Sustainable Conservation of Globally Important Caribbean Bird Habitats: Strengthening a Regional Network for a Shared Resource

Fast Facts

Achieved: Enhanced conservation efforts and fostered public awareness at Important Bird Areas by creating and working with local networks.
Where: The Caribbean: Bahamas, Dominican Republic, Jamaica
Cost: GEF funds: $999,200; Co-financing: $2.3 million
When: October 2003 to September 2007

Achievements

Working with local government, regional support groups and NGOs, the project created and supported conservation networks, advocated for biodiversity awareness, and implemented strategies to ensure the conservation of Important Bird Areas (IBA). It succeeded in exposing tens of thousands of people in Bahamas, Dominican Republic and Jamaica to the importance of bird and bird-habitat conservation.

Legacy

Some of the lasting impacts include:
- Creating regional and national databases of Caribbean IBAs and helping make them available to the public through the BirdLife International website.
- Establishing local support groups for IBAs and linking them so they shared information and efforts.
- Participating in a successful advocacy campaign to stop bauxite mining in Cockpit Country, a forest area in Jamaica rich in biodiversity and home to the endangered Jamaican Blackbird and other endemic birds.
- Encouraging small-scale ecotourism ventures near an IBA site in Dominican Republic.
- Increasing public awareness of biodiversity and conservation by participating in activities including The Caribbean Endemic Bird Festival and the Watchable Wildlife Ponds project.
- Training about 450 teachers, and hosting meetings with government policy makers and corporate leaders.
- Raising more than $2,055,000 in co-financing to support bird habitats.
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What People Say:

It is fair to say that without the GEF project tens of thousands of people in the Caribbean would not have been exposed to bird and site conservation issues. - from an independent evaluation

Publications:

An interactive database was made available online at http://www.birdlife.org/regional/caribbean/index.html.

National and regional newsletters were published including Birds Caribbean

Finances:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Funds Type</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GEF Funds</td>
<td>$999,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>In-Kind Funds</td>
<td>$255,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raised Funds</td>
<td>$2,055,000</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$2,310,000</strong></td>
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</tbody>
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Outputs and Deliverables:

- The GEF project catalyzed site conservation projects in eight Caribbean countries. Some were built directly on site demonstration projects of the GEF actions. Others responded directly to the priorities identified by the IBA analysis.
- In the Dominican Republic, the GEF-funded project contributed to application for Biosphere Reserve status for the Bahoruco-Jaragua-Enriquillo area. The GEF project partner is increasingly active in this area with a dynamic network of local conservation groups assisting with sustainable use projects and conservation actions.
- In the Bahamas, the GEF project was catalytic in changing attitudes towards working with local people in and around the national parks. Management planning is now undertaken with the full participation of local communities, and increasingly local conservation groups are engaged to assist with management.
- The GEF project process catalyzed a close networking relationship with partners across the Caribbean that has allowed the development of a number of collaborative ventures including the development of key biodiversity areas. This network now extends to the European partners who, though BirdLife International and in collaboration with the Bahamas National Trust, have submitted a joint proposal to the EU-BEST initiative to focus on improving protected area systems in the Caribbean UK and French and Dutch territories.

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