

2009-2010 Southern Wings Project Recommendations
for approval by the MAFWA
May 2010

The Southern Wings Task Force working under the direction of the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies' (AFWA) Bird Conservation Committee was charged "to create a funding mechanism that provides an easy and flexible avenue for states willing to participate in conservation in Latin America and the Caribbean by contributing funds annually through a US-based third party that will handle the funds and coordinate the distribution of funds." The Objective was to provide a mechanism to support and facilitate State Fish and Wildlife Agency participation in conservation projects in Latin America and the Caribbean that support their goals of conserving priority species.

This round of projects, 2009-2010, is the first year of the program. To conform to the Southern Wings process, the Southern Wings Technical Committee developed/reviewed proposals and is providing the following recommendations on what proposals to fund based on the amount of money, match, and the biological relevance to the States participating in the program. The Technical Committee has a member from each state that is participating in the program in that given year (Brad Jacobs (MO); David Goad (AR), Doug Harr (IA), Craig Thompson (WI), Eileen Dowd-stukel (SD), Mark Howery (OK), and Edwin Juarez (AZ). The Directors of each regional association are required to approve the Technical Committee recommendations. The states of Iowa, Missouri, South Dakota and Wisconsin have chosen to participate in the following projects. They request your approval of their choices at either your May Executive Committee meeting or June 2010 Directors meeting for approval.

Project 1 – Yucatan Migratory Bird Habitat, Mexico

State agency contributions - \$15,000 (Missouri Department of Conservation)

Matching funds – Matching funds will come from the NAWCA and NMBCA grants, at a greater than 1:1 match.

Specific Activities supported – Land acquisition (partial costs of a 247 acre parcel of the larger land acquisition)

Reporting schedule - The project period will cover June 1 to November 30, 2010. An interim report will be due to the donors on September 30, 2010, and the final report will be due on December 31, 2010.

The Yucatan is one of the most important areas for migrating birds in all of the Neotropics. It is however, very seriously threatened by development, especially near the expanding tourist areas radiating out from Cancun. The Yucatan Peninsula Alliance for Birds (Alianza para las Aves de la Península Yucatán; AAPY) was recently formed by six key conservation institutions (Reserva Ecológica del Edén, Niños y Crías, Pronatura Peninsula de Yucatan, The Nature Conservancy, the National Commission for Protected Areas – CONANP, and Amigos de Sian Ka'an), with the objectives to: 1) Develop a stable long-term regional infrastructure for bird and habitat conservation; 2) Provide immediate protection of key bird landscapes; 3) Develop science-based

bird conservation strategies; 4) Coordinate national and international bird conservation efforts across migratory ranges; and 5) Create community support for bird conservation.

Recently, AAPY received funds from the North America Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA) and the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act (NMBCA) for land purchase, to acquire approximately 500 hectares (1,235 acres) of forest and wetland properties in tracts west of Cancun for conservation. This acquisition would protect key Neotropical migratory bird habitat in the northeastern Yucatán Peninsula and contribute to the planned conservation corridor. This property would be held permanently by a Land Conservation Trust whose Board of Directors would be the AAPY members. Support is needed to complete a land acquisition of the final 247 acres.

Some of the important species of Neotropical migrants that winter in the northern Yucatan Peninsula area include WatchList 2007 species such as Wood Thrush, Blue-winged Warbler, Swainson's Warbler, and Kentucky Warbler. Non-WatchList species include Yellow-throated Warbler, Worm-eating Warbler, and Hooded Warbler. As well, enormous numbers of migrants pass through the area in spring and fall, including WatchList species such as Canada Warbler, Golden-winged Warbler, Cerulean Warbler, along with many other species (a more complete list can be seen in Appendix A.). The northeastern Yucatan Peninsula contains two Important Bird Areas, SE 41 and SE 42, Dzilam - Ría Lagartos -Yum Balam.

Project 2: Saltillo Grasslands, Mexico

State agency contributions - \$6,000.00 (South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks) (This project is also supported by Oklahoma in another region and those contributions are being approved at the SEAFWA meeting in May 2010.). Matching funds will be provided by an NMBCA grant to Pronatura Noreste in a ratio of at least 1:1.

Specific Activities supported: Restoration materials for grasslands and guard salary to guarantee protection of restoration activities.

Reporting schedule – The project period will cover June 1 to November 30, 2010. An interim report will be due to the donors on September 30, 2010, and the final report will be due on December 31, 2010.

The Saltillo Grasslands, located south of Saltillo, in northern Mexico, are fairly high (6,000 to 7,000 feet elevation) grasslands important to numerous wintering birds as well as threatened resident species and a threatened mammal, the Mexican prairiedog. The project is directed to the protection, management, and restoration of grasslands on a protected area near El Cercado village, about 25 miles south of Saltillo. Here more than 250 bird species are found and the highest concentrations of grassland wintering birds occur, including significant numbers of Long-billed Curlews (seen in flocks to 20 to 50 in the area of the reserve, and as many as 1,500 have been seen in a single flock at nearby lagoons). Mountain Plovers also winter in the area, and it is the part of the wintering range for some important grassland birds such as Loggerhead Shrike, Baird's Sparrow, Chestnut-collared Longspur and Ferruginous Hawk. Passage migrants include the Upland Sandpiper and Swainson's Hawk. A partial list can be seen in Appendix A. Resident birds of significance include the Burrowing Owl and Worthen's Sparrow, an IUCN Endangered (EN) species.

A significant threat to all of the species in the area is overgrazing of these naturally arid lands. Long over-usage by grazing goats, sheep, and cattle has caused serious erosion of already-thin soils, and of course loss of vegetation cover, not only of grasses but also of the shrubs upon which many of the native species depend. Erosion sediments have filled in small impoundments, which are very attractive to shorebirds for drinking and bathing, even species that normally forage on dry uplands, such as Long-billed Curlews. There has also been increasing conversion of the land to agriculture in areas with irrigation from wells, especially for potatoes but also for other crops such as sorghum and even apples.

The protected area (Reserva Los Cuatro Gorriones) and the surrounding landscape near El Cercado village have been heavily affected by overgrazing and the resulting erosion. The objective of the project is to improve the protection of the reserve area and begin its restoration. This will include planting native grasses and shrubs on eroded areas, and improvement of silted-in impoundments to provide sources of water for birds and other wildlife. In addition, an education program is needed for local people, so they can improve their range management to reduce over-grazing and promote sustainable use of the grasslands, and seek economic alternatives compatible with maintaining the grasslands. A long-term goal is to increase the size of the protected area through acquisitions and possibly easements.

Project 3: Bird Habitat on the Osa Peninsula, Costa Rica

State agency contributions - \$25,000 – Wisconsin DNR and \$5,000 – Iowa DNR Matching funds will come from NMBCA grants and other sources at greater than 1:1 match.

Specific Activities supported – Land Acquisition (target property is a 100-acre privately owned parcel within the Corcovado-Matapalo Biological Corridor)

Reporting schedule - The project period will cover June 1 to December 31, 2010. The final report will be due on December 31, 2010.

The Osa Peninsula of Costa Rica supports the largest remaining rainforest and mangrove forest on the Pacific coast of Central America. Those habitats are used by many neotropical migrant landbirds and shorebirds, as well as several threatened resident species. Neotropical migrants on the U.S. WatchList recorded on the Osa include the Black Swift, Olive-sided Flycatcher, Wood Thrush, Blue-winged Warbler, Golden-winged Warbler, Bay-breasted Warbler, Prairie Warbler, Prothonotary Warbler, Kentucky Warbler, and Canada Warbler. Broad-winged Hawk, Whimbrel, Chuck-will's-widow, Great Crested Flycatcher, Tennessee Warbler, Chestnut-sided Warbler, and Baltimore Oriole are among the many other non-WatchListed migrants here. The Osa Peninsula is also the stronghold for four IUCN-threatened species: Mangrove Hummingbird (EN), Yellow-billed Cotinga (EN), Turquoise Cotinga (VU), and Black-cheeked Ant-Tanager (EN). The Alliance for Zero Extinction (AZE) identified the Osa Peninsula as an AZE site triggered by the Black-cheeked Ant-Tanager. It has also been designated a Costa Rican Important Bird Area. A more complete list of migratory species in the area can be seen in Appendix E.

This ongoing project has included field surveys across the peninsula to better understand the distribution of migrants and residents (data uploaded to the Avian Knowledge Network via eBird), field surveys of more detailed point-counts near the Osa Biodiversity Center to measure use of different forest types by migrants, education and outreach, land acquisition at Cerro Osa, and habitat restoration on degraded forest lands. Although a large national park and national wetlands protect much of the Peninsula, key areas important to native wildlife and wintering migratory birds are not represented within the existing protected area system. Further land protection could greatly increase connectivity between these established reserves and protect areas where mangroves and forest meet (important for both migrants, like the Prothonotary Warbler and Northern Waterthrush, and endangered residents, like the Yellow-billed Cotinga).

Appendix A. List of Migratory Birds in the for Yucatan Migratory Bird Habitat, Mexico

Neotropical migratory birds occurring in the area. Transient species area indicated with a “T”; all others have at least some winter-resident population.

Fulvous Whistling-Duck		Semipalmated Plover	
American Wigeon		Piping Plover	
Blue-winged Teal		Killdeer	
Northern Shoveler		American Avocet	
Northern Pintail		Spotted Sandpiper	
Green-winged Teal		Solitary Sandpiper	
Ring-necked Duck		Greater Yellowlegs	
Lesser Scaup		Willet	
Hooded Merganser		Lesser Yellowlegs	
Pied-billed Grebe		Upland Sandpiper	T
American White Pelican		Whimbrel	
Anhinga		Long-billed Curlew	
American Bittern		Marbled Godwit	
Least Bittern		Ruddy Turnstone	
garza morena/Great Blue Heron		Red Knot	
Great Egret		Sanderling	
Snowy Egret		Semipalmated Sandpiper	
Little Blue Heron		Western Sandpiper	
Tricolored Heron		Least Sandpiper	
Reddish Egret		White-rumped Sandpiper	T
Cattle Egret		Pectoral Sandpiper	T
Green Heron		Dunlin	
Black-crowned Night-Heron		Stilt Sandpiper	
Yellow-crowned Night-Heron		Buff-breasted Sandpiper	T
Glossy Ibis		Short-billed Dowitcher	
White-faced Ibis		Long-billed Dowitcher	
Osprey		Wilson's Snipe	
Swallow-tailed Kite	T	Wilson's Phalarope	
Northern Harrier	T	Ring-billed Gull	
Sharp-shinned Hawk		Herring Gull	
Zone-tailed Hawk		Lesser Black-backed Gull	
Red-tailed Hawk		Gull-billed Tern	
American Kestrel		Caspian Tern	
Merlin		Black Tern	
Bat Falcon		Common Tern	T
Peregrine Falcon		Forster's Tern	
Sora		Black Skimmer	
Purple Gallinule		Yellow-billed Cuckoo	T
American Coot		Black-billed Cuckoo	T
Black-bellied Plover		Common Nighthawk	T
American Golden-Plover	T	Chimney Swift	T
Snowy Plover		Ruby-throated Hummingbird	
Wilson's Plover		Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	

Eastern Wood-Pewee	T
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher	
Acadian Flycatcher	T
Alder Flycatcher	T
Willow Flycatcher	T
Least Flycatcher	
Eastern Phoebe	
Great Crested Flycatcher	
Eastern Kingbird	T
Gray Kingbird	T
Scissor-tailed Flycatcher	T
White-eyed Vireo	
Yellow-throated Vireo	
Blue-headed Vireo	
Philadelphia Vireo	
Red-eyed Vireo	T
Black-whiskered Vireo	T
Purple Martin	T
Tree Swallow	T
Northern Rough-winged Swallow	
Bank Swallow	T
Cliff Swallow	T
Barn Swallow	T
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	
Veery	T
Gray-cheeked Thrush	T
Swainson's Thrush	
Wood Thrush	
American Robin	
Gray Catbird	
American Pipit	
Cedar Waxwing	
Blue-winged Warbler	
Golden-winged Warbler	T
Tennessee Warbler	T
Orange-crowned Warbler	
Nashville Warbler	T
Northern Parula	
Yellow Warbler	
Chestnut-sided Warbler	T
Magnolia Warbler	
Cape May Warbler	
Black-throated Blue Warbler	T
Yellow-rumped Warbler	
Black-throated Green Warbler	
Blackburnian Warbler	T
Yellow-throated Warbler	
Prairie Warbler	

Palm Warbler	
Bay-breasted Warbler	T
Blackpoll Warbler	T
Cerulean Warbler	T
Black-and-white Warbler	
American Redstart	
Prothonotary Warbler	T
Worm-eating Warbler	
Swainson's Warbler	
Ovenbird	
Northern Waterthrush	
Louisiana Waterthrush	T
Kentucky Warbler	
Mourning Warbler	T
Common Yellowthroat	
Hooded Warbler	
Wilson's Warbler	
Canada Warbler	T
Yellow-breasted Chat	
Summer Tanager	
Scarlet Tanager	T
Western Tanager	
Chipping Sparrow	
Clay-colored Sparrow	
Savannah Sparrow	
Grasshopper Sparrow	
Lincoln's Sparrow	
White-crowned Sparrow	
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	
Blue Grosbeak	
Indigo Bunting	
Painted Bunting	
Dickcissel	T
Bobolink	T
Orchard Oriole	
Baltimore Oriole	

Appendix B. Partial Bird List for Saltillo Grasslands, Mexico

Non-Neotropical migratory birds are indicated with an asterisk. The IUCN status is given for all species that are not "Least Concern." The codes are NT = Near-threatened, VU = Vulnerable, and EN = Endangered.

Scaled Quail	*	
Turkey Vulture		
American Kestrel		
Northern Harrier		
Red-tailed Hawk		
Ferruginous Hawk		
Mountain Plover		NT
Long-billed Curlew		
Mourning Dove	*	
Greater Roadrunner		
Burrowing Owl	*	
Northern Flicker		
Say's Phoebe		
Chihuahuan Raven	*	
Common Raven	*	
Loggerhead Shrike		
Bushtit	*	
Horned Lark	*	
Cactus Wren	*	
Rock Wren	*	
Northern Mockingbird	*	
Curve-billed Thrasher	*	
Western Bluebird		
American Pipit		
Sprague's Pipit		VU
House Finch	*	
Eastern Meadowlark		
Western Meadowlark		
Savannah Sparrow		
Grasshopper Sparrow		
Chipping Sparrow		
Vesper Sparrow		
Lark Sparrow		
Chestnut-collared Longspur	*	NT
Worthen's Sparrow	*	EN
Black-throated Sparrow	*	
Baird's Sparrow	*	
Botteri's Sparrow	*	
Cassin's Sparrow	*	
Canyon Towhee	*	

Appendix C. List of migratory birds occurring in the Bird Habitat on Osa Peninsula, Costa Rica

Non-Neotropical migratory birds are indicated with an asterisk. The IUCN status is given for all species that are not “Least Concern.” The codes are NT = Near-threatened, VU = Vulnerable, and EN = Endangered.

Great Curassow	* NT
White Ibis	
Cattle Egret	
Brown Pelican	
Turkey Vulture	
Black Vulture	
Common Black-hawk	
Broad-winged Hawk	
Semipalmated Plover	
Spotted Sandpiper	
Sanderling	
Wandering Tattler	
Laughing Gull	
Sandwich Tern	
Elegant Tern	* NT
Mangrove Cuckoo	
Chuck-will's-widow	
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	
Baird's Trogon	* NT
Turquoise Cotinga	* VU
Willow Flycatcher	
Tropical Kingbird	
Dusky-capped Flycatcher	
Great Crested Flycatcher	
Yellow-bellied Flycatcher	
Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher	
Yellow-throated Vireo	
Philadelphia Vireo	
Red-eyed Vireo	
Yellow-green Vireo	
House Wren	
Blue-winged Warbler	
Golden-winged Warbler	NT
Tennessee Warbler	
Yellow Warbler	
Chestnut-sided Warbler	
Northern Waterthrush	
MacGillivray's Warbler	
Baltimore Oriole	
Summer Tanager	
Black-checked Ant-tanager	* EN