



International Alliances Program

2008 – 2009



The National Audubon Society is the
U.S. Partner of BirdLife International.

Program Summary

Because more than half of North American birds migrate elsewhere in the Western hemisphere every year, in 2006 the National Audubon Society formed the International Alliances Program (IAP) to build the capacity and develop the effectiveness of conservation organizations throughout Latin America and the Caribbean. The future of these birds and the entire ecosystems that they use depend on governments and peoples who need the knowledge and incentives to protect these global resources. National Audubon has 100+ years of United States experience fostering a conservation ethic, developing essential scientific tools, advocating key policies, and protecting special places. IAP shares that experience, embodied in National Audubon's vast network of volunteers, professionals, and supporters. This unique assemblage of skills enables National Audubon to lead efforts protecting Important Bird Areas (IBA) throughout the hemisphere.

IBAs are key sites for conservation, selected through a rigorous, scientific process that is administered by BirdLife International, a global coalition of organizations committed to the conservation of birds and biodiversity. Each in-country BirdLife International partner leads conservation efforts to conserve IBAs in their respective country—National Audubon is the partner for the U.S. As the hemisphere's oldest and largest BirdLife International partner, National Audubon, through IAP, is at the forefront of IBA conservation at home in the U.S. and throughout the Americas.

IAP and its partner organizations in Latin America and the Caribbean develop site-specific strategies to address the threats at specific IBAs. We use a three-phase strategy to involve communities and citizens: 1) build awareness of the unique, internationally recognized resources in their area and the value of protecting them, 2) engage people who impact the IBA resources in conservation activities, and 3) provide these people and the partner organization with the knowledge and capacity to take effective actions that address the need for conservation while enhancing human livelihoods.

IAP Vision

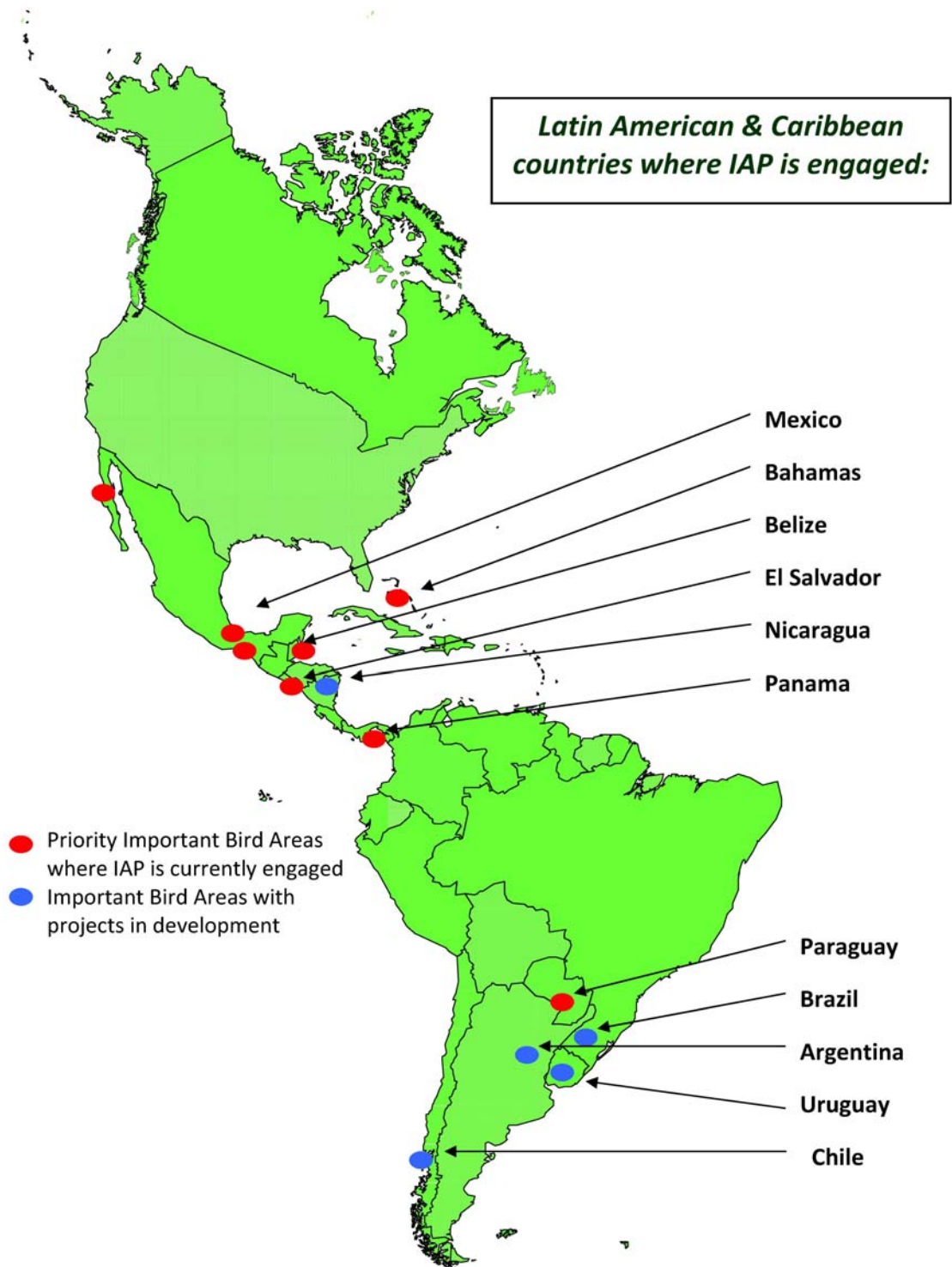
IAP protects and restores critical sites for North American migratory birds throughout the Western hemisphere by encouraging local resource stewardship and sustainable communities, as well as by building effective in-country organizations.

IAP Goals

1. Build the conservation effectiveness of in-country conservation organizations working to protect key bird habitats and biodiversity throughout the Americas, especially focusing on IBAs that provide the winter range habitat for birds from National Audubon's priority landscapes and initiatives.
2. Share the knowledge and experience of the National Audubon network with those in-country organizations.
3. Empower, mobilize, and expand a constituency engaged in the conservation of Important Bird Areas.
4. Promote livelihoods that balance the needs of people with the ecological health of Important Bird Areas throughout the Americas.
5. Advance efforts to abate the impact of climate change at Important Bird Areas throughout the Americas.

IAP Geographic Scope

IAP works in Latin America and the Caribbean at Important Bird Areas that are critical habitats for both priority North American migratory bird species as well as threatened endemic bird species.



IAP Strategies

IAP partnerships concentrate on increasing the capacities of established, in-country bird and biodiversity conservation organizations with proven track-records that want to become even more effective. These organizations are staffed by professional, committed conservationists who are already recognized leaders in their communities and countries. By providing them with enhanced tools, knowledge, skills and financial backing, National Audubon attains significant leverage for its investments, thereby strengthening a network burgeoning with untapped potential.



Jim-ba-ru the Jabiru Stork, mascot for the Pride Campaign at Belize's Crooked Tree Wildlife Sanctuary, gives schoolchildren a lesson on wetlands and Neotropical migrants.

Photo: Belize Audubon Society

IAP projects often begin with a “Pride Campaign,” a signature social marketing creation of Rare, a conservation organization that specializes in increasing public awareness of and appreciation for the natural world that surrounds communities in ecologically sensitive areas. Rare – through the Pride Campaigns—has been an essential partner in many of IAP’s initiatives, laying the groundwork for conservation, training local leaders, and with local involvement, identifying barriers to conservation and solutions to overcoming them.

1. Learning Exchanges

IAP expands our partners’ skills and knowledge by connecting them with mentors from the National Audubon network (staff, chapters, board members). Linking our hemispheric partners with this network develops long-term relationships based on shared conservation objectives.

2. Community Conservation Engagement

In collaboration with our partners, IAP educates and engages citizens and key stakeholders in IBA conservation through campaigns that raise public awareness about the importance of habitat and biodiversity conservation. In addition, IAP advises our partners on involving communities through National Audubon-style Nature Centers, citizen science (Christmas Bird Count, Great Backyard Bird Count, bird monitoring), leadership training, and environmental education curriculum and activities for K-12 students.

3. Grants

IAP raises funds from individuals, foundations, corporations, and government agencies that we in turn grant to our partners. This is a crucial activity for increasing protection at IBAs, because our partner organizations are often limited by lack of funds or the skills and connections to access funding from North American donors.

4. Sustainable Economic Development

IAP collaborates with partners to design projects that balance conservation with sustainable economic development. Some of these initiatives include the cultivation of farm products that generate improved returns, implementation of agricultural best management practices to increase productivity, and opportunities to establish ecotourism enterprises.

5. Equipment

IAP helps partner organizations improve their land management and stewardship, educational programs, bird monitoring and other essential conservation activities by securing badly-needed equipment. Necessary supplies range from trucks for the rangers who patrol IBAs to mist-nets for bird banding to digital slide projectors that bring the message of conservation into classrooms and boardrooms.

6. Local Language Resources

IAP supports the publication and distribution of educational and scientific materials in local languages in order to increase access to knowledge and develop a greater appreciation of birds and biodiversity.

7. Policy

IAP works to increase funding from the U.S. Government for conservation action in Latin America and the Caribbean. In addition, IAP helps build environmental safeguards into the terms of loans and grants made by the U.S. Government and multi-lateral institutions, such as the World Bank, for development projects.



IAP works with in-country organizations in and around Important Bird Areas throughout the Americas, like Belize's Crooked Tree Wildlife Sanctuary, that provide critical habitats for migratory and endemic birds.

Photo: Rudi Burgos

Lead Projects

Mexico

IAP is collaborating with Pronatura, the largest conservation organization in Mexico and the country's BirdLife partner. Pronatura recently demonstrated its strong commitment to bird conservation by hiring a coordinator for avian conservation. Overall, Pronatura has been working effectively on behalf of biodiversity and human communities. Our work together is greatly aided by the high-quality staff in the regional offices close to our project sites.

Site: "River of Raptors," Central Veracruz

- Globally Important Bird Area
- Internationally significant hawk migration corridor

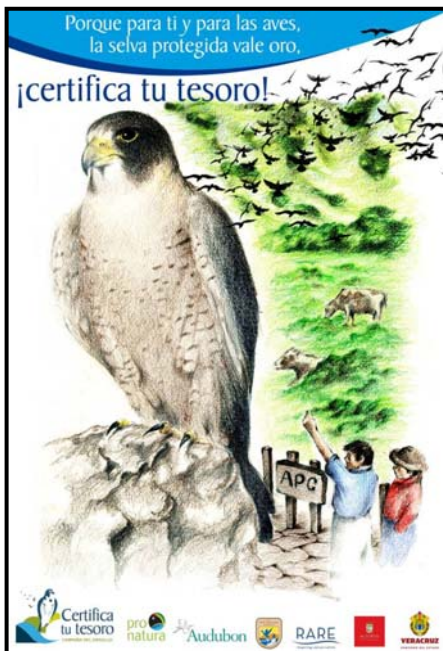
Many of the Western hemisphere's birds-of-prey rely on the ecosystems of central Veracruz during migration. Central Veracruz's unique geographic location and range of ecosystems spanning almost 15,000 feet in elevation create a bottleneck of land that concentrates over 220 species of North American migrants and 245 other bird species in Veracruz each year during annual flights. Birds migrating from both eastern and western regions of the United States come together in Veracruz to create a "River of Raptors," which is one of the most important sites for raptor migration in the world. Nearly 75% of the natural habitats around the town of Cardel, where the famous raptor observation site is



Raptors in flight over Central Veracruz.
Photo: Pronatura Veracruz

located, have been converted into agricultural lands, primarily for large-scale sugar cane plantations or cattle pastures. The monocultures leave little cover, food, or roosting sites for the birds.

In recognition of Veracruz's importance, IAP, in partnership with Pronatura and Rare, is conducting a Pride Campaign to build local appreciation for this globally important natural resource. A priority of this campaign is motivating landowners to preserve and restore natural habitat on their property. The campaign will also provide farmers with knowledge and incentives to improve their agricultural practices for the benefit of biodiversity and to generate improved and sustainable yields from their lands.



Poster from the Veracruz Pride Campaign highlighting the region's landscape and unique habitat for raptors migrating from North America.

Belize

Some of IAP's first projects were in Belize, because of the caliber of our local partner Belize Audubon Society (BAS), and because Belize is so important to the survival of birds that nest along the east coast of the U.S. National Audubon has a long history with BAS, a major force in conservation, education and land use matters in Belize. In recognition of its capabilities, the Government of Belize has given BAS the responsibility of co-managing several national parks.

Site: Crooked Tree Wildlife Sanctuary

- *Globally Important Bird Area*
- *RAMSAR Wetland of International Importance*
- *Belizean Protected Area*

Crooked Tree Wildlife Sanctuary (CTWS) comprises over 36,000 acres of lagoons, creeks, wetlands, broadleaf forest, and pine savanna just north of Belize City. BAS has documented a wide variety of fauna, including 330 species of birds, among them such Belizean specialties as the Jabiru Stork and Yellow-headed Parrot. More than two-thirds of the birds using Crooked Tree are migratory. Mammals include such species as the Jaguar, Puma, Baird's Tapir, Manatee, and Neotropical River Otter. Crooked Tree also serves an essential watershed role, which provides flood protection to communities downstream, including the country's largest city, Belize City.



Land clearing and overgrazed landscapes both pose significant threats to Crooked Tree Wildlife Sanctuary. Photo: Tom Riggle

Crooked Tree's proximity to Belize City, as well as the number of people residing in the five communities surrounding and inside the Sanctuary, present a number of threats to the Sanctuary's unique resources. Many residents depend on livestock and agriculture, resulting in continued deforestation, wetland filling, and stream diversion to increase arable and grazing acreage. This is a significant problem for Crooked Tree's forests and other habitats. Run-off from the denuded land destroys the wetlands and fills waterways, which consequently ruins habitat for birds as well as fish—an important resource for both birds and area residents.

Results generated in the first years of the partnership with BAS at Crooked Tree include a significant percentage of cattle farmers adopting best management practices for grazing in and around wetlands (supplied by Audubon Florida), national media attention for wetlands with a focus on Crooked Tree and a greater local understanding of the impacts of deforestation following an area over-flight conducted for community leaders by the Belize Defense Force. Perhaps most importantly, BAS reports that citizens in the communities surrounding Crooked Tree now feel empowered to participate in local land use decisions and are acting as watchdogs for its protection. This accomplishes a major strategic goal of IAP, because despite Crooked Tree's protected status, the Belizean government has allowed and even supported highly detrimental development within the Sanctuary, including an attempt to construct a major road. Thanks to local organizing and public awareness generated by BAS, a Rare Pride Campaign, and other IAP work, the road work was halted and an Environmental Impact Statement was begun, as required by national law.

Paraguay

Guyra Paraguay, our in-country partner, is an inspiration for other Latin American conservation organizations. It is at the forefront of bird protection efforts in South America. Thanks to Guyra's initiative, Paraguay was one of the first countries in South America to complete its inventory of IBAs. Guyra was also one of the first organizations to recognize the value of collaborating with National Audubon, through IAP.

Site: San Rafael National Park

- *Globally Important Bird Area*

San Rafael National Park is situated at the heart of the Atlantic Forest, one of the most biologically diverse and threatened ecosystems in the world. The Atlantic Forest once covered approximately 300 million acres stretching across portions of Brazil, Argentina, and Paraguay. Today a mere 7% remains, mostly in scattered fragments. Paraguay has some of the largest remnants—one of which comprises San Rafael National Park.

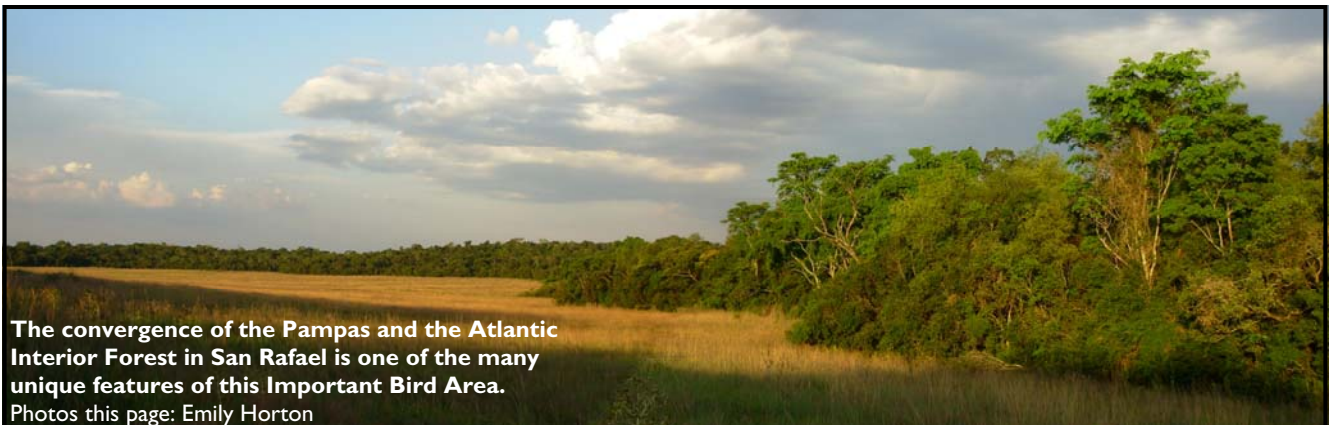
In 1997, San Rafael became the first Globally Important Bird Area in Paraguay and the second in all of Latin America. San Rafael's fauna features 28 globally- and near-threatened bird species, in addition to more species endemic to the Atlantic Interior Forest than any other site in Paraguay. Guyra has been working to expand and protect the Park for years.

Fifteen communities are located within the Park's buffer zone, with nearly 14,000 people relying on local natural resource extraction for some portion of their sustenance. Therefore, the future of the forest, watershed, flora and fauna of San Rafael (which the government cannot afford to police) will continue to be threatened by the activities of these settlements deep within the forest—until the residents begin to perceive value in its protection.

IAP, Guyra Paraguay, and Rare conducted a Pride Campaign in San Rafael, targeting the communities located within the Park's buffer zone. Led by Guyra's staff, the campaign made remarkable progress in changing the behaviors and attitudes of area residents. Successes include the establishment of two municipal reserves in the buffer zone, dozens of locals trained to monitor biodiversity indicators, and almost 100 farmers converting to sustainable agriculture methods and new crops that will wean them away from their traditional slash-and-burn agriculture. Through the campaign, Guyra has gained significant new organizational capacity in social marketing, community organizing, and sustainable agriculture.



The campaign in San Rafael has led local farmers to use sustainable methods that reduce deforestation.



The convergence of the Pampas and the Atlantic Interior Forest in San Rafael is one of the many unique features of this Important Bird Area.
Photos this page: Emily Horton

Panama

Panama Audubon Society (PAS), our partner in Panama, is one of the oldest conservation nonprofits in Central America. Over the years, its accomplished board of directors has achieved remarkable conservation results as an all-volunteer organization. Through its focus on education and outreach, PAS has nurtured a new generation of young Panamanian conservationists. Its work in migratory shorebird and raptor monitoring has advanced efforts by the international bird conservation community to development meaningful protection initiatives. With the recent hiring of its first full-time staff, PAS is poised to have an expanded impact on conservation in Panama.



Rapid urban development poses numerous challenges to the ecological integrity of Panama Bay, a critical site for Neotropical migratory birds.

Site: Panama Bay, Panama City

- *Globally Important Bird Area*
- *RAMSAR Wetland of International Importance*

With 85 square miles of mudflats and 42,000 acres of mangroves and wetlands extending more than 40 miles along the coast, the Upper Bay of Panama is one of the most important sites for migratory shorebirds in the hemisphere. Twenty-eight species of shorebirds rely on the area, including the Red Knot, Long-billed Curlew, and Buff-breasted Sandpiper –all of which are considered to be Highly-Imperiled – and 12 other species listed as of High Concern. Winter surveys along Panama’s coastline found over 80% of all shorebirds migrating through Panama stop-over or winter in the mangroves, wetlands and mudflats in the Upper Bay of Panama. This rich shoreline habitat also supports other globally threatened species, including the Jaguar, Baird’s Tapir, Spider Monkey, American Crocodile, and Loggerhead Sea-turtle.

Panama City has grown exponentially over the past decades, funded by a massive influx of capital and fueled by lax government regulation. As a consequence of the building boom, population growth, and industrial development, the ecological integrity of Panama Bay faces compound threats. Pollution from agricultural run-off, untreated sewage, garbage, and, perhaps most significantly, chemical wastes dumped into the Bay by industry, are disrupting the naturally

functioning ecosystem. Lack of enforcement of existing environmental laws, despite the internationally recognized importance of the Bay, poses another serious threat.



Many migratory birds like these Black-bellied Plovers rely on Panama Bay’s resources during their annual migrations.

Photos this page: Karl Kaufman, Panama Audubon Society

In conjunction with Panama Audubon Society and Rare, IAP initiated a Pride Campaign focused on the citizens and governments in the suburban and rural communities that are impacting the health of the Upper Bay. The later phases brought special focus on changing the behaviors of citizens living in the eastern suburbs of Panama City, which lie adjacent to the most important zone for migratory birds in the Upper Bay.

The completed campaign in Panama Bay produced several notable accomplishments:

- Official designation of Panama Bay as a National Protected Area
- Initiation of a large-scale refuse removal and recycling initiative throughout the Upper Bay area
- National media attention reaching tens of thousands throughout Panama about the importance of conserving shorelines, wetlands and mangrove ecosystems



Volunteers pick up trash on the Panama Bay shoreline during one of the Pride Campaign’s many community outreach activities. Photo: Panama Audubon Society

Bahamas

Our partner, the Bahamas National Trust (BNT), was established in 1959 by the country’s parliament (and with assistance from Audubon Florida) to develop and manage the national park system. Over the years, BNT has become the leader in the conservation of the Bahamas’ bird habitat and biodiversity, historic preservation, resource management, and sustainable development while emerging as a key mentor and role model to other organizations throughout the Caribbean.

Site: New Providence and Grand Bahama

- *Globally Important Bird Areas*

Wetlands, marine shorelines and mangrove ecosystems contain the richest biodiversity of all the terrestrial ecosystems of the Bahamas. They are vital to the archipelago’s migratory and endemic birds. Over 100 bird species – many of them threatened or of conservation concern—rely on the

Bahamas’ wetlands and shorelines as their primary habitat for foraging, nesting, or roosting. These ecosystems also serve as nurseries for many marine species that are economically and culturally important to Bahamians.



Bahamian mangroves and shorelines, which support many Neotropical migrant species and are a draw for international tourists, face many threats stemming from unregulated pollution.

Photo: Bahamas National Trust

As in many island nations, a healthy ecosystem is vital to a healthy economy and citizens' livelihoods. The Bahamas presents a classic case where the economic engine, tourism, is both a leading source of income and cause of environmental damage. The very resources that attract visitors – the shorelines, ocean and reefs – are placed at risk in the rush to develop facilities to accommodate and profit from those visitors. Dumping of solid waste poses major environmental, health, and economic threats, which are often met with relative indifference from island residents and regulators. Degradation to land and water systems from leaching and run-off also place the Bahamian ecosystems at risk; the challenges posed by these particular threats are exacerbated by the islands' porous ground. In order for the Bahamas to continue to gain economically from its world-renowned landscapes, it must take measures to protect them.

In response to the lack of national recognition of intact ecosystems as tools of ecological, economic, and social sustainability, IAP and Bahamas National Trust (BNT) are working to catalyze a new national culture that takes actions to conserve Bahamian shorelines, wetlands, and mangroves in their natural states. As the first step toward elevating citizen and government valuing of these ecosystems, IAP, BNT and Rare have completed a Pride Campaign focused on raising public awareness about the country's unique wetland and marine treasures in communities across the Bahamian nation.

Though the campaign was conducted in sites across the Bahamas, it focused activities on the islands of New Providence and Grand Bahama. On New Providence, we centered many campaign activities at Harrold and Wilson's Ponds National Park, an Important Bird Area boasting one of the most intact mangrove and wetland systems on the island. This site is also readily accessible to a large portion of the Bahamian population, as many of residents live on New Providence in and around Nassau. By engaging community members at this site, the campaign was able to give residents first-hand examples of the islands' natural ecosystem services, which include controlling storm surges, abating floodwaters, protecting coral reefs and their marine inhabitants, and providing habitat for many avian species. Because this site also exhibits signs of human-induced ecological stresses that are common in the Bahamas, the campaign effectively illustrated these threats to government officials and citizens.

Campaign activities at Harrold and Wilson Ponds and on Grand Bahamas such as field trips, guided tours, and trash pick-ups, engaged residents with their natural landscape and provided them with real-life examples of the close link between mangrove and shoreline health and that of their own health and livelihoods. The major highlights and accomplishments of the campaign include the successful engagement of teachers, community members, and over 1,800 schoolchildren in field trips, guided tours, and educational talks; high community participation in the Adopt-a-Wetland Program, an initiative that promotes conservation activities such as trash pick-ups and invasive plant removal; and bird and nature festivals, which bolstered support for wetland conservation and involved citizens in restoration projects and educational activities.



Local residents plant native vegetation as part of the Adopt-A-Wetlands Program.

Photo: Bahamas National Trust

Other Sites Where IAP is Engaged

Site: Jaltepeque – Jiquilisco, El Salvador

- *Globally Important Bird Area*
- *Wetland of international importance under the RAMSAR Convention*
- *UNESCO Biosphere Reserve*

SalvaNATURA, our partner in El Salvador, is an effective nonprofit that focuses on restoration and conservation of the country's considerable natural resources. Its mission is closely and explicitly linked to improving the quality of life for people in the region through appropriate types of economic development. IAP is funding SalvaNATURA's shorebird monitoring and awareness-building project in the largest coastal IBA in El Salvador: Jaltepeque – Jiquilisco. This IBA is an 168,000-acre bay with extensive beaches, mudflats, sandbars, and mangrove swamps, as well as the only shorebird breeding sites in El Salvador, and the only Black Skimmer and Least Tern breeding colonies in all of Central America.

Numerous threats face this IBA, including agro-chemical runoff, fishing with explosives, coastal development, conversion of mangroves to salt pans or shrimp farms, and local harassment and killing of birds at their resting and nesting places. With funding from IAP, SalvaNATURA has initiated a successful habitat restoration operation, organized community beach clean-ups and education programs, and trained volunteers from the surrounding communities to conduct shorebird monitoring. Through the partnership, we have increased international visibility for El Salvador's natural treasures and importance for migratory birds, which has inspired support for the on-going conservation of Jaltepeque from several Audubon Chapters from the West Coast of the U.S.

Bahía San Quintín, Baja California, Mexico

- *Globally Important Bird Area*
- *RAMSAR designation as a Wetland of International Importance*
- *Site of Regional Importance in the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network*

Located in northwestern Baja California, Bahía San Quintín is a complex environment with the largest Mediterranean coastal wetland in Mexico and the most pristine tract of coastal salt marsh in western North America. This cornerstone of the Pacific Flyway migratory corridor supports 180 bird species that migrate to and from the U.S., including the Snowy Plover, Long-billed Curlew, and Marbled Godwit. Bahía San Quintín is currently threatened by unsustainable tourist and urban development, agriculture expansion, poor grazing management, and unplanned land use. This natural area is at risk and desperately needs local and national land use safeguards, ideally as a federally-designated protected area.



A Long-billed Curlew on the shores of Bahía San Quintín, Mexico.

Photo: Alan Harper, www.alanharper.com

To address the threats and encourage the Mexican government to provide protected-area status, IAP—with support from Audubon California’s state office and extensive chapter network—joined forces with the Bahía San Quintín Coalition (Pronatura Noroeste, The Nature Conservancy, Pro Esteros, and Terra Peninsular) to launch a Pride Campaign. The campaign is building citizen support for conserving the irreplaceable resources of the Bahía, changing the way local communities use land and water, and encouraging sustainable land use practices.



Bird banding stations like this one in coastal Mexico are critical components of IAP’s scientific capacity-building for partner organizations. Photo: Craig Lee

Site: La Encrucijada, Chiapas, Mexico

- *Globally Important Bird Area*

Pronatura is working in the Globally Important Bird Area at La Encrucijada, located on the Pacific Coast of Chiapas, Mexico, thanks to financial assistance from National Audubon. The area’s mangrove ecosystem is one of the most important along North America’s Pacific Coast. The area supports many migrant shorebirds and land birds. However, a host of human-caused activities are threatening the ecosystem. These threats include illegal extraction of sand and gravel, overfishing, siltation of estuaries and lagoons due to canalization, and dredging. As the principal strategy for protecting these habitats, Pronatura is promoting sustainable practices among landowners and fishermen who live and rely on the resources in the watershed.

Site: Coastal Wetlands of Sinaloa, Mexico

- *Globally Important Bird Areas*
- *Site of Regional Importance in the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network*

National Audubon is underwriting grassroots efforts to conserve wetlands at IBAs along the Pacific Coast of the state of Sinaloa in Mexico. The threats include intensive agriculture, water pollution, and shrimp farming. At these IBAs, our Mexican partner Pronatura is restoring coastal wetlands that support 32 migratory shorebird species, many of which are declining. Pronatura is creating and restoring tidal creeks and channels that enable movement of fauna and drainage of flood water. These restoration activities restore the mangroves.



Bahía San Quintín, Mexico.
Photo: Alan Harper, www.alanharper.com

IAP's work extending across the Americas

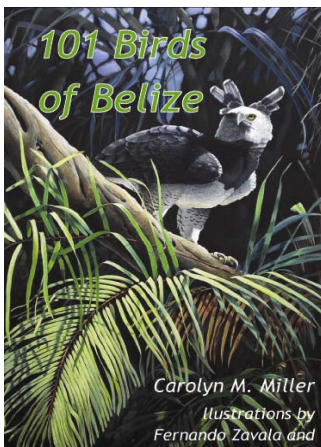
National Audubon Society is the BirdLife International partner for the United States. BirdLife is an alliance of over 100 conservation organizations around the world – one per country – that have a strong interest in protecting birds. BirdLife created the criteria for designating Important Bird Areas and reviews and approves the establishment of each site. The BirdLife partners throughout the Americas work together on issues of mutual concern, such as flyways, seabirds, and international accords. IAP is the point of contact at National Audubon and is frequently involved in major policy decisions.

Identifying new Important Bird Areas

IAP has supported the identification of Important Bird Areas in Chile and Honduras. In Honduras, IAP worked in partnership with a coalition of Missouri Audubon chapters and the Audubon state office in Missouri to raise funds for this effort. In Chile, funding from IAP helped CODEFF (our Chilean partner organization) advance that country's IBA investigations. Because the identification of IBAs greatly enhances knowledge of conservation priorities, these investments with in-country partners provide tremendous leverage for bird conservation. Once IBAs are designated, there are new opportunities to work with governments and funders to achieve new levels of protection.

Distributing Local Language Resources and Tools

As part of its capacity-building mission, IAP secures educational materials for its partner organizations and other individuals and entities committed to bird conservation. In partnership with BAS, IAP underwrote the publication of the updated version of *101 Birds of Belize*, a field guide highlighting some of Belize's most distinctive birds, some common and some rare. The first edition of the guide introduced a generation of Belizeans to the biodiversity in their country, inspiring some to pursue careers in biology. We believe the new edition, by ornithologist Caroline Miller, will foster Belizean's curiosity about their country's unique natural treasures and inspire them to take action to conserve them. Additionally, IAP is distributing Spanish editions of Ken Kaufmann's *Guide to the Birds of North America* and, along with the American Birding Association, *A Neotropical Companion* by John Kricher, to its BirdLife partners in Latin America and the Caribbean.



Preventing Extinctions Program

There are 4,255 bird species in the Americas, 86 of which are listed as Critically Endangered. 151 are listed as Endangered and 245 are listed as Vulnerable, which translates to 11.3% of the Americas' birds threatened with extinction. With a further 281 species in the Near Threatened category, 18% are in danger. In response to these troubling statistics, BirdLife launched the Preventing Extinctions Program (PEP). IAP is implementing PEP in the Americas. The program supports people and organizations in Latin America and the Caribbean addressing the conservation needs of the most endangered species. Currently, PEP is assisting 25 projects in South America—21 targeting Critically Endangered birds. IAP is providing funding for PEP and working to help advance the program's objectives by arranging speaking engagements for the director of PEP throughout the Audubon chapter network.

Southern Cone Grasslands Conservation Initiative

IAP is facilitating a joint venture between Audubon's Mississippi River Initiative (a consortium of Audubon states, known as the MRI) with the Southern Cone Grasslands Alliance (composed of BirdLife International partners in Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay, and Brazil). These two regions share many migrants and have several comparable economic challenges. Audubon state directors involved in MRI participated in a 5-day mobile symposium in the Pampas with their Southern Cone colleagues (from Guyra Paraguay, Aves Uruguay, Aves Argentina, and SAVE Brasil). After these professionals compared their experiences in grassland conservation, land management, and agricultural practices, they formed a new north-south consortium. With IAP's leadership, they have developed a framework for conservation of five of the Americas' highly migratory grassland bird species. This can benefit all birds of the grassland ecosystems involved. IAP is working to expand the exchange of best practices and recent innovations in agricultural product marketing among the consortium's organizations.



Audubon's Mississippi River Initiative and the Southern Cone Grasslands Alliance are beginning a partnership that will work to conserve grasslands in the Northern and Southern hemispheres.

Photo: Matt Jeffery

Influencing Global Policy

IAP is involved in several projects that support national and international policies that protect the habitats of migratory birds throughout the hemisphere.

- National Audubon is helping to shape BirdLife's global policies on climate change bringing our knowledge and connections within the U.S. government to bear on this critical challenge for biodiversity.
- Together, National Audubon and BirdLife promoted U.S. accession to the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP).
- To keep U.S. funds from paying for habitat destruction, IAP and BirdLife are working to secure commitments from the Department of Treasury and the InterAmerican Development Bank to institute environmental safeguards when those entities finance biofuel production in the Southern Cone Grasslands.
- IAP and National Audubon's policy division coordinated advocacy supporting re-authorization of the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act, which provides the principal U.S. funding for habitat conservation throughout the hemisphere.

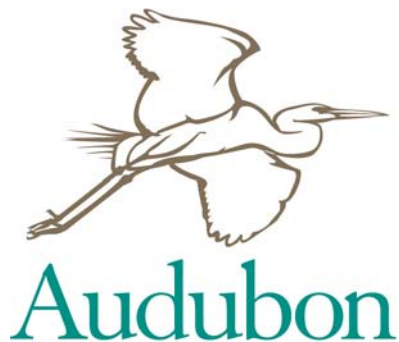
What Lies Ahead for IAP

It is both encouraging and inspiring to look back over IAP's accomplishments and to report on the progress that we—and all of our partners—have made in protecting habitats throughout the Americas. With your support, we can continue to make achievements like these. Thank you for being an essential part of IAP and National Audubon Society's work, which is making it possible for dedicated conservationists throughout the hemisphere to join forces on behalf of international conservation.

The National Audubon Society's International Alliances Program protects migratory birds throughout the Western hemisphere by building the effectiveness of in-country organizations that conserve key habitats for birds and biodiversity throughout the Americas.



In the pine-oak highlands of Chiapas, Mexico, Craig Lee, Director of Audubon's International Alliances Program, teams with staff of partner organization Pronatura to monitor the progress of a conservation initiative for the Golden-cheeked Warbler, one of the U.S.' most Endangered birds. Photo: Sandra Tassel



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www.audubon.org/bird/IAP/OurPrograms