



Prothonotary Warbler
Photo: Mike Williams

El Silencio Reserve

Project title: El Silencio Reserve

Location: Colombia

Coordinates: 6°48'1.88"N 74°12'23.18"W

Size: 1312 acres

Grant Amount: \$40,000

Date: 2022

Partners: American Bird Conservancy and Biodiversa

Summary and Background:

The Middle Magdalena Valley (MMV) ecosystem in Central Colombia belongs to the highly threatened Tumbes-Choco-Magdalena biodiversity hotspot and the Magdalena-Urabá moist forest ecoregion. The MMV is one of the most biologically diverse areas in Colombia. It accounts for about 20% of the species of Colombian birds (345 species), primates (6 species) and rodents (26 species), and 33% of the country's bats (58 species). However, deforestation

for extensive cattle farming and agriculture has eliminated 85-90% of its original forest cover. Despite its priority and threat, national protected areas cover less than 4% of the MMV.

El Silencio Reserve covers 7,001 acres of lowland forests and wetlands, making it one of the last well-preserved areas in the MMV. Our partner, Biodiversa, established the reserve 8 years ago, benefiting 12 endangered species including the Critically Endangered Blue-billed Curassow, globally threatened primates, and over 40 neotropical migratory bird species, such as the Prothonotary Warbler. In 2020, 5,905 acres of the Peñon del Caballo ranch were purchased by Biodiversa with support of Rainforest Trust, ABC, and many other supporters. Biodiversa's goal is to expand the reserve further by acquiring an additional 1,312 acres in two parcels that still remain within the same ranch and owned by two entities: La Cebra S.A.S. and Tierra y Río S.A.S. Forest covers 93% of the area intended for purchase (70% primary forest) and the land is currently not used, nor actively managed, except for nearly 148 acres (of the total 1,312 acres) seasonally used for cattle grazing.

Mission and Description of the Organization:

American Bird Conservancy was founded in 1994 with a mission to conserve wild birds and their habitats throughout the Americas. With an emphasis on achieving results and working in partnerships, we take on the greatest problems facing birds today, innovating and building on rapid advancements in science to halt extinctions, protect habitats, eliminate threats, and build capacity for bird conservation. Over the past 25 years, ABC has helped to conserve and manage 7.6 million acres of habitat in the U.S., as well as protect more than one million acres of habitat in Latin America and the Caribbean for resident and migratory bird species alike. In addition, we have helped restore habitat by planting over six million trees and shrubs. ABC is headquartered in The Plains, VA, and has over 100 full-time employees in locations throughout the Americas. We proudly work with local partners in our projects.



List of Neotropical Bird Species Using the Project Site:

- Acadian Flycatcher
- Baltimore Oriole
- Bank Swallow
- Barn Swallow
- Bay-breasted Warbler
- Blackburnian Warbler

- Blue-winged Teal
- Broad-winged Hawk
- Chimney Swift
- Chuck-will's-widow
- Cliff Swallow
- Common Nighthawk
- Eastern Kingbird
- Gray Kingbird
- Great Blue Heron
- Great Crested Flycatcher
- Greater Yellowlegs
- Green Heron
- Killdeer
- Laughing Gull
- Least Sandpiper
- Lesser Scaup
- Lesser Yellowlegs

- Mississippi Kite
- Mourning Warbler
- Northern Waterthrush
- Osprey
- Prothonotary Warbler
- Red-eyed Vireo
- Rose-breasted Grosbeak
- Scarlet Tanager
- Solitary Sandpiper
- Spotted Sandpiper
- Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher
- Summer Tanager
- Swainson's Thrush
- Willow Flycatcher
- Yellow Warbler
- Yellow-billed Cuckoo
- Yellow-green Vireo

Bird Species of Concern or Focus:

- Blue-billed Curassow

Non-Bird Species of Concern:

- Brown Spider Monkey
- Lowland Tapir
- Magdalena River Turtle
- Magdalena Striped Catfish
- Silvery-brown Tamarin



Blue-billed Curassow
Photo: David Fisher

Budget:

Budget Item	Amount (USD)
Land purchase (1,312 acres)	\$563,182
Land management (2 years) – Property taxes, park ranger salary, management plan, maintenance (trails, roads)	\$40,581
Establishment of a guard station	\$25,758
Fundación Biodiversa Colombia – Partial salaries for Project Coordinator, Field Coordinator, Administrative support	\$70,479
ABC project management	\$10,000
Total	\$710,000

Funding Secured: \$300,000 secured from The Bobolink Foundation

Property Protection Plan:

Biodiversa has been implementing management and conservation actions in the reserve since 2012 to increase protection and connectivity, and to monitor the main forest patches of the area. The reserve management includes community outreach to promote conservation and reduce human-wildlife conflict, illegal logging and poaching. Biodiversa is promoting and supporting alternative economic activities for the local community, including setting up plant nurseries for community-based restoration, and productive backyards, in order to reduce pressure on the reserve and surrounding areas. In addition, Biodiversa has signed four conservation agreements with neighboring landowners covering 40,871 acres (of which 27,238 acres are forests), and have collaborated to actively restore 86 acres and set up 107 acres of silvopasture systems

Maps and photos:



This map shows the current El Silencio Reserve (three main phases of acquisitions each outlined in red). The new lands targeted for purchase extend the reserve on the southern edge to the muddy Magdalena River (details in next map). The blackish area in the lower left is a giant marsh.



Áreas específicas de pleno dominio y posesión de cada una de las partes propietarias del predio Peñón del Caballo, Yondó, Antioquia Matricula Inmobiliaria No. 303-727663

Elaboró: Fundación Biodiversa Colombia
Diciembre 2020



This map shows the Peñón del Caballo ranch, that is currently partially owned (orange) by our partner Biodiversa as part of the El Silencio Reserve. We seek to purchase the remaining portion (blue) owned by two other entities. Most of this area is primary forest, which shows well in this image.

For more information contact:

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