



# Rainforest Biodiversity Group

*Protecting the Great Green Macaw to Protect Biodiversity*

7 N. Pinckney, Suite 220 • Madison, WI 53703 • Inc. 2000

*Hello!*

*Spring is upon us here in Madison and like so many people in northern climates we always eagerly anticipate this time of year, relying on the warmer winds and sprouting life all around us to rejuvenate our souls. As bird lovers, we also rely on seeing our feathered friends return and busily begin their breeding season. This year Rainforest Biodiversity Group is celebrating **10 YEARS** of working to ensure that our birds continue to return year after year by protecting their over-wintering habitat in the tropics!*

*We are planning various ways to celebrate and commemorate this milestone, one of which will be a commemorative issue of the newsletter which will span the past 10 years and showcase our accomplishments, made possible through the hard work of many and the support of all of you.*

*Another way we are going to celebrate is through our **annual Bird-a-Thon fundraiser on May 15**. Anyone can participate, it doesn't matter where you live. See article on 3rd page for more details on the event.*

*Enjoy the Spring everyone!*

*Holly Robertson, President, RBG*

## Birding Adventures TV Visits Bird Route



Birding Adventures TV recently shot an episode within the Costa Rican Bird Route at the Bird

Route site Selva Verde Lodge. [Click here](#) to watch Birding Adventure TV host James Currie go in search of the highly endangered Great Green Macaw and in the process captures almost unheard of footage of an active Sunbittern nest with two baby chicks! During a torrential downpour no less!

Birding Adventures TV (BATV) is the first birding TV program that focuses on destination and adventure bird-watching. BATV portrays a unique blend of information and adventure, making bird-watching refreshing, contemporary, interesting and exciting. It explores the exotic birding destinations on the planet; the most unusual, rare and highly sought after bird species mixed with amazing cultures and other wildlife. The program has a strong conservation emphasis and highlights the importance and urgency of preserving the planet's incredible bird life.

## IN THIS ISSUE

[RBG Protects Habitat on Pacific Coast of Costa Rica](#)

[4th Annual RBG Bird-a-Thon](#)

[Maquenque Christmas Bird Count Results](#)

[Results of 2009 Bi-National Great Green Macaw Census](#)

[Delegates from Benin Visit Costa Rican Bird Route](#)

[Oroioles to Ocelots: NRF Fundraiser](#)

[International Migratory Bird Day, Earth Day Turns 40, and PIF Turns 20](#)

twitter



Find us on  
Facebook

Follow Us!

## RBG Protects 292 Acres of Habitat on Pacific Coast of Costa Rica

On the Pacific side of Costa Rica, between Quepos and Dominical, is a stretch of coastal land that is rapidly becoming developed for tourism, housing, and palm plantations. This development is putting great pressures on natural habitat and on the native wildlife.

Rainforest Biodiversity Group recently took advantage of a great opportunity to protect from that same fate an important piece of relatively undisturbed habitat.

This nearly 300-acre property provides critical habitat for several species of wildlife, with more than 206 species of birds, including numerous neo-tropical migrants such as the Wood thrush, Golden-winged Warbler, and Prothonotary Warbler. This area is home to the Yellow-headed Caracara, the Black Hawk-Eagle, the Slaty-tailed Trogon, and many other birds, amphibians, reptiles, and mammals.

As the surrounding area becomes more developed, this area of very humid tropical forest and agricultural lands will become an even more important island for native vegetation and wildlife.

The Rainforest Biodiversity Group was able to protect this habitat by negotiating and accept-

ing the donation of a strong conservation easement that was placed on the property by the landowner. In doing so, RBG has broadened the scope of our conservation efforts into land trust work in Costa Rica. As the holder of the easement, RBG has made the commit-



Hacienda Baru Wildlife Refuge  
Photo courtesy of [www.ecoworld.org](http://www.ecoworld.org)

ment to protect in perpetuity the conservation purposes outlined within the easement agreement.

To ensure the integrity of the conservation purposes of this property, RBG is required to monitor the property at least once every 12 months and will make detailed reports after each visit. This will

ensure that the detailed terms of the conservation easement are not violated.

We are very excited about this new chapter in the history of our organization. Stepping into this new role, we will protect this important area; in the future we hope to help facilitate connecting area with other nearby reserves. Not 10 kilometers away is the famed Hacienda Baru National Wildlife Refuge and Lodge which protects 815 acres of habitat!

Holding, monitoring, and enforcing a conservation easement requires a strong and sustainable organization. You can help this important initiative with your financial contribution.

This is a big step forward for the Rainforest Biodiversity Group, and we hope that our members and friends will support this work. We welcome your generous tax-deductible gift designated for this project.

We look forward to keeping you updated on these efforts in future newsletters.

### Conservation Purposes of the Land Protected

The conservation purposes of this land are:

1. To protect the relatively natural habitat of fish, wildlife and plants
2. To preserve open space
3. To protect scenic values; and
4. To maintain the natural ecological processes and function of the tropical forest

## 4th Annual RBG Bird-a-Thon Fundraiser: May 15, 2010

The 4th annual RBG Bird-a-Thon fundraiser will be held on May 15, 2010, and the event is **open to anyone who wants to participate**, no matter where you live. To participate contact Dan Schneider at [info@rainforestbiodiversity.org](mailto:info@rainforestbiodiversity.org) and let him know that you want to be a birder for the event and he will give you a sponsorship sheet to use as you obtain sponsors for your big day of birding.

Sponsors can choose how much they want to pledge



Golden Winged Warbler photo by Roger Eriksson courtesy Birdscope/ Cornell Ornithology Lab)

per bird species seen, or they can make a flat donation for your effort. When you have your final tally of birds seen, contact your sponsors, collect the money and send it into RBG. It's that easy!

**Anyone who birds that day and turns in donations will receive a free Bird-a-Thon T-shirt, as will**

anyone who donates \$50 or more to the event.

Our fundraising goal is \$4,000 this year, so please help us make that happen! If you cannot bird that day, please consider making a donation to the event, which you can send to RBG.

**In addition to sustaining RBG, money from this year's Bird-a-Thon will go toward the following:**

- **Provide education materials to schools within the Bird Route**  
Many of these rural schools do not have the means to purchase materials like posters, coloring/activity books or guide books.
- **Support next year's Maquenque Christmas Bird Count event**  
RBG hopes to continue holding this event to support ongoing bird monitoring efforts. Many of the count sites are hard to reach, however, and participants typically need two days or more for travel and the actual day of counting. Most of these volunteers pay for these expenses out of pocket, and RBG would like to be able to better support these volunteers, to ensure future counting events.

## Maquenque Christmas Bird Count

On January 9th, 2010, the Rainforest Biodiversity Group coordinated the 2nd annual Maquenque Christmas Bird Count. This year a total of 16 people counted at 8 sites within the Maquenque Bird Count Circle.

**Participants found a total of 3,662 individual birds of 241 species**

Interestingly, 100 plus more individual birds were observed this year than last year however, 63 less species were observed this year. The top two sites were Bosque Tropical del Toro and Maquenque Eco-lodge, who both had 107 species. Mi Pedacito de Cielo was right behind these two sites with 105 species found.

### Thank you to all of our counters:

Angie Sanchez, Guido Quesada, Gustavo Flores, Paul Pickering, Darrell and Lorna Smith, Fred Ball, David and Alberto Segura, Dorothy MacKinnon, Peter Negaard, Gerardo Vega, his wife and daughter, and Mathais Kummerlen.

The species with the single most individuals observed was the Montezuma Oropendola with a total of 212 individuals. Some of the most interesting species observed during this year's count included;

- Buff-throated foliage gleaner
- Dot-winged Antwren
- Bi-colored Antbird
- Great and Fasciated Antshrike
- Pied and White-necked Puffbird
- Ruddy-tailed Flycatcher
- Common Potoo

For the complete bird list, [follow this link](#).



Picture of King Vulture taken during the count, photo by Gustavo Flores

## Results of the 2009 Great Green Macaw Bi-National Census

Biologists from both Costa Rica and Nicaragua collaborated on a 2009 bi-national census of the Great Green Macaw population in the zone of the bi-national biological corridor El Castillo/San Juan-La Selva, ranging from southern Nicaragua on into northern Costa Rica.

The biologists from Costa Rica included investigators from the Tropical Science Center, the National University's School of Biology, and the Ornithological Society of Costa Rica. Representatives from the River Foundation in Nicaragua helped round out the team that counted at 12 sites in Nicaragua and 16 sites in Costa Rica.

The count was completed on four separate days in 2009: **April 4, April 18, May 2 and May 16**. These dates were chosen because they fall within the reproductive period of the Great Green Macaw, facilitating observations. Also, the weather is good during this time of year, allowing for better access to nest locations, and also greater movement by the birds.

### Nest Counts

Researchers also conducted nest searches, revisiting nests previously documented to see if the nests were still being utilized. Results shown below.

### Costa Rica:

- Total known nests in 2008: 69 (includes 11 nests since cut down)
- Total of existing nests in 2009: 66 (80 known minus 14 that were cut down); the 66 includes 11 new in 2009
- Total of new nests for 2009: 11, of these 11, 4 are of the Scarlet Macaw, and some are located in the tree species espavel, cativo, botarrama, guanacaste blanco and ajillo.
- **Total active nests for 2009: 28**

### Nicaragua:

- Total of known nests since 2005: 30
- Of these 30, total of nests revisited in 2009: 15
- Total of 4 new nests in 2009, compared to 2008
- A total of 4 of the nests that were active in 2008 were still active in 2009
- All of the nests for 2009 were found in Almendro trees
- **Total active nests in 2009: 9** (8 are Great Green Macaw nests; 1 is Scarlet Macaw)

### Results from Nicaragua

Site	Community	April 4	April 18	May 2	May 16
1	Las Maravillas	13	17	18	0
2	Nueva Quezada	13	6	4	14
3	Filas Verde	12	3	5	9
4	El Monico	16	27	0	0
5	Bijagua	14	14	10	16
6	Romerito	24	20	19	15
7	El Castillo	0	7	6	0
8	Bartola	14	14	35	10
9	Boca de Sabalos	0	0	0	0
10	El Brenes	0	0	0	0
11	La Juana	12	11	9	8
12	Boca de Escalera	6	2	2	4
<b>Totals</b>		<b>124</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>76</b>

Photos by Mark Stafford and Bent Pedersen

### Results from Costa Rica

Site	Community	April 4	April 18	May 2	May 16
1	Tiricias	13	2	11	16
2	Crucitas	0	0	2	0
3	Rio Tico-El Carmen	X	X	0	0
4	Coopevega	X	X	0	0
5	Boca San Carlos	0	X	2	2
6	Santa Rita	2	6	4	X
7	San Marcos	X	X	X	2
8	Santa Elena	15	4	0	0
9	Luz Mirio Alvarado	25	8	2	X
10	Quebrada Grande	0	X	0	X
11	Finca Matra	2	0	X	X
12	Boca Tapada	10	3	6	X
13	La Suerte	X	X	4	0
14	El Zota	X	X	4	2
15	Linda Vista	X	X	4	0
16	Sierpe de Tortuguero	X	7	6	0
<b>Totals</b>		<b>67</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>22</b>

## Delegates from Benin Visit the Costa Rican Bird Route

As part of our latest grant entitled “ Supporting Conservation through Tourism Development in the Forest areas of Benin and Costa Rica” in February RBG hosted a visit from Eco-Benin, our partner organization from Benin for this grant.

The organization Program for South-South Cooperation is providing the grant with funding from the Netherlands. The delegation from Benin consisted of two people Maxim Djondo and Nadine Worou and during their week-long trip to Costa Rica, Andrew Rothman, Costa Rican Bird Route Project Director, kept a blog on the daily events.



From top: Max Djondo, Andrew Rothman and Nadine Worou

[Click here](#) to read the blog about their trip and the progress made on the grant.

## Training & Workshops

Rainforest Biodiversity Group continues to progress toward the completion of the grant through the Program for South-South Cooperation. In addition to hosting the visitors from our partner organization Eco-Benin, the following has also been completed:

- **Community meeting** held on Feb. 5-6 for 18 people, 9 of which were from 5 bird route sites, and the remainder of participants were from surrounding communities. The purpose of the meeting was to facilitate a sharing of ideas and experiences
- **Guide training program:** On March 8 began a training program for guides in Sarapiquí that will allow more than 80 local guides to obtain guide certification through the National Learning Institute (INA), and a tour guide license through the Costa Rican Tourism Board (ICT). The program is co-sponsored by INA, EARTH University, and PROMES (Promoting Sustainable Markets). Representatives from three different Bird Route sites are participating in the training.
- **To be held this month: Sustainable Infrastructure Workshop.** This workshop will be conducted by local experts in the basics of sustainable infrastructure and how sites can implement these principles at their own sites.

## Orioles and Ocelots: Wisconsin's Connection to Costa Rica

Rainforest Biodiversity Group is proud to be a sponsor of this event that is being held on April 24, 2010 from 5-8 pm to raise funds and awareness about Wisconsin's connection to Costa Rica. The event is being organized by the Natural Resources Foundation and will be held at the Milwaukee County Zoo. A highlight of the evening will be a talk by award-winning author and internationally recognized conservationist, Dr. Adrian Forsyth. Dr. Forsyth will share stories from Costa Rica's Osa Peninsula, including Wisconsin's efforts to protect one of the last and largest tracts of pristine rainforest remaining on the Pacific Ocean.



Photo by Dave Frericks

The cost of the event is \$35 which includes hors d'oeuvres and a contribution to conservation projects in Costa Rica. [Click here](#) for more information on how to register for the event, which you can do online or by mailing a check.



## 20th Anniversary of Partners in Flight

Partners in Flight was launched in 1990 in response to growing concerns about declines



in the populations of many land bird species, and in order to emphasize the conservation of birds not covered by existing conservation initiatives.

[Partners in Flight](#) is a cooperative effort involving partnerships among federal, state and local government agencies, philanthropic foundations, professional organizations, conservation groups, industry, the academic community, and private individuals.

This year Partners in Flight celebrates 20 years of:

- **Helping Species at Risk**  
Endangered species must be protected from extinction and recovered to play their role in healthy ecosystems
- **Keeping Common Birds Common**  
These species comprise the core of our avian diversity and are integral to ecosystems
- **Facilitating Voluntary Partnerships for Birds, Habitats and People**

*Congratulations, Partners in Flight, on 20 successful years!*

## 40th Anniversary of Earth Day - April 22

Forty years after the first Earth Day, the world is in greater peril than ever. While climate change is the greatest challenge of our time, it also presents the greatest opportunity – an unprecedented opportunity to build a healthy, prosperous, clean energy economy now and for the future.



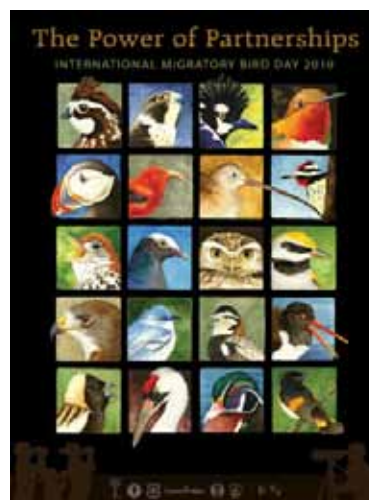
Earth Day 2010 can be a turning point to advance climate policy, energy efficiency, renewable energy and green jobs.

Earth Day 2010 is a pivotal opportunity for individuals, corporations and governments to join together and create a global green economy. Join the more than one billion people in 190 countries that are taking action for Earth Day by doing something good for the environment that day, that week, or longer.

Visit [www.earthday.org](http://www.earthday.org) for ideas on how you can join in the celebration.

## International Migratory Bird Day 2010 - May 8

[International Migratory Bird Day](#) (IMBD) is the only international education program that highlights and celebrates the migration of nearly 350 species of migratory birds between nesting habitats in North America and non-breeding grounds in Latin America, Mexico, and the Caribbean. Each year IMBD explores a different aspect of migratory birds and their conservation.



In 2010, IMBD focuses on the “**Power of Partnerships**” in bird conservation through its annual art and education materials. Twenty species of birds illustrate the conservation theme and represent species that benefit from partner-

ships and depend on our support to help their populations in the years to come.

IMBD officially takes place on the second Saturday in May in the U.S. and Canada and in October in Mexico, Central and South America, and the Caribbean each year.

### Why Celebrate Migratory Birds?

Public awareness and concern are crucial components of migratory bird conservation. Citizens who are enthusiastic about birds, informed about threats, and empowered to become involved in addressing those threats, can make a tremendous contribution to maintaining healthy bird populations.