

## 2023 NEOTROPICAL MIGRATORY BIRD CONSERVATION FUND AWARDS

(Listed by project number)

Note: The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's **Birds of Conservation Concern**, many of which are identified as at-risk in the 3 Billion Birds report, **are in bold blue font**, and **listed Endangered Species are in green font**.

### FY2023 Grant Awards Summaries

#### **7573: BIRD-FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES IN NORTHERN PERU III**

**Applicant:** AMERICAN BIRD CONSERVANCY

**Country:** Peru

**Grant Award Amount:** \$199,884    **Matching Contributions:** \$611,370

**Notable bird species to benefit:** **Cerulean Warbler**, **Canada Warbler**, **Olive-sided Flycatcher**, Alder Flycatcher, Western Wood-Pewee, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Swainson's Thrush, Black-and-white Warbler, Blackburnian Warbler, Blackpoll Warbler, Red-eyed Vireo, Summer Tanager, Scarlet Tanager, and Rose-breasted Grosbeak.

Building on their experience in Andean reforestation projects supported by the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act (NMBCA) since 2008, American Bird Conservancy (ABC) has identified priority habitat for the conservation of migratory birds on their wintering grounds. These priority areas include ABC's landmark regions called BirdScapes. BirdScapes identify areas where our long-term engagement has the power to improve the conservation outlook for birds by working closely with landowners in the production and marketing of bird-focused, high-value crops and other avenues to economic diversification. ABC works within the Colán-Alto Mayo BirdScape, delineated in 2018 and incorporating 14 protected areas and covering nearly 1.7 million acres within Amazonas and San Martín regions. With NMBCA support, ABC proposes to continue work supported by previous NMBCA awards to: (1) plant 135,320 new trees and coffee plants covering approximately 247 acres of new habitat for migratory songbirds and resident species; (2) work with local farmers to establish bird-friendly land-use practices; and (3) advance and build capacity for community-based conservation through the facilitation of local workshops. Activities will occur in the unprotected matrix of forest and agricultural lands within the BirdScape and will contribute to a continuous arc of habitat improvement across northern Peru to reestablish the wintering habitat for 23 species of migratory songbirds, including the **Cerulean Warbler**, **Canada Warbler**, and **Olive-sided Flycatcher**.

## **7574: BIRDS OVER A GREEN SEA: MAINSTREAMING BIRD-FRIENDLY PRACTICES INTO SUGARCANE**

**Applicant:** NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY

**Country:** Colombia

**Grant Award Amount:** \$200,000    **Matching Contributions:** \$2,130,720

**Notable bird species to benefit:** **Lesser Yellowlegs**, Solitary Sandpiper, Greater Yellowlegs, **Buff-breasted Sandpiper**, **Pectoral Sandpiper**, Mourning Warbler, Bay-breasted Warbler, Alder Flycatcher, Swainson's Thrush, Northern Waterthrush, and Gray-cheeked Thrush.

Nestled between the Western and the Central Andes of Colombia, the Cauca River valley region is a highly heterogeneous landscape that provides crucial habitat for a total of 84 Neotropical migratory bird species that depend on this landscape for their annual survival, like the **Lesser Yellowlegs**, **Pectoral Sandpiper** and **Buff-breasted Sandpiper**. Unfortunately, this important landscape only maintains approximately 13% of the original extent of forest ecosystems and 20% of the wetlands in the valley floor, prior to anthropic transformation, which makes it a high priority region for conservation. Audubon selected the Cauca Valley as a hub to implement its ambitious regenerative agriculture strategy that uses market-based solutions to deliver a comprehensive conservation and community engagement approach to landscape protection and restoration. This project will work to improve habitat for birds in this landscape, which is characterized by its high productivity in sugarcane production. Audubon will engage a myriad of stakeholders in the region to develop a portfolio of Bird-Friendly Practices (BFP) that can improve tree cover and connectivity to be tested in demonstration farms, to further advance in scalability. Specifically, this project will: (1) design a portfolio of innovative BFPs for the sugarcane sector, including artificial wetlands through sugarcane-rice rotation and improved water reservoirs, (2) develop a playbook on practices for birds in sugarcane production, training a group of stewards through 1-on-1 visits and assessing their willingness for BFP implementation, (3) test practices in at least two demonstration farms, and develop field days and events through Cenicaña (a sugarcane research center) and the sugar mills for dissemination and scaling, (4) create a network of community nurseries that can support the market for bird-friendly plants and alternative economic opportunities for rural areas, (5) educate and improve data about migratory birds through spreading Audubon's ExplorAves platform and deploying a MOTUS wildlife tracking network monitoring system, and (6) monitor success using Audubon's Bird Friendliness Index.

**7575: BUILDING CAPACITY FOR LANDBIRD MONITORING & CONSERVATION IN THE CARIBBEAN II**

**Applicant:** BIRDSCARIBBEAN [FORMERLY SCSCB]

**Countries:** Antigua & Barbuda, Aruba, Bonaire, Bahamas, Curacao, Dominican Republic, St. Eustatius, Grenada, Jamaica, St. Maarten, Saba, United States, and St. Vincent & Grenadines

**Grant Award Amount:** \$199,876    **Matching Contributions:** \$801,573

**Notable bird species to benefit:** **Bicknell's Thrush**, **Bobolink**, **Prothonotary Warbler**, **Kirtland's Warbler**, **Kentucky Warbler**, **Prairie Warbler**, Grasshopper Sparrow (endemic subspecies), and **White-crowned Pigeon**.

This project will continue to improve the long-term survival of landbirds and their habitats in the Caribbean by expanding three regional monitoring programs to: (1) build local monitoring capacity by providing training, guidance, tools, and funding; (2) provide essential information for adaptive management of landbirds and their habitats through coordinated, regional monitoring activities; and (3) increase support for conservation of landbirds and their habitats by increasing awareness through community outreach and education programs.

## **7577: COMMUNITY ACTIONS TO PROTECT NEOTROPICAL MIGRATORY BIRDS & THEIR HABITAT**

**Applicant:** ECOLOGIC DEVELOPMENT FUND

**Country:** Mexico

**Grant Award Amount:** \$126,902    **Matching Contributions:** \$452,995

**Notable bird species to benefit:** **Wood Stork**, **Bell's Vireo**, **Willow Flycatcher**, Loggerhead Shrike, American Redstart, Painted Bunting, **Wood Thrush**, Baltimore Oriole, Black Vulture, Black-and-white Warbler, Blue-gray Gnatcatcher, Blue-headed Vireo, Brown-crested Flycatcher, Buff-bellied Hummingbird, and Common Yellowthroat.

This project seeks to strengthen the work of rural communities that protect forest territories and their biodiversity through a model of Areas Voluntarily Designated for Conservation (ADVC). The objectives of this project are: (1) the protection and restoration of 6,828 hectares of natural habitat through voluntary community work based on three "Best Practice Management Plans for Conservation"; (2) the development and anchoring of community capacities in three Ejidos (communal agricultural lands) to create a community bird watcher/protector monitoring systems through protection patrolling and surveillance, reduction of logging, forest fire prevention and control, and bird species monitoring; (3) reduce anthropogenic pressure on Neotropical migratory bird habitat by applying climate change mitigation and adaptation approaches to forests; and (4) increase and build local knowledge and generate information on communal forests as habitat and their symbiosis with Neotropical migratory birds especially among children and youth as part of the conservation call to action, focusing on **Wood Thrush**, **Wood Stork**, **Willow Flycatcher**, and **Bell's Vireo** which have been documented in the ADVCS.

## **7578: COMMUNITY-BASED CONSERVATION OF NEOTROPICAL MIGRATORY BIRDS IN THE ECUADORIAN CHOCO VI**

**Applicant:** FUNDACION PARA LA CONSERVACION DE LOS ANDES TROPICALES (FCAT)

**Country:** Ecuador

**Grant Award Amount:** \$199,919    **Matching Contributions:** \$600,242

**Notable bird species to benefit:** Bay-breasted Warbler, **Canada Warbler**, **Olive-sided Flycatcher**, Spotted Sandpiper, **Lesser Yellowlegs**, Swainson's Thrush, Western Wood-Pewee, Acadian Flycatcher, Blackburnian Warbler, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Blackpoll Warbler, Black-and-white Warbler, American Redstart, Scarlet Tanager, and Summer Tanager.

The Mache-Chindul Reserve (MCR) in northwest Ecuador is a BirdLife International 'Important Bird Area' that houses at least 28 Neotropical migratory species, three of which are Birds of Conservation Concern. Yet, several thousand people with limited education and economic opportunities live within its borders, leading to deforestation and habitat loss. This project directly contributes to the conservation of Neotropical migratory birds and endemic taxa in this diversity hotspot via the purchase of priority habitat, protection of habitat at immediate risk of illegal land invasion, and capacity building and income diversification activities. In previous phases of this project, FCAT documented the importance of the project area for Neotropical migrants, identified priority forest fragments for conservation of migratory birds, acquired 565 hectares of priority habitat, established a field station with capacity for 50 visitors, reforested > 100 hectares and increased awareness, capacity, and economic alternatives via women's art workshops, youth environmental programs and other programs. They are now poised to extend this work and impact the conservation of migrants by: (1) acquiring 91 hectares of strategically located habitat to advance the goal of establishing connectivity with a RAMSAR wetland; (2) monitoring habitat use of migratory birds during the overwintering period; (3) protecting more than 4,000 hectares of at-risk habitat by patrolling the FCAT reserve and surrounding areas; (4) providing training and education to young men and women that can lead the next generation toward a more sustainable future; and (5) building capacity and diversified income for local women artisans to make and sell woodblock prints of migratory birds in local and international markets. More broadly, this project will contribute to FCAT's establishment of a corridor linking 5,000 hectares of continuous, priority habitat to achieve integrated and synergistic benefits for both local communities and local ecosystem alike which is a crucial requirement for any realistic, long term conservation strategy for migratory birds in the MCR.

## **7579: COMPREHENSIVE COASTAL SHOREBIRD SURVEY OF SOUTH AMERICA II**

**Applicant:** MANOMET, INC

**Countries:** Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, Peru, Uruguay

**Grant Award Amount:** \$159,600 **Matching Contributions:** \$485,167

**Notable bird species to benefit:** **Hudsonian Godwit**, Whimbrel, Sanderling, Semipalmated Sandpiper, Western Sandpiper, Black-bellied Plover, Ruddy Turnstone, Semipalmated Plover, **Red Knot**, **Short-billed Dowitcher**, White-rumped Sandpiper, and Wilson's Phalarope.

Recent trend estimates for shorebird populations suggest that most species are in precipitous decline and that these declines have accelerated in the past decade. These trend estimates have been derived from site-use indices generated at migratory stopover sites. There is a critical need to regularly update species' population estimates to help identify when they may pass important, and potentially irreversible, population size thresholds. South America supports majority of the hemispheric and global populations of a large suite of Nearctic migratory shorebirds and those populations spend most of their annual cycle in the region. Focusing efforts to generate robust shorebird population efforts in South America is therefore both important for informing conservation actions. Manomet proposes to build on survey efforts begun in Peru in 2010, extended to Chile in 2014, and expanded to include the entire coastlines of Peru, Chile, Argentina, Uruguay, and southern Brazil in 2019. In 2024, they will revisit all these countries and additionally survey the coasts of Ecuador and central Brazil. Efforts will target all Nearctic shorebirds but will specifically provide much needed information about declining or poorly known species, such as: **Hudsonian Godwit**, Whimbrel, Black-bellied Plover, Ruddy Turnstone, **Red Knot**, Semipalmated Sandpiper, Western Sandpiper, Sanderling, and **Short-billed Dowitcher**. Volunteer observers will be trained through targeted workshops and will form teams with trained professionals to undertake the surveys. Manomet will collaborate and coordinate with national, regional, and local governments, as well as local NGOs and land managers to enable these partners to become full participants. Survey data will be used to inform conservation actions, including the identification of new Key Biodiversity Areas; promoting the designation of new Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network sites and protected areas; revising existing management actions; and proposing new management actions.

**7580: COMPREHENSIVE MANAGEMENT OF GRASSLAND CORRIDORS IN VACE**

**Applicant:** PRONATURA NORESTE, A.C.

**Country:** Mexico

**Grant Award Amount:** \$198,134    **Matching Contributions:** \$612,460

**Notable bird species to benefit:** Long-billed Curlew, **Mountain Plover**, **Sprague's Pipit**, **Chestnut-collared Longspur**, **Thick-billed Longspur**, Lark Bunting, **Baird's Sparrow**, Swainson's Hawk, Ferruginous Hawk, Grasshopper Sparrow, and Loggerhead Shrike.

The threats that affect priority grassland areas vary greatly in their nature, dimension, and scope. Therefore, to increase the resilience of the Valles Centrales (VACE) region and reduce its vulnerability to these threats, Pronatura Noreste and partners will adopt a conservation approach based on comprehensive management of the watershed to seek a balance between economic activities, society, and the landscape. Partners will focus conservation efforts on key grassland corridors, protecting 27,428 acres with legal mechanisms to prevent agriculture expansion into grasslands. Also, to promote the correct use of rangelands, Pronatura Noreste will implement management activities within two properties, impacting 5,250 acres, and will reduce desertification on 12,555 acres by implementing soil restoration efforts. With the purpose to update bird density information, surveys will be done in eleven key properties at a ranch-level scale, and they will conduct a grassland birds' dietary study to evaluate the response of the birds in grasslands invaded by exotic grasses. Finally, they will enhance local grassland management capacities and promote the adoption of better practices throughout different approaches, such as large forums, training courses and experience sharing events.

## **7581: CONSERVATION FOR CERULEAN WARBLER & PRIORITY BIRDS IV**

**Applicant:** BIRDS CANADA

**Country:** Canada

**Grant Award Amount:** \$99,633      **Matching Contributions:** \$301,276

**Notable bird species to benefit:** **Cerulean Warbler**, Acadian Flycatcher, Louisiana Waterthrush, **Prothonotary Warbler**, **Wood Thrush**, **Canada Warbler**, and Eastern Wood-Pewee.

The **Cerulean Warbler** population has declined by over 70% since the 1970s, with loss and degradation of forest habitat identified as a primary threat. In Canada, most of the breeding population (approximately 150 breeding pairs) occurs in two areas of Ontario, the Frontenac Arch and the Carolinian Region. The Frontenac Arch supports Canada's largest population and is the only remaining area in Canada with the extensive tracts of mature deciduous forest upon which the species depends. The Carolinian Region supports a smaller but significant population in the remnant deciduous forest of southwestern Ontario. Population declines in the Carolinian Region have been especially severe, as much of the remnant forest habitat is unprotected, highly fragmented, and under immediate threat from poor forest management practices that removes mature trees and reduces forest cover. Building off previous project phases, the proposed project's objectives are: (1) no net loss of **Cerulean Warbler** population in 22,360 hectares within the Frontenac Arch and Carolinian Region, until 2030; and (2) increased availability of new suitable habitat for **Cerulean Warbler** in the Carolinian Region over the next two years. The specific project activities include working with private and public landowners to: improve habitat conservation, management, and threat reduction; monitor for target species nesting success, habitat and threats; implement Beneficial Management Practices (BMPs) for **Cerulean Warbler** to create new suitable habitat; and develop a BMP impact assessment tool to evaluate success of habitat improvement and creation efforts. Objectives will be achieved through working closely with several partners, including local landowners, land trusts, Conservation Authorities, counties, and the provincial and federal government.



## **7582: CONSERVATION OF CRITICAL GRASSLANDS IN DURANGO II**

**Applicant:** PRONATURA NORESTE, A.C.

**Country:** Mexico

**Grant Award Amount:** \$199,910    **Matching Contributions:** \$1,301,263

**Notable bird species to benefit:** Grasshopper Sparrow, **Baird's Sparrow**, **Black-chinned Sparrow**, Savannah Sparrow, Brewer's Sparrow, Lark Sparrow, Vesper Sparrow, Chipping Sparrow, Clay-colored Sparrow, Lincoln's Sparrow, Cassin's Sparrow, Lark Bunting, and Loggerhead Shrike.

This project will benefit the priority species **Baird's Sparrow**, a species that is in danger of extinction and has an action plan for the reestablishment of its populations at a continental level. This species spends the winter in the Grassland Priority Conservation Areas (GPCAs) Cuchillas de la Zarca and Malpais, which are two extremely important areas for other priority grassland species. With management and restoration actions, an estimated 5,948 acres will be positively impacted. In this second phase of the project, alliances between local partners will be strengthened to continue sustainable management of grasslands, thus ensuring permanence of habitat for migratory birds and ranching, which is one of the main productive activities of the State of Durango. In several Ejidos in these GPCAs the following activities will occur: (1) creation of conservation reserves with native grassland areas, (2) installation of infrastructure according to ejidal Livestock Management Plans, (3) habitat restoration to reduce thickets, (4) construction of 126m<sup>2</sup> of branch dams, and (5) monitoring at the farm level during the 2024 winter season in ten properties distributed in both GPCAs, in order to know the status of the migratory bird populations and thus the health status of the grasslands in each property. More broadly, Pronatura Noreste will strengthen the state legislative framework for the sustainable use of pasture through the initiating of a Livestock Law for the State of Durango, the establishment of a pasture management by SAGDER (the state agriculture authority), and the creation of a multidisciplinary committee. involved in decision making. To outreach to new generations about the importance of grasslands and migratory birds, the Rancho Escuela model will be carried out in El Ojo and Las Yucas Ejidos, where environmental education will be carried out for children and young people from some of the schools near both ranches.

## **7583: CONSERVING BICKNELL'S THRUSH ON CANADIAN BREEDING GROUNDS VII**

**Applicant:** BIRDS CANADA

**Country:** Canada

**Grant Award Amount:** \$47,039      **Matching Contributions:** \$143,455

**Notable bird species to benefit:** **Bicknell's Thrush**, Swainson's Thrush, Hermit Thrush, Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Blackpoll Warbler, Fox Sparrow, White-throated sparrow, Winter Wren, and **Olive-sided Flycatcher**.

**Bicknell's Thrush** (BITH) is one of the most range-restricted Neotropical migrants breeding in Eastern Canada, where roughly 38% of its global population (40,000-49,000 individuals) breeds. Substantial declines have been noted throughout its Canadian range. In the Maritimes, data indicates a 12% annual population decline between 2002-2011, and a 40% reduction in distribution of BITH over the last 20 years. The main threat facing BITH is loss and degradation of forest habitat. The proposed project will immediately improve conservation for the species in New Brunswick (169,400 hectares) and Nova Scotia (66,176 hectares) by addressing breeding habitat destruction and degradation occurring in industrial forest and other unprotected areas. Building upon results of previous phases of this project, the primary objectives are to: (1) facilitate communications among timber companies and regulators to refine and increase implementation of Beneficial Management Practices for preventing both incidental take and habitat degradation in high-elevation forest; (2) identify and assess BITH occupancy of potentially suitable habitat with Automated Recording Units to improve understanding of habitat use, distribution, and detection of BITH in the industrial landscape; and (3) continue to deliver long-term monitoring program in New Brunswick and continue refining monitoring protocol for Nova Scotia BITH to evaluate the success in achieving the International **Bicknell's Thrush** Conservation Group's goals at regional and international scales.

## **7585: CONSERVING SHOREBIRDS IN THE LITHIUM TRIANGLE**

**Applicant:** MANOMET, INC

**Countries:** Argentina, Bolivia, Chile

**Grant Award Amount:** \$181,124 **Matching Contributions:** \$557,969

**Notable bird species to benefit:** **American Golden-Plover**, Upland Sandpiper, Greater Yellowlegs, **Lesser Yellowlegs**, White-rumped Sandpiper, Baird's Sandpiper, **Pectoral Sandpiper**, Stilt Sandpiper, **Buff-breasted Sandpiper**, and Wilson's Phalarope.

Lithium is a key material for batteries of electronic devices, electric vehicles and energy storage, and its demand has been growing significantly. In recent years, salt flats in the High Andean region of Chile, Bolivia and Argentina have become the focus of world attention after it was discovered that lithium could be found in its brine waters. Consequently, the countries that have reserves of this mineral have seen an increasing amount of interest in lithium extraction. The Altiplano wetlands that are the focus of mining activity also provide critical habitat for a suite of North American-breeding shorebirds and resident species, including Wilson's Phalarope, Baird's Sandpiper, both Greater and **Lesser Yellowlegs**, American Golden-Plover, Upland Sandpiper, and **Buff-breasted Sandpiper**. The information available about the progress of lithium mining in key sites for shorebirds is scarce and difficult to access. This information is necessary to understand which important shorebird sites are being or will be affected in the short term by lithium mining, and how this could affect the shorebird populations that depend on them. The main objectives are to: (1) assess the scope of the current and projected mining sector within the Lithium Triangle; (2) strengthen local capacities in three priority pilot sites for the conservation of shorebirds and flamingos threatened by lithium brine mining; (3) assess shorebird abundance and distribution, and status of habitat from the Altiplano wetlands; and (4) raise awareness on short- and long-term impacts of lithium mining on Altiplano watersheds. The results of this project will be essential to understand the degree of overlap of lithium mining activity in key sites for shorebirds in the highlands, understand its impact on wetlands and the shorebirds that use them, increase the degree of involvement of local partners in the conservation of their sites, and identify those priority sites to direct conservation actions.

**7587: FOREST PROTECTION, RESTORATION & FILLING KEY KNOWLEDGE GAPS FOR NEOTROPICAL MIGRATORY BIRDS GUATEMALA**

**Applicant:** WILDLIFE CONSERVATION SOCIETY (WCS)

**Country:** Guatemala

**Grant Award Amount:** \$200,000    **Matching Contributions:** \$602,212

**Notable bird species to benefit:** **Wood Thrush**, **Golden-winged Warbler**, **Kentucky Warbler**, Louisiana Waterthrush, Worm-eating Warbler, Gray Catbird, **Wood Stork**, **Pectoral Sandpiper**, **Lesser Yellowlegs**, **Cerulean Warbler**, and **Canada Warbler**.

The Wildlife Conservation Society, the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology, Guatemala's National Council of Protected Areas (CONAP), and rural communities of the Maya Biosphere Reserve (MBR) will protect and restore nonbreeding habitat for **Wood Thrush**, **Kentucky Warbler**, **Golden-winged Warbler**, and other Neotropical migratory bird (NMB) species in Guatemala. Partners will build on existing baselines and sustain bird monitoring in habitat under restoration, including areas with active manipulation (elimination of exotic pastures, tree planting, agroforestry) and areas under passive regeneration to better document the importance of habitat restoration to NMB species, particularly as related to the tradeoffs between passive and active restoration approaches. This project aligns with several national and regional planning exercises, including Guatemala's National Forest Restoration Strategy, the draft Conservation Investment Strategy for Mesoamerica's Lowland Caribbean Slope Forests, Partners in Flight 2016 Landbird Conservation Plan and the associated 2022 Action Plan, and Road to Recovery Species objectives, particularly as related to increasing habitat availability and occupancy rates of **Wood Thrush** and **Golden-winged Warbler**. Specific deliverables include: (1) protection of 221,694 hectares of vulnerable intact forest habitats and wetlands from illegal colonization, deforestation, and fire; (2) protection of 3,081 hectares of fallows under passive restoration; (3) continuation of active forest cover restoration on 419 hectares in partnership with CONAP, rural MBR communities, and community-based forest management organizations; (4) monitoring of beneficiary bird species within intact forest and areas under active and passive restoration; e) participation of rural community bird guides within monitoring efforts; (5) outreach to rural communities to raise awareness about the value of intact habitat within the MBR for NMBs; and (6) preparation of at least one peer-reviewed scientific publication with results obtained.

## **7588: FORESTRY STANDARDS FOR WINTERING MIGRATORY BIRDS**

**Applicant:** MASSACHUSETTS AUDUBON SOCIETY

**Country:** Belize

**Grant Award Amount:** \$166,278    **Matching Contributions:** \$815,912

**Notable bird species to benefit:** **Wood Thrush, Kentucky Warbler**, Ovenbird, Worm-eating Warbler, Northern Waterthrush, Black-and-white Warbler, Louisiana Waterthrush, Magnolia Warbler, American Redstart, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Hooded Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, and Summer Tanager.

Populations of Neotropical migratory birds (NMBs) are threatened during the nonbreeding season by incompatible land use activities. Identifying activities that simultaneously promote NMB habitat and economic opportunity is key to creating compatible working landscapes and to the conservation of NMB. Non-plantation forest management conducted within a sustainable silvicultural program retains native vegetation across a range of age-class distributions to ensure future harvests and may be relatively benign to biodiversity. However, there have been no systematic studies of NMB response to a range of silvicultural practices varying in harvest level and spatial pattern on the wintering grounds. Belize is a highly important area for NMBs during the winter season. Partner work will take place at the 101,000-hectare Rio Bravo Conversation Management Area in northwestern Belize, where Programme for Belize conducts a sustainable timber program on 37,000 hectares. This will provide the representative forestry treatments needed to study the response of NMBs. Although we predict forestry at some levels will be benign or beneficial to wintering NMBs, it may instead be deleterious and pose a significant threat. To address this knowledge gap, researchers will quantify key demographic parameters (e.g., survival) for priority migrants along gradients of silvicultural intensity and will identify forestry treatments and structural conditions that achieve the highest values for these parameters. The findings will be integrated into the site management plan and forestry standards will also be formalized into an outreach document to be disseminated at one in-person workshop. To support ongoing and future implementation and monitoring of sustainable forestry, and the conservation of NMBs and other taxa in Belize, partners will hold 80 hours of banding workshops, three days of telemetry and habitat measurement trainings, and one workshop on data analysis and threats during the nonbreeding season.

**7589: GOOD GOVERNANCE FOR THE CONSERVATION OF NEOTROPICAL MIGRATORY BIRDS IN PATAGONIA**

**Applicant:** ASOCIACION AMBIENTE SUR

**Country:** Argentina

**Grant Award Amount:** \$163,537    **Matching Contributions:** \$493,827

**Notable bird species to benefit:** **American Oystercatcher**, **American Golden-Plover**, **Whimbrel**, **Hudsonian Godwit**, **Red Knot**, **Pectoral Sandpiper**, **Lesser Yellowlegs**, **Franklin's Gull**, and **Black Skimmer**.

This project will seek to improve the conservation status of the **Red Knot** and **Hudsonian Godwit**, in southern Argentine Patagonia, by increasing community knowledge, good governance for effective management, elimination of priority threats and legal protection of key natural areas for Neotropical migratory birds in the Province of Santa Cruz. The threats to be addressed are the dumping of waste and the disturbance of birds due to the transit of vehicles, domestic animals and people who carry out recreational activities. This will be achieved by building and consolidating local support for conservation actions; expanding the area and degree of protection of urban nature reserves; and conducting awareness campaigns using innovative methodologies such as social marketing and reducing barriers to positive behavior change.

**7591: HYDROLOGY RESTORATION FOR MIGRATORY BIRDS IN PARITA BAY**

**Applicant:** CENTRO REGIONAL RAMSAR PARA EL HEMISFERIO OCCIDENTAL (CREHO)

**Country:** Panama

**Grant Award Amount:** \$149,492    **Matching Contributions:** \$597,967

**Notable bird species to benefit:** **American Golden-Plover**, Ruddy Turnstone, **Red Knot**, Whimbrel, **Short-billed Dowitcher**, **Hudsonian Godwit**, **Wandering Tattler**, **Lesser Yellowlegs**, **Least Tern**, **Buff-breasted Sandpiper**, **Pectoral Sandpiper**, Semipalmated Sandpiper, Stilt Sandpiper, **Bobolink**, and **Golden-winged Warbler**.

The project will improve and increase the availability of critical habitats for fifteen Very High Urgency and High Urgency Neotropical migratory birds in Parita Bay, Panama, impacting a total area of 47,492.67 hectares as part of the implementation of the Pacific Americas Shorebirds Conservation Strategy through: (1) restoration of water flows supplying important wetlands for bird feeding and resting, (2) the creation of a Private Reserve, and (3) implementation of best agricultural practices in private farms. The project will also monitor bird diversity and abundance in Parita Bay, develop a broad environmental education and outreach campaign, and build capacity among project partners, leading agricultural producers and bird conservation practitioners through exchange and training.

## **7594: MIGRATORY BIRD CONSERVATION VIA AGROFORESTRY IV**

**Applicant:** PROVITA

**Country:** Venezuela

**Grant Award Amount:** \$199,492    **Matching Contributions:** \$830,097

**Notable bird species to benefit:** **Cerulean Warbler**, **Olive-sided Flycatcher**, **Willow Flycatcher**, Louisiana Waterthrush, Mourning Warbler, Tennessee Warbler, Black-and-white Warbler, Dusky-capped Flycatcher, Northern Waterthrush, Hepatic Tanager, Summer Tanager, Blackburnian Warbler, Tropical Parula, American Redstart, and Bay-breasted Warbler.

This project builds on the success of three previous phases funded in 2017, 2019 and 2021 by NMBCA, across 700 hectares. Provita will scale up organic and Bird-Friendly® certification to an additional 280 hectares of shade crop farms (980 hectares total) in Cordillera de la Costa, a biodiversity hotspot. The project area will contribute to protection of a vital habitat corridor between two key national parks and one of the last forest patches in the south range, where deforestation risk is high. Partners include three innovations: (1) ‘multiplier farmers’ to scale up more rapidly; (2) incorporation of cacao farms to aid connectivity; and (3) the achievement of full autonomy by the Asociación Civil de Productores Agroforestales Piedra e’ Cachimbo, a local farmer organization created in Phases I-II. This project will continue promoting preservation of both natural and cultural heritage, bolster sustainable livelihoods, help protect watersheds and expand work with elementary school children and adults to build knowledge and positive attitudes towards Neotropical migratory birds and agroforestry.



**7595: MIGRATORY BIRD CONSERVATION, SONORA, MEXICO**

**Applicant:** PRESCOTT COLLEGE

**Country:** Mexico

**Grant Award Amount:** \$51,304    **Matching Contributions:** \$155,813

**Notable bird species to benefit:** **Ridgway's Rail**, **American Oystercatcher**, **Wilson's Plover**, **Snowy Plover**, **Willet**, **Least Tern**, **Black Skimmer**, **Reddish Egret**, Brant, and Redhead

This project will protect habitat for 88 Neotropical migratory bird species, eight of which are classified as Birds of Conservation Concern. Critical habitat within two Ramsar sites (located in Sonora, Mexico) will be identified, mapped, and ultimately protected through community-based monitoring and conservation planning. The two Ramsar sites comprise 36,366 hectares in total. Plans will be informed by habitat maps, migratory bird monitoring results and community knowledge. This project is being conducted by Prescott College, a bi-national non-profit organization with a 30-year history of monitoring, conservation, and successful community collaboration in the bioculturally important Midriff Island Region of the Gulf of California, Mexico. This project builds upon projects conducted in collaboration with the Sonoran Joint Venture, local and Indigenous (Comcaac) communities, and academic institutions.

## **7596: MULTI-SCALE BIRD TRACKING TO SUPPORT CONSERVATION IN NW MEXICO II**

**Applicant:** PRONATURA NOROESTE, A.C.

**Country:** Mexico

**Grant Award Amount:** \$173,475    **Matching Contributions:** \$520,425

**Notable bird species to benefit:** Pacific **Red Knot**, **Short-billed Dowitcher**, **Snowy Plover**, Western Sandpiper, **Marbled Godwit**, Dunlin, **American Oystercatcher**, **Least Tern**, **Reddish Egret**, California Black Rail, and **Yuma Ridgeway's Rail**.

Millions of migratory waterbirds depend on the multiple coastal wetlands of northwest Mexico during their annual cycle. Despite the region's importance for these species, robust information about their connectivity and migratory patterns, survival, and habitat use are lacking. The limitations imposed on conservation efforts by these knowledge gaps are exacerbated by climate change and the accelerated expansion of aquaculture, coastal development, and anthropogenic disturbance. Effective conservation strategies aimed at improving the status of the region's declining species will require the integration of cost-effective and collaborative methods, to monitor birds and obtain robust data to support conservation decisions. Phase II of this project leverages the local support of partners to track the movement of birds at different scales. At the hemispheric scale, partners will continue to strengthen capacities, use, and expand the newly created Motus wildlife tracking network to elucidate the connectivity and migratory parameters of 11 species of waterbirds of conservation concern. At the regional scale, partners will implement their long-term comprehensive surveys at twenty priority wetlands in northwest Mexico to determine the population status and trends of more than three dozen species of waterbirds. At the local scale, partners will use biologgers and CTT (cellular tracking technology) nodes, a technology that complements the Motus network and allows scientists to describe the fine-scale movement of focal species. The information gathered by this collective of scientists and conservationists will support an ongoing research and conservation agenda that includes ten projects that address the following work streams: (1) the use and value of artificial wetlands as alternative habitat for shorebirds; (2) the effects of sea level rise on shorebirds; and (3) filling gaps of knowledge about the migratory ecology of waterbirds. This multi-scale bird tracking initiative will provide a critical foundation to help support feasible conservation initiatives in one of the Pacific Flyway's most important regions.

**7597: PROTECTING & RESTORING THE ECUADORIAN CHOCO**

**Applicant:** BIRDLIFE INTERNATIONAL

**Country:** Ecuador

**Grant Award Amount:** \$199,118    **Matching Contributions:** \$605,628

**Notable bird species to benefit:** **Canada Warbler**, **Cerulean Warbler**, **Olive-sided Flycatcher**, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Western Wood-Pewee, Acadian Flycatcher, Black-and-white Warbler, Mourning Warbler, Tennessee Warbler, Summer Tanager, Scarlet Tanager, Swainson's Thrush and Gray-cheeked Thrush.

This project represents the first phase of implementation of BirdLife International's 10- year Conservation Investment Strategy for the Ecuadorian Choco-Andes. It focuses on three core strategies: (1) protecting at least 15,000 hectares of new priority habitat for migratory and threatened endemic birds by placing land under private or sub-national protected area status; (2) initiating large scale habitat restoration efforts in the area of interest by developing restoration protocols and guidelines and placing 130 hectares of land under active or assisted natural regeneration models; and (3) improving knowledge on the abundance and distribution for at least three target Neotropical migratory birds (**Cerulean Warbler**, **Canada Warbler** and **Olive-sided Flycatcher**) and other migratory and resident birds of concern in the Ecuadorian Choco-Andes region via the implementation of bird monitoring activities at a minimum of twelve monitoring sites.

## **7598: PROTECTING CERULEAN & GOLDEN-WINGED WARBLERS IN COLOMBIA II**

**Applicant:** FUNDACION PROAVES

**Country:** Colombia

**Grant Award Amount:** \$199,930    **Matching Contributions:** \$600,255

**Notable bird species to benefit:** **Canada Warbler**, **Cerulean Warbler**, **Golden-winged Warbler**, **Olive-sided Flycatcher**, **Willow Flycatcher**, Bay-breasted Warbler, **Prothonotary Warbler**, Swainson's Warbler, **Kentucky Warbler**, **Prairie Warbler**, Swainson's Hawk, and **Swallow-tailed Kite**.

Two of the most threatened Neotropical migrant landbird species, the **Cerulean Warbler** and **Golden-winged Warbler**, depend on subtropical and montane forests across Colombia that are being destroyed at an unprecedented rate. Up until March 2020, ProAves had defended its reserves against spiraling deforestation thanks to support from NMBCA. Recently, Colombia has seen increasing deforestation rates as the shutdowns of the COVID-19 crisis has permitted illegal exploitation of natural resources on protected areas as government entities struggle to respond. With ProAves reserve rangers unable to depend on the help of authorities, eight reserves were exploited by illegal logging and squatters. With the support of NMBCA, plus an emergency grant from our ProAves Endowment, forest rangers were hired in April 2020 and ProAves added resources for fencing, signage, and increased legal support. Fortunately, this resulted in almost all invasions being rebuffed. Many ProAves reserves are prime habitat for priority migratory species like the Cerulean Warbler (CERW), Canada Warbler (CAWA) and Golden-winged Warbler (GWWA). ProAves plans to directly protect and manage 88,634 acres (88% increase from the 2018 project) of critical migratory bird habitat at 25 strategic sites for CERW and GWWA, as well as expand Colombia's protected area network for migratory birds at the most important subtropical forest site in the Central Cordillera for Neotropical migrants by acquiring and restoring an additional 72 acres, monitoring populations of CERW, CAWA and GWWA at those sites, and raising awareness about migrants through local community education.

## **7599: PROTECTING MIGRATORY BIRDS IN NORTHERN ECUADOR**

**Applicant:** FUNDACION JOCOTOCO

**Country:** Ecuador

**Grant Award Amount:** \$199,963    **Matching Contributions:** \$808,351

**Notable bird species to benefit:** **Cerulean Warbler**, **Olive-sided Flycatcher**, Acadian Flycatcher, **Canada Warbler**, Western Wood-Pewee, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Swainson's Thrush, Blackburnian Warbler, American Redstart, Summer Tanager, Scarlet Tanager, Black-and-white Warbler, Blackpoll Warbler, Broad-winged Hawk, and Eastern Kingbird.

Increasing threats to numerous migratory bird species, combined with a lack of information and monitoring, preclude detailed and effective conservation of Neotropical migratory bird populations in the Neotropics. Forest cover is lower in Ecuador than elsewhere in South America, and deforestation hotspots continue to emerge rapidly in northern Ecuador. To effectively protect migratory birds, the project will reduce habitat loss and information gaps on 139,000 acres, which form the nuclei of ecological corridors in northern Ecuador. The Canandé Reserve (25,650 acres) protects one of the last remnants of the Chocó lowland rainforest, while the Narupa Reserve (6,122 acres) protects the Andean Foothills in northeastern Ecuador. This work will be completed by: (1) reducing current threats by patrolling the two reserves; (2) monitoring migratory birds within the targeted reserves and the "Napo Buffer Zone" (107,466 acres) to understand their abundance, richness, and density; (3) expanding both reserves to increase connectivity to adjacent national parks; and (4) increasing the spatial scale of its monitoring program by strengthening local capacities and their involvement with local communities surrounding the Narupa Reserve. The proposed activities will benefit dozens of species of migratory birds, including the **Olive-sided Flycatcher** and **Canada Warbler**.

## **7600: PROTECTION OF MOUNTAIN PLOVER WINTERING SITES**

**Applicant:** HABITATS RESILIENTES AC (HRAC)

**Country:** Mexico

**Grant Award Amount:** \$150,007    **Matching Contributions:** \$528,790

**Notable bird species to benefit:** **Mountain Plover**

The Ascensión, is a Chihuahua region of great importance because it serves as a connection point between the Janos Natural Protected Area, the Janos-Ascension Grassland Priority Conservation Area (GPCA) and the Valles Centrales GPCA. Field work by partners has shown that there are sites with sightings of more than 1000 individuals of **Mountain Plover** (MOPL) in the region of Ascensión, outside of Natural Protected Areas, making its protection urgent. This is designed to reverse the negative curve in the population trend of MOPL by focusing on protection and conservation activities of wintering habitat with particular interest in the community-owned land of the Ascension Region and the Laguna de las Hormigas, located within priority grassland zones in the State of Chihuahua. Activities include: (1) protection: secure through a legal Ejido Agreement of 21,200 hectares within Ejido Constitución, to guarantee the long-term conservation (ten years) of this site; (2) restoration and enhancement of habitat quality: soil restoration works and installation of infrastructure that allows maintaining primary productive activities in harmony with the environmental conservation of the site; (3) research and monitoring: biannual monitoring program of grassland birds in the project sites to evaluate the presence of populations, habitat use parameters; availability and quality of food, during the winter season; (4) climate change mitigation by developing a model to identify environmentally sensitive areas to desertification that will establish actions to reduce the impact of climate change effects; and (5) outreach. Technical support will be provided to ejidatarios and producers on the best management practices of pastures, as well as the involvement of local inhabitants in the development of habitat management and restoration activities, which will strengthen their knowledge and awareness of the area they share with migratory birds.

## **7601: RECOVERY OF GRASSLAND BIRDS IN TWO GPCA II**

**Applicant:** ORGANIZACION VIDA SILVESTRE, A.C.

**Country:** Mexico

**Grant Award Amount:** \$200,000    **Matching Contributions:** \$806,816

**Notable bird species to benefit:** **Sprague's Pipit**, Long-billed Curlew, **Mountain Plover**, **Chestnut-collared Longspur**, Western Meadowlark, Loggerhead Shrike, Grasshopper Sparrow and Horned Lark

The project focuses on the conservation of two Grassland Priority Conservation Areas (GPCAs), which are home to populations of 29 priority species of high regional or continental conservation interest (density of 1,500 grassland birds per/km<sup>2</sup>). To conserve key species in these areas, partners will work with a rancher network with the objectives of: (1) protecting habitat long-term through Private Conservation Agreements on 9,667 hectares; and (2) improving grassland ecosystems through the implementation of a Regenerative Grassland Management Strategy, including implementing good livestock practices to reduce the impact of overgrazing in large landscapes. These regenerative grazing practices can rebuild soil organic matter, return carbon to the soil, increase water retention and infiltration capacity of the soil, increase grass diversity and nutrient density, and lead to more productive ranches and better grassland ecosystems, natural habitats and conditions that favor grassland birds. Ranchers can also lower total operating costs and therefore achieve better profitability of livestock production. Additionally, partners will carry out water and soil conservation works, fire management and solid waste management in five communities.

**7602: REDUCTION OF THREATS OF PRIORITY NEOTROPICAL MIGRATORY BIRDS, ALTIPLANO POTOSINO III**

**Applicant:** ORGANIZACION VIDA SILVESTRE, A.C.

**Country:** Mexico

**Grant Award Amount:** \$200,000    **Matching Contributions:** \$725,835

**Notable bird species to benefit:** **Mountain Plover**, Long-Billed Curlew, **Sprague's Pipit**, Ferruginous Hawk, Burrowing owl, Horned Lark, Savannah Sparrow, Lark Bunting, and Loggerhead Shrike

The Grassland Priority Conservation Area (GPCA) "El Tokio", San Luis Potosí, is critical for grassland birds wintering in their habitats, whose original vegetative cover has declined by more than 90% over the last 30 years. The project focuses on: (1) improving the habitat in 15,008 hectares through regenerative grassland management systems and best soil and water conservation practices, including training producers, improving livestock infrastructure, soil conservation works and the implementation of community projects; (2) protecting and managing habitat in 15,185 hectares through a mixture of legal tools such as Private Conservation Contracts for 15 years, Conservation and Management Units for 20 years that are approved and registered by the Federal Government and Ecological Reserves through Territorial Planning, registered with the National Agrarian Registry; (3) a research program to monitor grassland species through automated radio-telemetry and to evaluate the ecology of grassland birds (abundance, density, habitat use and preference, occupancy, local movements, parasitism, health condition, etc) throughout their wintering range.



#### **7604: RESTORING ANGUILLA'S KEY BIODIVERSITY AREAS**

Applicant: BIRDS CARIBBEAN [FORMERLY SCSCB]

Country: Anguilla

Grant Award Amount: \$150,282    Matching Contributions: \$464,766

Notable bird species to benefit: **White-crowned Pigeon**, **American Golden-Plover**, **Piping Plover**, **Wilson's Plover**, **Snowy Plover**, Whimbrel, **Hudsonian Godwit**, **Pectoral Sandpiper**, Semipalmated Sandpiper, **Short-billed Dowitcher**, **Lesser Yellowlegs**, **Willet**, **Least Tern**, **Prothonotary Warbler**, and **Prairie Warbler**.

Anguilla is located at the top of the Lesser Antillean island chain and along the Atlantic Flyway, and provides critical foraging and resting grounds to at least 75 Neotropical migratory bird species, linking the North and South American continents during the spring and fall migrations. With extensive restoration work already successfully conducted on Anguilla's offshore cays, Neotropical migratory birds are already benefitting from the removal of alien rodents and rewilded habitats. This project builds on these successes by extending restoration and management efforts to two Key Biodiversity Areas on the Anguilla mainland. More specifically, the objectives of this project include: (1) permanently removing multiple harmful invasive species (rodents, iguanas, goats, cats, dogs, and monkeys) from Anguilla's largest protected area, Fountain National Park (7 acres), and permanently controlling those species within Road Salt Pond Important Bird and Biodiversity Area (98 acres); (2) recognizing Road Salt Pond as a wetland of national and international importance through protected areas and Ramsar Site designation (98 acres); and (3) integrating bird conservation, monitoring and research into site-based management plans for Fountain National Park and Road Salt Pond (105 acres). Capacity building and community outreach will be integrated into all aspects of the project, with at least 30 national staff and volunteers trained and actively involved in project activities. This project would create the Caribbean's first "mainland islands" sanctuaries within inhabited islands.

## **7605: RESTORING DEGRADED LAND FOR NEOTROPICAL MIGRATORY BIRDS & OTHER THREATENED SPECIES IN THE WESTERN ANDES**

**Applicant:** SAVING NATURE

**Country:** Colombia

**Grant Award Amount:** \$25,000     **Matching Contributions:** \$78,188

**Notable bird species to benefit:** [Canada Warbler](#), [Cerulean Warbler](#), Mourning Warbler, [Olive-sided Flycatcher](#), and [Swallow-tailed Kite](#)

This project will restore winter habitat for Neotropical migratory birds (NMBs) and increase participation by local communities in the restoration efforts. The five-year goal is to reforest 594 hectares with native trees to increase habitat for NMBs and other species. To date, Saving Nature has purchased 249 hectares, upon which they have reforested 116 hectares with native trees. The project objective for 2023 is to restore 100 hectares of degraded land by planting 120,000 to 160,000 native trees, thus increasing non-breeding habitat under restoration for NMBs to 216 hectares. These project activities align with the habitat priorities of the [Canada Warbler](#) Full Life-Cycle Conservation Action Plan; [Cerulean Warbler](#) Conservation Action; [Olive-sided Flycatcher](#) Recovery Plan; and Colombia Migratory Bird Conservation Plan, all of which include restoration and protection of winter habitat as a high priority for species recovery and long-term survival. For the community to directly benefit from reforestation activities, they are transitioning the sourcing of native seedlings from private companies to local nurseries. To do so, Saving Nature is assisting local farmers with development of eleven family-owned nurseries, including assistance with training, technical support and financing for infrastructure, labor, and materials. Saving Nature is also expanding Fundación Bioconservancy's nursery production. In 2023, they will source 110,000 native trees from community nurseries, 10,000 from Fundación Bioconservancy's nursery, and the balance from private companies.

## **7606: RESTORING HABITAT & MONITORING OF MIGRATORY BIRDS AT MARIA MADRE ISLAND, MEXICO**

**Applicant:** GRUPO DE ECOLOGIA Y CONSERVACION DE ISLAS

**Country:** Mexico

**Grant Award Amount:** \$122,000    **Matching Contributions:** \$409,970

**Notable bird species to benefit:** **Rufous Hummingbird**, **American Oystercatcher**, **American Golden-Plover**, **Snowy Plover**, **Pectoral Sandpiper**, **Short-billed Dowitcher**, **Wandering Tattler**, **Lesser Yellowlegs**, **Willet**, **Elegant Tern**, **Elegant Trogon**, and **Cassin's Finch**.

The Islas Marías Biosphere Reserve is an archipelago recognized worldwide for its high biodiversity and endemism richness. There are 177 bird species recorded of which 23 are listed under a risk category by the Mexican law, 125 of them are Neotropical migratory birds (NMBs), and 17 are of NMBCA conservation concern. These islands are an Important Bird Area which offers nesting habitat for 24 Mexican endemic landbirds. María Madre Island is the biggest and most biodiverse of these islands, and the one that has suffered the most impacts from human activities since 1905 when a Federal Penitentiary was built. Several hectares were deforested for agricultural activities and invasive alien species were introduced, causing habitat loss and predation on native fauna, including NMBs. Monitoring and restoration activities on María Madre Island have been limited, and the information about the status of birds and the impact of invasive mammals to take conservation actions is scarce. The Federal Penitentiary was closed in 2019 opening the opportunity to start restoring María Madre. Here partners propose to: (1) conduct baseline monitoring of the abundance and distribution of twelve NMB species; (2) evaluate the impact of invasive mammals (cats, goats, and rats) on these species; and (3) build local capacity on island biosecurity and environmental education in park rangers and Navy personnel. The proposed actions contribute to the fulfillment of the Aichi Goals of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Management Plan of the Natural Protected Area, and with the goals of the North American Waterbird Conservation Plan.

## **7608: SAVING A CRUCIAL GATEWAY TO SOUTH AMERICA FOR NEOTROPICAL MIGRANTS III**

**Applicant:** FUNDACION PROAVES

**Country:** Colombia

**Grant Award Amount:** \$144,253    **Matching Contributions:** \$433,049

**Notable bird species to benefit:** **Cerulean Warbler**, **Canada Warbler**, **Golden-winged Warbler**, **Olive-sided Flycatcher**, **Prothonotary Warbler**, and **Kentucky Warbler**.

The Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta and adjacent Serranía de Perijá in northernmost Colombia are incredibly biodiverse isolated mountains located on the Caribbean coast. These moist montane forests, just 1,040 miles south of the Florida Keys, are critically important for Neotropical migrants seeking a wintering and stopover habitat. Over 132 species of migratory birds entering South America pass through these two mountains, which are especially important for one of the world's most threatened migrant landbirds, the **Cerulean Warbler** (CERW). CERW migrate directly over the Caribbean to the Northern Andes. This area is also a key wintering destination for **Golden-winged Warblers** (GWWA) and **Canada Warblers** (CAWA). The 3,465-acre El Dorado ProAves Reserve helps protect the northwestern spur of the Sierra Nevada and the 2,156-acre Chamiceró de Perijá ProAves Reserve protects the highest peaks of the Serranía de Perijá, two montane forest refuges vital for CERW, CAWA and GWWA during migration and wintering periods. Both reserves have faced tremendous challenges from habitat degradation during the COVID-19 pandemic, including suffering from deforestation. Thanks to a NMBCA grant in 2020, forest rangers have been hired to protect the reserves from illegal logging and the process of reforestation has begun. Unfortunately, the ongoing socio-economic and humanitarian crisis in Venezuela has created widespread human displacement, putting pressure on land and natural resources in this region. This project will expand (38.6 acres) and strictly protect 5,660 acres of NMB habitat (safeguarding an estimated population of 1,356 GWWA, 140 CAWA, and 269 CERW) and restore a total of 38.6 acres from former clearings and degraded forest. ProAves will monitor populations of CERW and GWWA at the reserve, ensure proper local law enforcement to prevent illegal activities that could harm migratory birds, and raise awareness about the plight of these species through public outreach campaigns.

## **7609: SAVING THE GOLDEN-CHEEKED WARBLER WINTERING HABITAT IV**

**Applicant:** FUNDACION DEFENSORES DE LA NATURALEZA

**Countries:** Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua

**Grant Award Amount:** \$199,997    **Matching Contributions:** \$621,357

**Notable bird species to benefit:** **Golden-cheeked Warbler**, Blue-headed Vireo, **Golden-winged Warbler**, Worm-eating Warbler, Black-and-white Warbler, Townsend's Warbler, Hermit Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, Wilson's Warbler, and **Red-faced Warbler**.

Phase IV of this project is presented by members of the Alliance for the Conservation of Mesoamerican Pine-Oak Forests, to follow up on the implementation of the Conservation Plan for the Central American Pine-Oak Forest Ecoregion and the **Golden-cheeked Warbler (GCWA)**. Previous phases have focused on the restoration of degraded GCWA habitat, the incorporation of the high conservation value approach to biodiversity in areas under forest management, and capacity building to protect and improve the management of restored habitat areas. Restoration is a regional priority and therefore it is important to implement management and protection measures for recovered areas to ensure success of those field activities. In response to the above alliance partners propose to establish four nurseries (one in Guatemala (GT), three in Honduras (HN)) to produce 50,000 native plants (20,000 GT and 30,000 HN), which will be used to restore 50 hectares (20 GT and 30 HN). The management and protection of pine-oak forests to reduce the threat of forest fires is also a priority, for this reason seven brigades will be strengthened with basic equipment for field activities that will help protect 617 hectares of forest. Better practices training will take place in Nicaragua to reduce the impact of extensive and intensive cattle farming. Finally, it is important to continue with the process of updating the habitat information of the GCWA in Mesoamerica and formally disseminate the information generated by the Alliance about the species in its winter habitat, for which the development of a scientific article by the research committee is proposed. Partners will continue with monitoring of the conservation plan, which begins with phase III of the project, and will hold a regional meeting to integrate the inputs from all partners.

## **7610: STRENGTHENING SHOREBIRD CONSERVATION IN PARITA BAY**

**Applicant:** NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY

**Country:** Panama

**Grant Award Amount:** \$200,000    **Matching Contributions:** \$727,465

**Notable bird species to benefit:** **American Oystercatcher**, **Wilson's Plover**, Whimbrel, **Marbled Godwit**, Ruddy Turnstone, Sanderling, Semipalmated Sandpiper, Western Sandpiper, **Short-billed Dowitcher**, **Lesser Yellowlegs**, **Willet**, and Greater Yellowlegs

Coastal habitats on the Pacific coast of Panama offer some of the most important stopover and wintering habitat for Neotropical migrant shorebird species in the Americas, but they face many threats. In recognition of the value of this coastal habitat and with a proven track record for successful conservation work in the country, National Audubon is partnering with the Inter-American Development Bank and Panama Audubon Society to implement a 3-year, \$3 million project focused on the conservation and protection of Panama's coastal natural capital (defined as mangroves and related wetlands), a project known as "Blue Natural Heritage". Successful execution of this project presents an opportunity to take shorebird conservation to scale in the region and streamline bird conservation needs into national policy considerations across Panama and beyond over the next ten years. To achieve this, partners will directly support the implementation of Conservation Plan for the Wetlands of Parita Bay by: (1) building knowledge, engagement, and educational opportunities that reduce human recreational disturbance, enable conservation actions of mangrove ecosystems, and increase protection of shorebirds in Parita Bay; and (2) measuring conservation success in Parita Bay using shorebird monitoring data through monthly monitoring efforts at strategic sites, while building science and monitoring capacity among students, government and others in country. This will help us gain a better understanding of shorebird abundance and habitat use at key sites and the impact of the human recreational disturbance awareness activities on shorebird populations.

**7611: ASSESSING SEASONAL & MIGRATORY MOVEMENTS BY BOBOLINKS ON THE FARM HUB & IN VERMONT**

**Applicant:** UNIVERSITY OF NEW ENGLAND

**Country:** United States of America

**Grant Award Amount:** \$76,344     **Matching Contributions:** \$230,294

**Notable bird species to benefit:** **Bobolink**, Savannah Sparrow, Eastern Meadowlark, Grasshopper Sparrow, Upland Sandpiper, Red-winged Blackbird, Song Sparrow, Northern Harrier, Dickcissel, and Sedge Wren.

The project will implement several of the highest priority actions identified in the Prairie to Pampas Grassland Bird Conservation Business Plan. Proponents intend to: (1) assess the annual life-cycle of individual **Bobolinks** by collecting data both while on the breeding grounds and through tracking devices for the entire annual cycle, connecting these movements and reproduction to the weather they experience across their lifecycle; (2) use these data to create hayfield management plans that account for how farmers and birds are adapting to a changing climate; (3) use a community-based approach integrating Audubon volunteers, undergraduate and graduate students in collecting and disseminating these data to landowners across a 5,500-acre landscape; and (4) grow an established network of partners in South America with which to share information gained from this work.

## **7613: IMPLEMENTING GOLDEN-CHEEKED WARBLER CONSERVATION PLAN IN CHIAPAS VI**

**Applicant:** PRONATURA SUR, A.C.

**Country:** Mexico

**Grant Award Amount:** \$198,000    **Matching Contributions:** \$595,000

**Notable bird species to benefit:** **Golden-cheeked Warbler**, **Grace's Warbler**, **Mexican Whip-poor-will**, **Golden-winged Warbler**, Worm-eating Warbler, **Red-faced Warbler**, Hermit Warbler, Townsend's Warbler, Wilson's Warbler, Blue-headed Vireo, Yellow-rumped Warbler, and MacGillivray's Warbler.

This project focuses on reducing **Golden-cheeked Warbler** (GCWA) habitat pressure particularly in Chiapas State, due to deficient forest management practices, illegal logging and forest fires. Pronatura Sur will contribute to the goals established in the Mesoamerican Pine-Oak Forest and **Golden-cheeked Warbler** Conservation Plan 2020-2030 by implementing five of the twenty-one strategies defined in this plan: (1) habitat protection, (2) forest management and (3) forest recovery through the protection of 1,300 hectares of an indigenous community forest in San Cristobal de Las Casas, Chiapas, which would be the first Ejidal or Communal private land in the region and could be a model to replicate; (4) education and outreach by implementing a communication and awareness program with general public from the City of San Cristobal, about the importance of Montetik Park and Ejido forests; and (5) research and monitoring to document the ecology of GCWA during migration, along its corridor on Sierra Madre Oriental in Mexico, evaluate opportunities for conservation on this important stage of the annual cycle, and evaluate the state of fragmentation of GCWA wintering habitat in Mexico. This information will orientate protection and restoration actions in GCWA critical sites.