

# 2009

*Rainforest Biodiversity Group  
Annual Report 2009  
January 1, 2009 through December 31, 2009*

*7 N. Pinckney St, Suite 220  
Madison, WI 53703  
[www.rainforestbiodiversity.org](http://www.rainforestbiodiversity.org)  
[info@rainforestbiodiversity.org](mailto:info@rainforestbiodiversity.org)*



## **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 2009.

---

## **DEDICATION**

In 2009, Rainforest Biodiversity Group lost one of its longest supports and board members. Carl Leopold, son of Aldo Leopold, was the organizations first Advisory Board Member. Carl graciously became a friend of the Rainforest Biodiversity Group family way back in 2001. Although Carl was never much involved in day to day operations of RBG, Carl was always someone who could help provide rational and wise advice. He was always interested in hearing about our grassroots advances and in hard times Carl always could provide calm and understanding support. We are so glad to have had a chance to meet Carl and have him be involved with our organization.

We dedicated our 2009 work, as well as much of our future work to Carl. Thanks for all the help.

---

## **ANNUAL SUMMARY**

Rainforest Biodiversity Group (RBG) continued to focus its efforts on the Costa Rican Bird Route (CRBR) in 2009, shifting into Phase III of the project's implementation. Phase III concentrates on 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 throughout 2009. Duties of the CRBR Coordinator included maintaining communication and outreach activities with reserve communities, owners, and tour operators; coordinating sustainable tourism, conservation, and guide training workshops with landowners and local guides; developing and managing our volunteer and bird monitoring programs with CRBR sites. RBG continued to have Andrew Rothman serve as Director of the Bird Route project for 2009.

In order to support bird monitoring efforts in the region of the Costa Rican Bird Route, RBG created a new bird count circle in the Maquenque region and organized the first annual Christmas Bird Count within this circle in January 2009, which acted as the count annual count for 2008. The Maquenque circle encompasses seven of the Bird Route sites, and on January 3, 21 volunteer ornithologists and bird guides birded at these seven sites logging 253 species and 3,570 individuals. RBG hopes to continue this annual birding effort. The 2009 count will take place in early January 2010.

In 2009 Rainforest Biodiversity Group 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. Now protected in perpetuity, this property, consisting of mostly very humid tropical forest, provides critical habitat for various wildlife species, including over 200 species of birds. The conservation purposes of this land include the protection of relatively natural habitat of fish, wildlife, and plants; the preservation of open space; the protection of scenic values; and the maintenance of the natural ecological processes and function of the tropical forest.

Rainforest Biodiversity Group continued to carry out promotional and fundraising activities in 2009 to further build the capacity of the organization, through networking, fundraising events, and a presence at local festivals. RBG held its third annual Bird-a-Thon fundraiser, enjoying the best turn out to date, with 17 birders and 56 donors for a total raised of \$2,401.10, exceeding our goal of \$2,000.

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.



**Image 1 and 2:** Participants in Rainforest Alliance Sustainable Nature Tourism Workshops

---

## 2009 Activities

**The Rainforest Biodiversity Group completed the following during the 2009 Annual Cycle.**

1. Maintained staff and operational needs for the Costa Rican Bird Route project:
  - a. RBG has maintained the services of Raquel Gomez as Bird Route Coordinator in Costa Rica, and Andrew Rothman as Project Director in the United States and in Costa Rica.
2. Continued with the sale and distribution of the Costa Rican Bird Route Map and Guide:
  - a. In 2009, 44 Map and Guides were sold for a net profit of \$532.22, and 100 more were distributed at conferences and on trips to the Bird Route. 200 Map and Guides were distributed to sites within the Costa Rican Bird Route to be sold at each site's profit.
3. Coordinated a fundraising campaign to raise money for CRBR site Albergue el Socorro:
  - a. This site incurred significant infrastructure damage from a 6.2 magnitude earthquake that hit Costa Rica on January 8<sup>th</sup>. RBG asked its members and

constituents to help the site's owner rebuild his home/reception area, and was able to present Alberque el Socorro in person a total cash donation from RBG of \$1,018.83. Henk Morelisse, owner of Finca Pangola, a Costa Rican Bird Route site, also raised money to be donated directly to Alberque el Socorro, raising a total of \$3,195.

4. A new private reserve was added to the Costa Rican Bird Route:
  - a. Quebrada Gonzalez, CRBR's 14<sup>th</sup> site, is 26 miles north of San José and provides excellent birdwatching opportunities within Braulio Carillo National Park. Of the 864 species of birds in Costa Rica, 550 species have been reported in Braulio Carillo National Park. Quebrada Gonzalez offers restroom facilities, a picnic area, and trails for visitors. Establishing this reserve has improved relations between RBG and the Ministry of Environment, Energy and Telecommunications (MINAET) that helps oversee National Park management in Costa Rica.
5. Completed action plans for each Costa Rican Bird Route site and developed a standard evaluation form for site performance and sustainability based on the action plans:
  - a. These action plans are the plans that are to be implemented by each site to meet the sustainable standards developed by RBG for the Costa Rican Bird Route. These actions plans also lay out timelines for implementing the plans and the development of the site for tourism. Three sites were evaluated in 2009: Alberque el Socorro, Bosque Tropical del Toro, and Quebrada Grande.
6. Established first two official tour operators of the Costa Rican Bird Route:
  - a. Service Birding and Birding on a Budget became the first two companies to sign on to be the first two official tour operators of the Costa Rican Bird Route.
7. Coordinated and conducted "Best Practices for Sustainable Tourism" workshop series in conjunction with Rainforest Alliance:
  - a. This series of three workshops (held on March 7-8, July 31-August 1, & October 17-18) was designed for private landowners and other community members in order to provide assistance and information on how to run a successful and sustainable rural tourism business. The workshops also provided the landowners with personalized guidance on implementing the "best practices" recommended by Rainforest Alliance, based on the activities summarized in their action plans.
8. Conducted a free GIS training workshop at the Sarapiquí Conservation Learning Center for community members.
9. Established a CRBR quarterly newsletter "El Paseo de las Aves" to distribute to CRBR sites, as well as other organizations and individuals in Costa Rica:
  - a. Written in Spanish, the purpose of the newsletter is to share information about how CRBR sites are working towards sustainability and implementing their action plans, and also to provide updates on the CRBR project to the greater Costa Rican community.
10. Conduct CRBR Bird ID and Monitoring Workshop:
  - a. This workshop was conducted on October 16<sup>th</sup> for sites and their associated communities as a part of a CRBR Ornithological Education Program. The

objectives of this workshop were to educate landowner, guides, and local communities on the importance of bird diversity and habitat conservation, and to train them on how to monitor bird diversity in their community. Three presentations were given during the workshop, covering current bird monitoring efforts in Costa Rica, how to use Cornell Lab of Ornithology's eBird program, and the goals of the Bird Monitoring Initiative within the CRBR.

11. Conducted the inaugural Maquenque Christmas Bird Count on January 3<sup>rd</sup> with the help of the Costa Rican Ornithological Society:
  - a. A total of 21 volunteers, made up of ornithologists and experienced bird guides, counted 253 species and 3,570 individuals within the Maquenque Bird Count Circle.
12. Advanced Costa Rican Bird Route Operation Plan
13. Began work on coordinating a Guide Training Program and a Rural Tourism Training:
  - a. Program for CRBR sites, to be conducted in partnership with the PROMES project (Promoting Sustainable Markets for Micro, Small, and Mid Size Businesses and Rural Producers in Costa Rica).
14. Continued to maintain communication with sites of the CRBR.
15. Placed volunteers at different Bird Routes sites:
  - a. Joe Taylor worked on trail maintenance, infrastructure improvements, invasive species control, and a bird species inventory at Bosque Tropical del Toro (BTT).
  - b. Also placed at BTT was Jeff Maitz who developed interpretational materials for self-guided trails at the site. All other volunteers were placed at Finca Pangola. Nicole Bauer completed a study on the social aspects of the Pangola community, including information on demographics, local institutions, challenges, and limitations.
  - c. Hadley Cole worked with a local Peace Corps volunteer to teach English classes and develop an after school program that incorporates environmental education activities.
  - d. Helena and Stephen King also taught English classes and conducted private tutoring sessions within the community with a focus on environmental education.
  - e. Two additional volunteers, Thibaut and Marion Ferrieux, were placed at Finca Pangola to help initiate an environmental education program in the community.
16. Restructured the volunteer program to streamline the volunteer placement process:
  - a. Encourage at least a 4-month commitment, and to ensure sufficient funding is provided to community host families.
17. Promotion of Costa Rican Bird Route:
  - a. Attended a cultural festival at the Gold Museum in San José on October 1<sup>st</sup>. The festival celebrated birds in pre-Columbian Costa Rica and was attended by members of the community. RBG and CRBR organized bird-related activities such as bird ID, bird mask arts and crafts, and origami, as well as provided educational materials to kids and adults on bird adaptations and behaviors.
  - b. Attended Society for the Conservation and Study of Caribbean Birds meeting in Antigua on July 13-17<sup>th</sup>. Here Andrew Rothman gave a key note presentation on

the Costa Rican Bird Route to promote the project and provide background information on its development so that other organizations doing work in the Caribbean may invest in similar bird tourism initiatives.

- c. Booth for the Bird Route the Sarapiquí Tourism Board tourism fair in Sarapiquí
  - d. Produced and placed CRBR road signs within Bird Route region.
  - e. Articles published on the Costa Rican Bird Route in Costa Rican publications including Costa Rica Traveler, Revista Destinos, 2010 Sarapiquí Tourism Board promotional magazine, Revista Perfil, and Revista Viajes.
  - f. Articles published on the Costa Rican Bird Route as an ecotourism destination in U.S. publications including the Washington Post, Lonely Planet Costa Rica, AAA Travel Magazine and Outside Magazine.
  - g. The Costa Rican Bird Route website was redesigned and updated ([www.costaricanbirdroute.com](http://www.costaricanbirdroute.com)).
18. Negotiated and accepted the donation of a conservation easement on 292 acres of land 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.
19. Participated in the 2009 Bi-National Macaw Festival in Barro Colorado, Costa Rica:
- a. Conducted presentations on the Costa Rican Bird Route
  - b. Conducted presentations on sustainable tourism and community outreach
20. Participated in Society for the Conservation and Study of Caribbean Birds in Antigua and Barbuda.
- a. Andrew Rothman presented keynote presentation on developing bird tourism and the Costa Rican Bird Route and how similar activities may be conducted in the Caribbean.
21. Help to coordinate and organize Bird Education Festival at National Gold Museum in San Jose, Costa Rica.



**Images 3 and 4:** Banner from 8<sup>th</sup> Annual Bi-National Macaw Festival and the new ranch constructed at Albergue el Socorro after the original structure was destroyed by the Jan. 2009 earthquake.

## ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

### Associations:

- Maintained membership within Executive Committee of San Juan – La Selva Biological Corridor.
- Collaboration and partnership with the Japanese International Cooperation Agency.
- Maintained partnerships with the Sarapiquí Conservation Learning Center, the Sarapiquí Tourism Board, Partners in Flight, and the Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative.

### Grant Writing

- Submitted a grant proposal for the amount of \$60,000 to the Programme for South-South Cooperation (PSC), funded by the Kingdom of the Netherlands.
- Submitted a funding proposal to Finca Pangola for community programs and environmental education initiatives for the Finca Pangola site and surrounding community of Pangola.

### Promotional Activities/ Outreach:

- Held fundraising activities: Spring Bird-a-Thon, and a booth at the Orton Park Festival and Waterfront Festival in Madison, Wisconsin.
- Conducted local educational presentations at Ripon College, Beaver Dam Arts Association, USFWS Friends of Horicon Marsh, Green Rock Audubon Society, and Beaver Dam Kiwanis Club.
- Continued the fundraising mechanism of selling customized packages of shade grown coffee supplied through Just Coffee Coop.
- Designed and printed 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 Myspace page for the organization, and created an RBG Twitter account.
- In 2009 RBG published 3 newsletters: Issues number 36, 37, and 38. The newsletter list serve contains approximately 550 contacts.

---

## RBG MEMBERSHIP:

### Board of Directors:

In 2009 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 2009:

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

**The Advisory Board 2009:**

Carl Leopold (deceased as of 11/2009)

Bobbie Webster

Bill Volkert

**General membership:**

In 2009, 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, 68 people were considered members of RBG in 2009. 16 of these were officially renewing memberships.

**2009 DONORS / General Members:**

FIRST NAME	LAST NAME
Paul	Anderson
Matthew & Rebecca	Bains & Weber
Adam	Baltz
Kelly (Network for Good)	Belly
Richard	Bielawski
Jean	Bjorenson
Harry & Mary Ann	Boland
Mary	Buser
Shawn	Castellanos
Nick & Robin	Checota
Richard	Cramer
Marty	Crump
Tom	Delany
Michael & Kathryn	Dietry
Karen	Dorris
Craig & Cindy	Dunn
Dave & Diane	Edwards
Shari & Mark	Eggleston
Stephanie	Fan
Chase & Jose	Ferrer
Stacey	Fuller
Lisa Bierer- & Chris	Garrett
Serena	Grover
Ruth	Gundlach
Cheryl	Hageman
Lillian	Harris
Tom & Barb	Haynie
Chuck	Henrikson
Jacqueline	Hugo
Bob & Gretchen	Hunter
Daniel	Jakab
Andrew	Janicki
Ellen & Nico	Letschert
Joshua	Liss

FIRST NAME	LAST NAME
Kevin	Loope
Davin	Lopez
Shawn	McMillan
Louise	Mullen
Richard & Janice	Nelson
Blaize	Norton-Wisla
Larry & Paula	Osborn
Margaret	O'Toole
Richard & Katherine	Petherick
Chris	Petherick
Terry	Rich
Louise Rothman- & Davis	Riemer
Hans & Angela	Riemer
Diane	Robertson
Jim	Roethe
Judy	Roethe
Peter	Ross
Robert	Rothschild
Elizabeth	Rowley
Shane & Andrea	Saunders & O'Brien
Joe & Margreet	Schaap
Kay	Schneider
Nancy	Shiver
Rudy & Judy	Shunta
Marie & Fred	Skahan
Joe	Veverka
Benjamin	Wagner
Jerry & Janice	Waters
Will	Weber
Erin	Wilichowski
Richard	Wilson
Cathi	Winicki
Earth Preservation Fund	
Wild Bird Center	

**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, Olivier Chassot, Andrew Rothman, Russ Rothman, Daniel Schneider, Rebecca Osborn, Guisselle Monge, Jon Kohl, Matt Kemp, Pablo Elizondo, Delci Gonzalez Gonzalez, Rachel Osborn, Takashi Nishimura, Heather Milton, Ryan Gillum, Darrell and Lorna Smith, Roy May, Terry Rich, Jim Zook, Peter McKeever, Rodolfo Alvarado, Silvia Roja, Raquel Morales, Gabriela Rodríguez, Marisol Mayorga, Wisconsin Bird Conservation Initiative, JICA, Rainforest Alliance, Tropical Science Center, the Costa Rican Ornithological Association, Orlando Vargas, Luis Vargas, Diego Vargas, Joe Taylor, Pieter Westra, William Ureña, Gerald Campos, Minor Hidalgo, Kevin Martínez, Enrique Salizetti, Gerardo Vega, Adolfo Downs, Paula Calderón, Adilio Zeledón, Leandro Arias, Alvar Saborío, Didier, Gustavo Flores, Elidier Vargas, Hadley Cole, Jeff Maitz, Nicole Bauer, and Marion and Thibaut Ferrieux.

---

**RBG General Accounting (non-grant related)****Cash Donations 2009:****2009 Total Donations: \$10,630.64**

Membership total: \$1,106.44  
Bird-a-Thon donations: \$2,154.10  
Earthquake Relief donations: \$940.09  
Merchandise Sales: \$703.72  
Waterfront Festival donations: \$231.00  
Other donations: \$5,495.29

**In-kind Donations 2009:****Work:**

- Volunteer hours:
  - Holly Robertson: \$11,700 (=780 hours @ \$15/hr)
  - Andrew Rothman: \$13,600 (=680 hours @ \$20/hr)
  - Raquel Gomez: \$9,600 (= 480 hours @ \$20/hr)
  - Rebecca Osborn: \$2,600 (=200 hours @ \$13/hr)
  - Daniel Schneider: \$2,015 (=155 hours @\$13/hr)
  - Guisselle Monge: Value of \$1500
  - Jon Kohl: Value of \$500
  - Joe Taylor: \$1,680 (= 210 hours @ \$8/hr)
  - Jeff Maitz: \$2,240 (= 280 hours @ \$8/hr)
  - Nicole Bauer: \$1,920 (= 240 hours @ \$8/hr)
  - Hadley Cole: \$2,240 (= 280 hours @ \$8/hr)
  - Helena King: \$5,632 (= 704 hours @ \$8/hr)
  - Steven King: \$5,632 (=704 hours @ \$8/hr)
  - Marion Ferrieux: \$11,304 (= 1,413 hours @ \$8/hr)
  - Thibaut Ferrieux: \$11,304 (= 1,413 hours @ \$8/hr)

Non Work In-Kind

- Russell Stevens Marketing: \$337.00
- Donations for the RBG fundraising event at Waterfront/Orton Park Festivals: \$140.96
- Society of Study and Conservation of Caribbean Birds: \$1500 value
  - Flight to Antigua for Bi-annual meeting
  - Lodging and Food in Antigua
- Sarapiquí Conservation Learning Center: Value of \$600
  - Office space, projector, meeting room, paper, fax, phone and computer use in 2009
- Tropical Science Center: Value of \$300
  - Meeting rooms, projector and telephone use
- Costa Rican Ornithological Association: Value of \$1,150
  - Assistance with education programs, data entry and Maquenque Bird Count

**TOTAL IN-KIND US 2009: \$39,844.33**

**TOTAL DONATIONS US 2009: \$50,474.97 = IN-KIND + MONETARY**

**2009 Total Expenditures: \$7,451.84**

Legal fees/easement related expenses: \$1981.58

Accountant fees: \$992.92

Promotion/fundraising (coffee program, t-shirt printing, etc.): \$1,074.44

Office expenses (postage, office supplies, printing costs, etc): \$894.21

Bird education materials for use in Costa Rica: \$283.41

Donation to Annual Bi-National Macaw Festival (Nicaragua/Costa Rica): \$200

Donation to La MICA Biological Station (Panama): \$50

Donation to Costa Rican Bird Route site, Albergue el Socorro, for earthquake relief: \$1,018.83

Membership dues for Bird Conservation Alliance: \$50

RBG Website update: \$535.71

Other: \$370.74

**CASH ACCOUNTING TOTALS:**

Total donations: **\$10,630.64** LESS total expenditures **\$7,451.84** = **\$3,178.80**

**DIFFERENCE of Income/Expenditures: \$3,178.80**

**CASH ON HAND FOR RBG:**

**Jan 1. 2009: \$3,282.10**

**Dec. 31 2009: \$6,460.90**

**Difference = \$3,178.80**

**GRANT ACCOUNTING for the Costa Rican Bird Route project:**

Grant funds on hand as of Jan. 1, 2009: **\$2,096.72**

TOTAL DISPERSED to RBG from USFWS Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act grant: **\$15,790.00**

TOTAL EXPENDED by RBG: **\$17,658.35**

**DIFFERENCE: (\$15,790 + \$2,096.72) - \$17,658.35 = \$228.37**

**NMBCA Funds Spent in 2009:**

In 2009 RBG used \$17,658.35 of the \$30,000 grant. These funds were used to pay salaries of staff; purchase office items; print Bird Route road signs; fund workshops, trainings, promotional activities, and educational events; paying for work on the CRBR website; and for travel within and to Costa Rica. For detailed information please contact the organization.



Images 5: Members of the Costa Rican Ornithological Association participate in Maquenque Christmas Bird Count.

Image 6: Board member Andrew Rothman with Society for the Conservation and Study of Caribbean Birds Bi-annual Meeting participants from St. Lucia and Jamaica

Image 7: CRBR Coordinator Raquel Gomez Ramirez at Bird Education Festival at National Gold Museum in San Jose, Costa Rica