

## Station Fact

The Caribbean Ecological Services Field Office (CESFO) was established in 1974, as part of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (Service) Southeast Region. The CESFO's main office is co-located with the Caribbean Islands National Wildlife Refuge Complex within the Cabo Rojo National Wildlife Refuge (CRNWR). We have jurisdiction on Federal Trust Species (*i.e.*, at-risk species, federally-listed species, migratory birds and inter-jurisdictional fish) in Puerto Rico and U.S. Virgin Islands (USVI; St. Thomas, St. John, and St. Croix).

## Station Mission

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's **mission** is to work with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people.

## Our Goals and Priorities

- Design and implement landscape conservation actions and initiatives to protect, conserve and enhance habitats for at-risk species, federally-listed species, and other Federal trust species within private and public lands in Puerto Rico and the USVI.
- Identify, protect and recover at-risk and federally listed species in partnership with other Federal agencies, Commonwealth and Territorial agencies, non-governmental organizations and private landowners and entities.
- Conserve candidate and federally-listed species, wetlands and aquatic resources throughout project evaluation and consultations under the Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act for projects with Federal nexus.
- Evaluate impacts of contaminants on at-risk species, federally-listed species and other Federal trust species and aid in remediation of impacts and restoration of habitats and resources.
- Develop partnerships with Federal, Commonwealth and Territorial agencies, organizations and citizen groups to understand and address, minimize, mitigate, avoid or remediate climate change impacts on fish and wildlife resources and their habitats.
- Manage the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Puerto Rican Parrot



Recovery Program and be part of an interagency working group that promotes the recovery of this species.

## What we do...

### Endangered Species

- Protect and recover threatened and endangered species through regulatory mechanisms and implementation of high priority recovery actions.
- Promote the conservation of at-risk species so that listing of those species under the ESA does not become necessary.
- List, recover, and re-classify threatened and endangered species.



Under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) we also work with:

- Candidate Conservation Agreements
- Section 7 consultations
- Grants for the implementation of recovery actions
- Incidental Take Permits and Habitat Conservation Plans
- Listing of species and designation of Critical Habitat
- Recovery Planning and Implementation
- Section 10 Permits



### Habitat Restoration Initiatives (Partners for Fish and Wildlife and Coastal Programs)

- Protect and recover at-risk and federally-listed species and other Federal trust species by supporting restoration of high priority habitats in private and public lands. Projects include the establishment of riparian buffers, reforestation, restoration of shade grown coffee plantations, enhancement and protection of coastal lagoons, mangrove forests, salt ponds, native beach dune forests, dry forest, riparian or gut moist forest, and coral reefs.
- Provide financial and technical assistance for voluntary, on-the-ground habitat restoration and conservation projects.
- These programs focus on the enhancement, restoration and protection of ecologically important habitats.
- The programs recognize the need to balance residential, tourist, commercial, agriculture, and industrial needs with conservation of important habitats and species and work closely with other Federal, Territorial, non-governmental organizations, and private partners to carry out restoration projects.

- The programs cover a wide area of Puerto Rico and USVI. The focal areas in Puerto Rico and USVI are dominated by subtropical moist and dry forests. In addition, since the participation is voluntary, the Service can evaluate and accept the collaboration of private landowners located outside the designated focal areas.



Strategic Habitat Conservation Areas

### Fish and Aquatic Conservation Initiative

- Implement initiatives for the conservation, restoration and enhancement of aquatic habitats in Puerto Rico and the USVI. These projects include: restoration and enhancement of aquatic habitats via the removal or modification of physical barriers, replacement or modification of stream-crossing structures, construction of fish ladders, rehabilitation of stream banks, and enhancement of recreational fisheries activities.
- Systematically gather information on the status of native aquatic species, assess their threats and needs and document invasive aquatic species in Puerto Rico and the USVI.
- Educate and engage the public in aquatic resources and conservation.
- Build partnerships with Federal, Commonwealth and Territorial agencies, non-governmental organizations, and private landowners and entities for the conservation of aquatic resources.



Photo by: Patrick Cooney©

### Environmental Quality

- Provide scientific information and technical assistance to all Service's Divisions (e.g., National Wildlife Refuges), other Federal agencies, and Commonwealth and Territorial agencies in the U.S. Caribbean on contamination, cleanup response, pollution, water quality, and pesticide-related resources issues. Emphasis is given to suitable habitats for at-risk, and threatened and endangered species.

- One of the primary responsibilities of the Environmental Contaminants Program is the identification of environmental contaminant problems affecting National Wildlife Refuge lands, migratory birds, and threatened and endangered species. The CESFO has worked extensively on the investigation and cleanup activities of unexploded ordnance on the Culebra Island National Wildlife Refuge and Vieques National Wildlife Refuge to ensure that cleanup levels are protective to wildlife and its habitats.
- Coordinate with Federal and local partners.
- Oil spill response, natural and damage assessments, and restoration plans.



#### Puerto Rican Parrot Recovery Program

- The CESFO has been implementing actions to prevent the extinction and recover the Puerto Rican parrot for almost four decades. We implement high priority recovery actions under a Memorandum of Understanding among the Service, the Puerto Rico Department of Natural and Environmental Resources and the U.S. Forest Service. The main goals of the program are to maintain a healthy and sustainable captive population and establish wild viable and interacting populations in Puerto Rico.
- We are the primary Federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting, and enhancing the Puerto Rican parrot and its habitats.
- Operate the Iguaca Aviary at El Yunque National Forest to support wild parrot populations and new reintroduction efforts for the recovery of the species.
- Manage the wild population at El Yunque National Forest, assist with the reintroduction efforts at the Río Abajo Commonwealth Forest, and co-manage the reintroduction efforts at the Maricao Commonwealth Forest.
- We aim to expand our knowledge on the parrots biology, ecology, and behavior in order to insure the survival of the species in the wild.



- Coordinate interagency recovery efforts through partnerships and best available science.
- Promote awareness and education for the plight of the Puerto Rican parrot.

#### Where can you find us...

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#### For more information visit...

- <http://www.fws.gov>
- <http://www.fws.gov/caribbean/es>
- <http://ecos.fws.gov>
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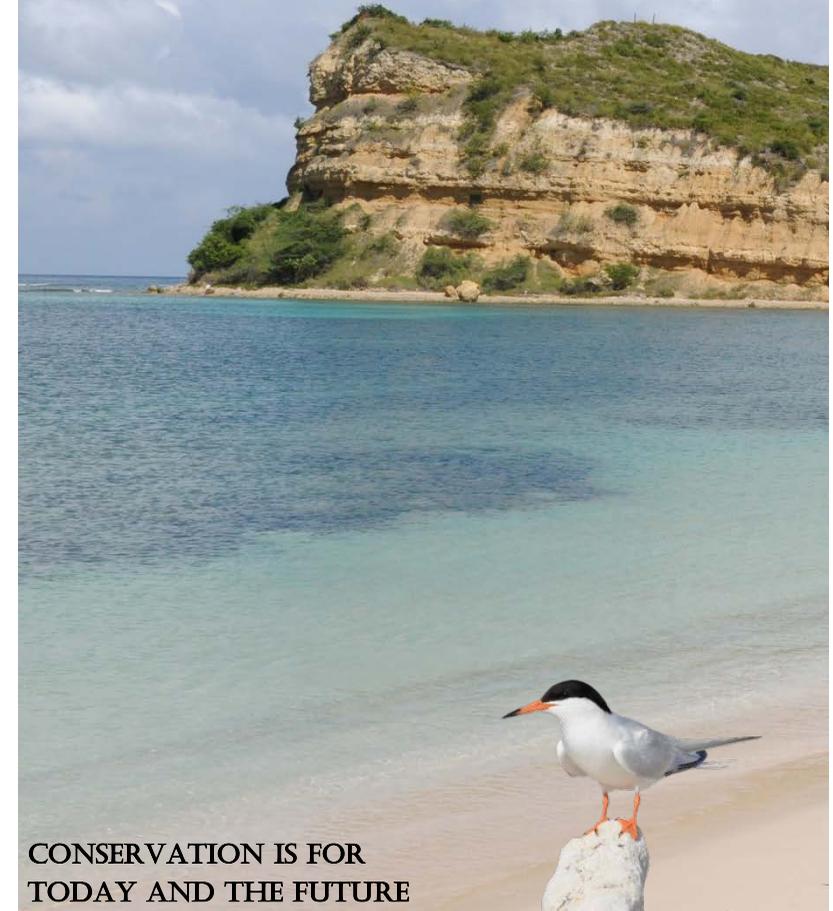


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# Caribbean Ecological Services Field Office



CONSERVATION IS FOR  
 TODAY AND THE FUTURE