



RAINFOREST BIODIVERSITY GROUP

Protecting the Great Green Macaw to Protect Biodiversity

Newsletter 30
Volume 6, #2
Summer 2007

Hello again from RBG,

As usual time flies when you are having fun...or working you keister off. This is what we have been doing here with RBG in the States as well as in Costa Rica as we continue to advance the Costa Rica Bird Route. Just think, by this time next year you should be able to access most of the Bird Route sites, using the Guide Map and websites we are developing, or through the tours our affiliated companies and portal sites will offer. With our initial sites selected you could even start planning your trip now!

In this our second newsletter of the year, you will hear about the Bird Route advancements as well as other RBG and Bird Related news and activities. We hope you enjoy and we thank for your continued support. Speaking of which, becoming a member (just \$25 for the year) is the very basis for maintaining our overhead and operational costs to run this non-profit organization. If you are receiving this newsletter, and have never actually been a member we ask for you to take this opportunity to help us continue our efforts and become a member of RBG.

Thanks for your time and again enjoy the news.



Bird Route Update

Andrew Rothman
President RBG
U.S. Director CRBR

Initial Bird Route Sites Selected

The Rainforest Biodiversity Group is happy to announce the initial Costa Rican Bird Route site selection process has been completed. Based on reviews of our 30 selection criteria, 13 sites, from a pool of 25 plus sites, have been selected to participate in the Costa Rican Bird Route.

Seven of the sites will be considered Portal Sites, and six sites will be called Remote Sites. The Portal sites have an established clientele and already recognized as some of the largest and most important bird reserves within the San Juan – La Selva Biological Corridor (CBSS). More importantly, the Portal sites will offer day trips to the Remote Sites

within the structure of a Sister Reserve Program that can ensure the newly established reserves regularly receive visitors and the economic benefits they bring. The Remote sites will be just that, sites with a remote location within the CBSS. These sites will be newly established private reserves and in creating these new reserves RBG's work will ensure habitat for biodiversity is protected for years to come.

We are currently working to create contracts with the sites to secure their participation in the Route for a minimum of three years.

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Membership Form

Initial Sites Selected Continued.....

The initial sites chosen for participation in the Costa Rica Bird Route are (Note these may not be the final sites of the Route):

1. **La Selva Biological Station:** La Selva is one of the most famous tropical biological stations in the world. The San Juan – La Selva Biological Corridor is named for its connection to the large amount of habitat La Selva protects. As one of the premier bird watching locations in Costa Rica it had to be included in the Bird Route.
2. **Selva Verde Lodge:** This well-established Eco-Lodge is already participating in the Rainforest Alliance / Costa Rican Tourism Board sponsored Sustainable Tourism Program. The Lodge has a large forest preserve, as well as an adjoining environmental center, the Sarapiquí Conservation Learning Center.
3. **Tirimbina Rainforest Center:** An educational /training center with a great reserve and many connections to Wisconsin is the staple portal reserve for the La Virgen Area of the San Juan – La Selva Biological Corridor.



4. **Gavilan Lodge:** The lodge is known for the giant raptor migration that is observed annually at this locale. Gavilan Lodge is

well respected as a great birding lodge.

5. **Laguna del Lagarto Lodge:** One of the most important vestiges of Great Green Macaw habitat occurs in the area of the Laguna del Lagarto Lodge. Remotely located, this reserve offers the lowland rainforest experience (which can even be done by canoe or kayak).
6. **Mi Pedacito del Cielo:** Translation: “My little piece of sky”. This new family run lodge is already up and running. They offer unique tours that put you in the heart of Great Green Macaw habitat.
7. **Albergue El Socorro:** A great little bird watcher hideaway at middle elevations that supports an incredible diversity of birds. A home-style atmosphere that will make Costa Rica’s great hospitality hard to forget.
8. **Reserva Quebrada Grande:** This is community conservation in action. The Community of Quebrada manages a private reserve that offers bird watching in a canopy tower, great views of the Biological Corridor, a waterfall and lots of local contact.
9. **El Retorno de Crysofila:** Possibly the best location in the world to see the Great Green Macaw. What more can we say.
10. **Bosque Tropical del Toro con Los Paniaguas:** This site is comprised of two neighboring landowners that have come together for the greater good of conservation. Hike from one site to the next while birding the little explored Yollio Palm Swamps. Scarlet Macaws and Tapir tracks are regularly ob-

served at these sites. In addition, high amounts of hard to find bird species have been tracked down on the Paniagua property. Which species you ask... guess you will have to come down to find out.

11. **Finca Pangola:** A huge reserve with lots of unexplored territory. Both high quality and rustic accommodations are available, as well as canoe trips through the



saturated rainforest swamps.

12. **Lomas de Sardinal:** There is great potential in the Lomas Sardinal Area. Great views, great birds, and the potential to get multiple landowners involved to create an even larger reserve.
13. **Finca Eduardo Artavia:** Visit a family who has been trying their hardest to protect habitat for the Great Green Macaw on their own. They are currently building a small jungle lodge to help raise funds to maintain their desire to conserve wildlife habitat.

More information will be available on these sites in due time. This may not be the final list of sites, however they are the sites that we have initially determined to be best bird tourism sites within the CBSS.

Ornithological Association Conducts Bird Counts at Potential Sites

Throughout the months of April and May, members of the Costa Rican Ornithological Association (AOCR) conducted big day bird counts at most of the 25 pre-qualified potential Costa Rican Bird Route sites. The idea behind the counts was to get a good snap shot of what species occurred at the sites that were being reviewed as possible sites for the route. Not only was the AOCR looking simply for diversity of species present., they were looking for the presence of hard to find, threatened, endangered or emblematic bird species also

known as the “Gems of Sarapiquí”.

In total, 317 of the estimated 500 plus species of the region were observed in just a few days of good birding. Gavilan Lodge had one of the largest bird lists at 133 species. In addition, many of those mentioned gems of Sarapiquí were observed during the counts. Some of those gems were: Snowy Cotinga, Bare-necked Umbrellabird, Slaty-back Forest Falcon, Tawny-faced Quail, White-fronted Nunbird, Keel-billed Motmot, and of course both the Great Green and

Scarlet Macaws.

Also many important migratory birds that are declining were found at the potential reserves including, both Canada and Golden-wing warbler as well as Wood Thrush and Olive-sided Flycatcher.

The utmost of thanks and appreciation goes out the AOCR for their work they have contributed to the development of Costa Rican Bird Route.



Management Action Plans

We hope site contracts will be finalized in the coming months. From there we can begin to develop site profiles as well as Management Action Plans for developing sites for the Bird Route. This fall we will begin to have people onsite to implement those action plans. Currently, volunteers are still needed to assist sites.

Volunteers are also needed to help put together the Management Action Plans for each site within the Costa Rican Bird Route. These Action Plans are guides for the landowner to develop sustainable tourism and meet the standards established for the Costa Rican Bird Route.

For more information on these volunteer opportunities please contact:

Holly Robertson at

holly_robertson1@yahoo.com

Below is the first Costa Rican Bird Route advertisement. It will be in CATUSA's 2008 Guide to Sarapiquí!

• 13 SITES • OVER 510 SPECIES OF BIRDS • LOCAL CULTURE • THE LEGENDARY GREAT GREEN MACAW •

CORREDOR BIOLÓGICO SAN JUAN-LA SELVA

UNIQUE ATTRactions

MAQUENQUE NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE • EXPERIENCED GUIDES • REMOTE PRIVATE RESERVES

ENHANCING YOUR RAINFOREST EXPERIENCE
COMING IN 2008!

The Costa Rican Bird Route is a project of the Rainforest Biodiversity Group. www.greatgreenmacaw.org

Fundraising Update

As some of you may recall from our last newsletter, RBG was planning on holding an online auction through eBay Giving Works to help raise funds. We were able to get several great items donated from eco-friendly companies (some of which you will see highlighted on this page) and gave it a run.

The auction began on May 7 with 27 items listed and ran for 7 days, ending on May 14. Out of the 27 items listed, only 9 items were sold for a net profit of about \$81. Not a great showing, but we were able to take the items donated for the auction and do another auction and raffle at the Waterfront Festival in Madison on June 9 and 10 and managed to raise upwards of \$700! We had a booth set up for both days and many people supported us by bid-

ding on items, buying raffle tickets and giving donations. Thanks to everyone who helped make the booth a success!

Benefits that have come from having done the online auction is that we gained exposure for the organization and an article is being written in the Milwaukee State Journal about our experience with using eBay Giving Works to fundraise. Plus, other sellers on eBay have been selecting RBG to be a beneficiary of a percentage of their profits. To date, a total of 6 items have been sold by other eBay members with a percentage going to us! We will still continue to sell items from time to time on eBay, so periodically check us out by clicking on the link below and searching for our name.

[eBay Giving Works](#)

Spring Birdathon

This Spring Daniel Schneider, a past and present volunteer with RBG, decided to organize a Birdathon to help raise funds for RBG. He and several others secured pledges of money per every species of bird sighted on the day of the Birdathon. In one day, Dan spotted more than 100 species! He and the others involved in the birding effort that day have raised around \$500 with pledge money is still coming in! Thanks for your hard work, Dan and to everyone who birded on that day or pledged money.



ECO-PRODUCTS:

The following featured products are supported by RBG and the companies that produce them support RBG.

Xeko Mission: Costa Rica

The [Xeko ompany](#) is revolutionizing children's board games. Not only are all of the components of the game 100% recycled, but the game itself is designed to educate children about the 12 distinct ecosystems in

Costa Rica. The game comes with a game mat, 48 cards for a two-player game, guide books for playing the game, and some other extras. Extra packs of cards can be bought separately to keep the game fresh.

This game has been produced in conjunction with Conservation International.



Chico Bags

The [Chico Bag company](#) is out of none other than Chico, California. These reusable market bags stuff down into themselves and come with a carabiner so that you can latch them anywhere, which can help you not forget them at home!

Pachyderm Paper

Mr. Ellie Pooh is a company that produces paper made completely from elephant dung! This innovation came as a response to the mass killing of elephants in Sri Lanka, not for tusks or their hides, but because they are a nuisance to local agriculture. Elephants are vegetarians, so their excrement is full of raw cellulose, the main component of paper. This new market has given the natives an economic incentive to think twice before killing elephants, as well as providing jobs to the locals. All of the artwork is handcrafted and many designs are available. Check out the [online stationary store](#) to help support this industry.

2007 Farm Bill: Helping Farmers and Ranchers Conserve Birds

The House and Senate are moving to pass a farm bill before they adjourn for their month-long August recess. The renewal of federal farm and food policies this year, which currently include \$4.4 billion for the conservation of natural resources, creates an opportunity to better assist more farmers and ranchers when they take steps to protect or enhance vital bird habitats.

The best researched and documented farm bill conservation program has been the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). Introduced in 1986, this program has converted millions of acres of cropland to grass cover across the prairies, and to grass or forest cover in the Southeast. CRP removes eroding cropland from cultivation and protects it with perennial vegetation under 10-15

year contracts.

While some grassland birds are able to nest in croplands, their nests have high rates of failure. CRP fields are much more beneficial to a wide variety of breeding birds than the croplands that they replace. Populations of Sedge Wrens, Grasshopper Sparrows, Savannah Sparrows, Dickcissels, Lark Buntings, Red-winged Blackbirds, Common Yellowthroats, Clay-colored Sparrows, and Bobolinks have been shown to utilize CRP lands, with associated increases in reproductive rates and population gains. This is good news considering surveys of bird populations over the past 35 years have documented the decline of more grassland species than any other group of birds.

Tracts of untilled native prairie

are also tremendously important to grassland birds, supporting many species that rarely, if ever, use cropland or even CRP fields, such as the Burrowing Owl, Sprague's Pipit, Baird's Sparrow, and Chestnut-collared Longspur.

While CRP is a beneficial program, maintaining extant native prairie should be a high priority for the conservation of birds. It is therefore critical that farm programs do not directly or indirectly encourage conversion of native prairie to cultivation.

American Bird Conservancy has been working with members of Congress to make certain that forthcoming legislation promotes leaving native prairie in tact, and to assure that each acre of CRP land addresses the country's truly important wildlife goals, particularly for at-risk birds.

Kirtland's Warbler Found Nesting in Wisconsin

The first confirmed Wisconsin nesting of the Kirtland's Warbler has occurred in central Wisconsin. This is a very exciting discovery since this is one of North America's rarest breeding birds (found breeding in Michigan only until now) and a federal endangered species. In the past in Wisconsin, only singing males have been observed within preferred breeding habitat--young jack pine.

The bird is nesting on private property and the Fish and Wildlife Service is working with the private landowner to accomplish surveying and monitoring for the bird.

IPCC Report: Global Warming Threatens Many Bird Species

Between 20 to 30 percent of all species are threatened by an increased risk of extinction if average temperatures increase more than 1.5-2.5°C. One important way to mitigate the impacts of global warming is to protect existing forests, grasslands, and wetlands, which store carbon and provide essential habitat for imperiled wildlife.

"Two of Earth's most serious environmental problems, global warming and the loss of species, have a common solution: stopping the loss of Earth's forests and other natural carbon fixing habitats," said George Fenwick, President of American Bird Conservancy. "At least 20% of greenhouse gas emissions result from deforestation which causes carbon stored in forest biomass, deadwood, litter and soil to be released to the atmosphere."

The by-product of a global program to reduce greenhouse emissions through forest conservation would be the protection of large numbers of Earth's threatened species, and preservation of ecosystem services such as watersheds. "Avoided deforestation", in which payments are provided to countries or projects that protect existing forest, can be financed by carbon taxes, a global trust fund, or by carbon credits purchased by polluters to offset emissions. Congress is now considering global warming legislation that includes provisions to encourage storing carbon in forests and other habitats.



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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!