



Patuxent Wildlife Research Center Science Brief for Resource Managers

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Science Brief PWRC 2003-38

Date: March 2003	Contact: Chandler Robbins	Phone: 301-497-5641	Email: chan_robbins@usgs.gov	Address: USGS Patuxent Wildlife Research Center Laurel, MD 20708-4015
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Tropical forest conservation plan

Description:

Much of the 7,900 ha nuclear zone of the Cerro San Gil Ecological Reserve in Guatemala--essentially the undisturbed mountaintop--has been purchased by *FUNDAECO* and is also protected by federal legislation. The surrounding multiple use (11,000 ha) and buffer zones (28,000 ha), which are unprotected, provide habitats for dozens of bird species that do not occur in the protected area, and many of these are neotropical migrants. This project identifies and prioritizes sites in need of protection. *FUNDAECO* personnel, with support from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, will negotiate with landowners and land managers to establish through easements or other means, for the protection of high priority habitats. BRDs role in this project is to assist *FUNDAECO* in establishing a GIS of the Cerro San Gil area and train *FUNDAECO* biologists in its use, and to assist in designating candidate areas, selecting indicator species, and sampling bird populations in representative habitats.

Progress to Date:

After a highly successful partnership with the Guatemalan NGO, *FUNDAECO*, since 1992, we are gradually phasing out of the fieldwork on this project. In the past two winters, *FUNDAECO* biologists again revisited our ten study sites on Cerro San Gil and banded for three days at each site. This was the second time they did the banding all by themselves, and we were very pleased with the results. In the winter of 2000-01 they recaptured 205 birds that we had banded in previous years, and in 2001-02 they recaptured 165, increasing the sample size of year-to-year recaptures to 1,420. We calculated survival rates for 20 of the more common species and presented a paper on longevity records and survival estimates at the 2002 joint meeting of the Association of Field Ornithologists and the Wilson Ornithological Society. Dowell and Robbins put on a four-day training workshop on avian monitoring techniques at the Biotopo del Quetzal at the request of the National

Fish & Wildlife Foundation. The workshop was sponsored by *FUNDAECO* and the Guatemala Ornithological Society; and 35 students attended, including representatives from government and non-government organizations and students from both major Guatemalan universities. On the same trip we assisted *FUNDAECO* biologists with their 2001 roadside transects in the Department of Izabal. We were pleased to learn that *FUNDAECO* has received a 5-year grant from a TNC sister reserve on Long Island to continue the bird projects that we had started.

Management Implications:

The idea is to demonstrate to major landowners specific means of enhancing habitats, such as planting living fences, protecting stream corridors, and reducing fragmentation.

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