

SYMPOSIUM S-PIF-16

SISTER BIRD CLUB NETWORK – LINKING BIRDERS THROUGH NEOTROPICAL MIGRATORY BIRDS

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Neotropical migratory birds link birders throughout the Americas. To sustain our ability to observe and enjoy the migratory birds about which we care deeply, bird clubs need to become active learners to increase our knowledge about the birds, and become more active in conservation efforts. The Sister Bird Club Network aims to: (1) build relationships among bird clubs throughout the Hemisphere, (2) help clubs offer enhanced birding opportunities to local community members and to avi-tourists from afar, and (3) increase participation in on-the-ground bird conservation projects. This symposium will present several perspectives from bird club members and ornithologists from Central America and the U.S. about the current and future potential benefits of the Network and how it functions.

S-PIF-16-01. SISTER BIRD CLUB NETWORK: WHAT, WHY, HOW?

RED DE HERMANA CLUBES DE OBSERVACION DE AVES -- QUE, POR QUE, Y COMO?

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Many species of Neotropical migratory birds are declining in the Western Hemisphere. Despite the important efforts of governmental agencies and non-governmental bird conservation organizations to try to stop these population declines, habitat loss and other drivers continue to drive populations downward. Many birders and bird clubs lack mechanisms through which they can engage in person-to-person or club-to-club communication and actions aimed at conservation of Neotropical migrants. The Sister Bird Club Network initially grew out of efforts of a few individuals in the U.S. and Honduras to connect bird clubs through migration of Neotropical bird species. While birders throughout the Hemisphere enjoy observing these species, opportunities to continue enjoying the seasonal ebb and flow of these species cannot be sustained without greater engagement of the birding community. The Sister Bird Club Network is aimed at developing deep and sustained connections between clubs in breeding, stop-over, and wintering areas to increase awareness of conservation needs and to provide opportunities to engage in on-the-ground conservation efforts. Specific outcomes of these connections or relationships that are nurtured through the Network include: increased knowledge of these migratory species when they are in other parts of their, migratory life cycle; facilitation of sustainable, local, conservation efforts involving avi-tourism, helping clubs achieve their strategic bird-related goals, and supporting bird-related education for youth. Examples of each of these possible outcomes will be provided in subsequent presentations in the symposium.

S-PIF-16-02. THE ASHO STRATEGY TO BUILD A BIRD CLUB NETWORK IN HONDURAS

LA ESTRATEGIA “ASHO” PARA CONSTRUIR UNA RED DE CLUBES DE OBSERVADORES DE AVES EN HONDURAS

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The four strategic pillars of the Asociación Hondureña de Ornitología (ASHO) are education, research, conservation, and promotion of avitourism in Honduras. For the last strategy, ASHO has encouraged local development of bird clubs in urban centers since 2012. In parallel, the association organized a series of events called birding blitzes to generate promote domestic avitourism and interaction among members of the clubs in the network. The blitzes are similar to Christmas Bird Counts but take place over three to four days. One blitz, held annually at Lake Yojoa since 2014, has been promoted internationally, aiming to bring foreign birders to join Hondurans in a socially enjoyable foray into tropical birding and bird monitoring. ASHO sees the clubs and birding in general as key to the generation of bird monitoring information in Honduras. ASHO currently supports 7 bird clubs in different regions of Honduras (Copán, Gracias, La Ceiba, Lake Yojoa, Marcala, San Pedro Sula, and Tegucigalpa). Principal club activities include field trips, often visiting established bird monitoring routes. All of the ASHO bird clubs have members who work as local birding guides. ASHO sees the local clubs as recruiting and training grounds for youth to develop skills as birding guides. Each of the club's local areas includes endemic species of great attraction for foreign birders. For example, the Chlorophonia Club of Lake Yojoa visits areas with Resplendent Quetzal, Snail Kite, and Black-crested Coquette. The Tanuna Club of Gracias frequently observes Ocellated Quail and Honduran Emerald. The Alzacuanes Club of Tegucigalpa visits sites with Ocellated and Singing Quails, Blue-and-white Mockingbird, and Wine-throated Hummingbird. The Cotinga Club of La Ceiba specializes in monitoring Lovely Cotingas, as well as Agami Heron and Boat-billed Heron. Each club is interested in exploring "sister" club relationships outside of Honduras.

S-PIF-16-03. USING THE SISTER BIRD CLUB NETWORK TO ENHANCE ECOTOURISM IN HONDURAS

OPORTUNIDADES DE LA RED DE CLUBES DE OBSERVACIÓN DE AVES PARA PROMOVER EL ECOTURISMO EN HONDURAS

Katinka Domen and William Orellana
Beaks and Peaks Birding and Adventure Tours

Several countries all around the world thrive on ecotourism. And there is really no reason why Honduras couldn't. It is a wonderful country with large natural areas, a variety of possible activities, accommodation and services, and welcoming people. But not too many tourists have found their way to the heart of Central America yet, for various reasons – reputation, lack of information, access etc. In this presentation, we point out how ecotourism could be a way out of poverty and towards a healthy and sustainable economy and society; we analyze what it is that Honduras needs to grow; and we explore how the Sister Bird Club Network could contribute to the development of Honduras as a top ecotourism destination, in first instance for birders, nature lovers and adventure seekers, and always with respect for our natural environment and our people's culture.

S-PIF-16-04. SISTER BIRD CLUBS WORKING TOGETHER: LESSONS LEARNED "SISTER BIRD CLUBS" TRABAJANDO JUNTOS: LECCIONES APRENDIDAS

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Bringing together individual birders, scientists, bird clubs, and local chapters of the National Audubon Society, Partners in Neotropical Bird Conservation (PINBC) has as its mission to promote bird conservation and education with an emphasis on Neotropical migrants, using the Golden-winged Warbler as a flagship species. In this presentation, we will share an overview of our accomplishments to-date along with challenges encountered and lessons learned, with a particular focus on how bird clubs can work together to both benefit each other and the birds. In February 2016, PINBC led a "Birding for Conservation" trip to Honduras with

the purpose of promoting birding and ecotourism while making connections and building partnerships with other organizations involved in bird conservation. We spent portions of this trip visiting with Hondurans who have made outstanding efforts to protect the environment and educate their citizens on birds and conservation, such as Isidro Zuniga at the Las Orquideas private reserve. One of our first initiatives was to support the inauguration of Club de Observadores de Aves Águilas Arpías, a local chapter of the Asociación Hondureña de Ornitología (ASHO) in the Department of Olancho, Honduras. In addition to donating binoculars and bird guides, our financial support helped to sponsor a “Migratory Bird Fair” at the Universidad Nacional de Agricultura in Catacamas, where the university’s La Montañita reserve is home to at least 7-8 wintering female Golden-winged Warblers. The two-day fair – the first of its type in Honduras – included a photography contest, activities for children (crafts, face painting, coloring), educational displays about birds attended by ASHO members to field and answer questions, bird walks, bird banding demonstrations, and several lectures for students/adults. PINBC has also been supporting a small group of organic shade-grown coffee farmers in the Marcala region by helping them connect with vendors in the U.S., promoting their coffee, and by selling their coffee directly. We are actively working with the farmers to help them create more bird-friendly habitat and improve their operations to protect and promote biodiversity. Possibilities for ecotourism development are being discussed. The recently formed Club de Aves Los Jilgueros in Marcala has expressed an interest in working with these coffee farmers to provide educational opportunities. We are presently discussing with them how we might be able to provide assistance in promoting birding and local on-the-ground conservation efforts.

S-PIF-16-05. ENGAGING YOUTH IN BIRDING ACTIVITIES THROUGH THE SISTER BIRD CLUB NETWORK
INVOLUCRAMIENTO DE LA JUVENTUD EN ACTIVIDADES DE OBSERVACIÓN DE AVES A TRAVÉS DE LA RED DE CLUBS DE OBSERVADORES DE AVES

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La inclusión de los (as) más pequeños en la observación de aves ha creado un impacto socio ambiental positivo no solo en la población de Gracias Lempira, lugar que dio origen al primer club juvenil con miembros afiliados a la ASHO, sino que también a nivel nacional. Niños (as) y jóvenes de todas las edades y procedentes de diferentes lugares, poco a poco son instruidos en la observación de aves con el fin de crear alternativas para el fortalecimiento de la educación ambiental, implementando una dinámica que integra la recreación y el sano entretenimiento, enfocado en la conservación y protección de nuestros recursos naturales a través de métodos y herramientas que permitan asegurar un aprendizaje significativo, y a la vez que puedan aplicarlo en su diario vivir en el entorno en que se desenvuelven. La comunidad científica en nuestro país ha sido testigo del notable crecimiento de estos grupos, gracias a la unión de esfuerzos de las diferentes organizaciones que velan por la conservación de las aves. De esta manera, avanzamos con la difícil tarea de transmitir estos conocimientos a cada rincón del país. La red de club de observadores de aves abrirá las puertas para la juventud y la niñez que necesita y debe aprender sobre el tema de conservación, sobre todo a los que son vulnerables a los problemas de violencia doméstica, desintegración familiar, uso y abuso de drogas, alcoholismo y farmacodependencia entre otros. En la actualidad la juventud se ha convertido en presa fácil de los avances tecnológicos. El simple hecho de salir por unos minutos a ver las aves de nuestro patio podría hacer la diferencia. Observar aves es un paso muy grande para cualquier persona, especialmente para los jóvenes como yo. Hoy en día no es tan común que los (as) jóvenes se interesen por la observación de aves, pero recientemente esto ha cambiado significativamente. Es interesante ver la relación que se establece entre la naturaleza y la juventud a través del mundo de las aves. The Sister Bird Club Network sería un gran medio para unir a los jóvenes en América tomando en cuenta que entre nosotros existe una mejor comunicación, ya que es más espontánea. Además, compartir e intercambiar experiencias tales como:

iniciación en el mundo de las aves, la diversidad en las especies de cada región, entre otros. Incluso, se vuelve más emocionante al compartir diferentes aspectos culturales en el proceso.

S-PIF-16-06. HOW BIRD CLUBS CAN CONTRIBUTE TO AVITOURISM AND NEOTROPICAL ORNITHOLOGY THROUGH EBIRD

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In Honduras, the Asociación Hondureña de Ornitología has promoted the development of eight local bird clubs, and oriented their members towards registering their observations in the eBird online database as a way to (1) promote local and international avitourism in their local region; and (2) improve knowledge of avian distribution and abundance. eBird now provides several tools that facilitate both objectives. Furthermore, the use of eBird and its tools is improving local capacities for bird identification, allowing club members to become more effective champions for bird conservation and environmental education. The role of local bird clubs in these processes in Honduras is of extreme importance. Most Honduran environmental organizations, including local and national government agencies, lack personnel with knowledge about birds, and thus local bird clubs and their supporters have great opportunities to influence conservation actions, much more so than in developed countries where professional conservationists and biologists are employed by multiple management agencies or organizations with local oversight. Sister Bird Club arrangements can help Central American bird club members understand and appreciate the importance they can have locally, especially if they include cross-regional communication about patterns in bird movements, distribution, and abundance. eBird tools adapted for these kinds of questions include illustrated checklists for every registered hotspot, realtime data collection with the mobile app for smartphones, automatic data quality filtering and review, and presentation of interactive maps, as well as advanced temporal-spatial models of bird migration movements.

S-PIF-16-07. SYMPOSIUM SUMMARY: BRINGING THE DREAM TO REALITY

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