversity Group is now a member of the Bird Conservation Alliance! This Alliance is: *a network of organizations that focus on bird conservation, study, education, observation and advocacy, representing millions of bird watchers and concerned citizens, united for the conservation of birds.* The Bird Conservation Alliance is facilitated by the American Bird Conservancy. For more information on the BCA please visit www.birdconservationalliance.org



The Costa Rican Bird Route now has a website! Please visit www.costaricanbirdroute.com.

In addition, the RBG website www.greatgreenmacaw.org, can now be accessed via www.rainforestbiodiversity.org.

The site has been updated as well. Visit the website to see the changes.

RBG Reinststitutes Volunteer Program

RBG is reinstituting its [volunteer program](#) for the fall of this year. The following announcement is being circulated on the web. Pass this on to anyone who might be interested, or let us know if you have a good idea as to where we should advertise:

The Rainforest Biodiversity Group is in the process of reinstituting our Volunteer Program and we are beginning to look for people with an interest in volunteering in Costa Rica in the fall of 2007. Volunteers will help build infrastructure within six newly established nature reserves to prepare them to be a part of Costa

Rica's newest nature tourism venture, the Costa Rican Bird Route. Work will entail creating trails, constructing benches and cabins, and posting signs. There is also a need for biological surveys, in particular bird counts. At this moment we believe that room and board will be provided by the host site. All other expenses are the responsibility of the volunteer. A stipend will not be able to be provided. We are looking for individuals who are able to commit to a minimum of four weeks to a given site. Our goal is to place two volunteers at each site, thus partners or couples are welcome to apply.

Accommodations will be rustic. There may or may not be electricity, and hot water at the site. The site may be difficult to access and may

be over 2 hours away from civilization. Volunteers are encouraged to have health insurance as Rainforest Biodiversity Group will not be responsible or cover any injuries or health needs. We are looking for people with Spanish speaking skills, construction experience, a spirit of adventure and a serious interest in having an effect on rainforest conservation and sustainable tourism development. If you would like to be a part of this exciting project that will preserve important rainforest habitat, please send a cover letter and resume to:

Holly Robertson of the Rainforest Biodiversity Group at holly_robertson1@yahoo.com.



RBG has registered itself on [ebay Giving Works/ Missionfish](#) to help raise funds! Anyone who sells items on eBay can donate a percentage of their profits to the non-profit of their choice, and RBG is now on that list. RBG can also sell items for itself to earn 100% of the profits!

What's even more ex-

citing is that in April and May, to celebrate Earth Day, eBay will be featuring our organization on its site. During this time we would like to hold an auction on our [own personal page](#) on Missionfish.

Help us accomplish this by donating items for our auction, or any items in general that we could sell for ourselves on eBay.

Contact Holly for more info at holly_robertson1@yahoo.com.



RBG has been included on the list of environmental groups at www.onepercentfortheplanet.org.

This website provides a database of environmental non-profits to corporations who are interested in donating a percentage of their income for charitable purposes.

There are a lot of people who have been contributing to the advancement of the CRBR and RBG. We would like to take time to briefly thank those the following people for their contributions:

Matt Kemp, Jon Kohl, Guisselle Monge, Holly Robertson, Jennifer Ewald, Jim Zook, Alicia Craig, Craig Thompson, Andy Paulios, Andrea Holbrook, Rebecca Beck, Gustavo Flores, Roy May Juan Criado, Jeanne Fossani, Lorna and Darrell Smith, Joshua Rose, Ashley Dayer, Leslie Montgomery, Auburn Carpenter, Susan Gilchrist, Henk Morelisse, Raquel Gomez, Alejandrina Acuna, Jennie Duberstein, Andres y Adrian Poveda, Helen Rodriguez and Lori Fujimoto.



RAINFOREST BIODIVERSITY GROUP

MEMBERSHIP FORM

ANNUAL DUES: \$25 · STUDENT FEES: \$15 · ADOPT-A-NEST: \$100

Please complete the following information and send this form and your check or money order to:

*Rainforest Biodiversity Group
7 North Pinckney Street
Suite 220
Madison, WI 53703*

Name:

Address:

Phone Number:

Email:

Donation Amount:

Comments:

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!