

FINAL REPORT

GRASSLANDS PROJECT

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Aims and Objectives

The main aim of this project is to provide effective long term conservation in four (4) important bird areas for grassland birds located in the provinces of Río Negro and Paysandú, with involvement of the local community.

To achieve this aim we will carry out the following strategies:

Objectives:

- A. To raise the awareness about, or promote the importance of these grasslands, through meetings with landowners and local government entities, and through environmental education focused on the conservation of birds in all the habitats of the local community.

We made four workshops and meeting with landowners, local government of Paysandú and Río Negro, and diferent actors of local community. The workshops was very important because the 87 % of people that participated not knowledge about the importance of grasslands conservation and threatened grassland birds. After workshops and meeting all people involved understood the importance of grassland conservation.

- B. To sign “sustainable” agreements for the conservation of areas that are identified as important for grassland birds, with the landowners and local and national authorities.

We made three agreements with landowners in Paysandú Province. And also received de collaboration for made research and work with local community in one area of Ministry of Environmental in Río Negro Province.

- C. To develop an ecotouristic alternative in birdwatching for the region, thus aiding the protection of these areas.

We made ecoturistic circuit for birdwatching activities, trekking, information center, brochures, local groups capacitation in birdwatching and flora. The groups was 20 people average, but at the final of courses and capacitation the people that have very important knowledge about birdwatching and flora guide was three people in Río Negro and five people in Paysandú.

- D. To provide support to local groups or help develop new ones so as to activate a network of volunteers working to promote conservation of these birds and thus ensuring protection of the habitat.

We choosed the local people more qualified and with more motivation for specials workshops that was very good for training the volunteers.

- E. To monitor grassland bird species through field trips. This includes the follow-up of migrating birds such as *Sporophila* spp., of other residents that carry out local population movements such as *Xanthopsar flavus* y *Heteroxolmis dominicana* and of grassland species with different degrees of threat such as *Culicivora caudacuta* and *Polysticus pectoralis*.

With the help of Lic. Alexis Cerezo and Mr. Gabriel Rocha can made a very important monitoring programme for grassland birds. Is the first monitoring programme in

Uruguay about grassland birds. We made a programme for three years with point counts, transects and mist-netting studies. Anexo II.

Methods

A. Production of three types of educational and support materials:

- 500 Handbooks on birds and conservation for primary and high schools.
- 2000 Descriptive guides of local birds for the development of birdwatching.
- 1000 Posters about local birds and their importance.

We made:

3.000 descriptive guides of grassland birds and other habitat for primary, high schools and birdwatching activities in the areas.

1.000 posters with grassland birds and importance of habitat conservations.

B. Hold information interviews with the local landowners of the potentially important bird areas, including local authorities.

We made eleven interviews with landowners, local authorities and Forestal Company, we obtain very good result with landowners and local authorities, but not with Forestal Company.

We made four meeting with Forestal Company and they made any promise but after not to make concrete the activities.

C. Publish 8 articles in the local and national press and also have 10 interviews on the local radio and television stations.

We made:

Seven interviews in "Radio Paz - Guichón" (Paysandú).

One TV interview in "Tele - Guichón" (Paysandú).

One TV interview in Canal 4 (Montevideo).

Two interview in Radio San Javier (Río Negro).

One interview in Newspaper "El Telégrafo" (Paysandú).

D. Carry out two (2) workshops on the conservation of grasslands with the landowners, the authorities and the local NGOs.

We made two workshops in Paysandú Province and one workshop in Río Negro Province.

E. Organize three (3) field trips to observe birds with the owners and authorities in the key sites or areas for conservation.

We made three field trips: two in Paysandú Province and one in Río Negro Province. This field trips was very important for all people see the importance of grassland conservation.

F. Teach at least one (1) class on birds and the importance of the conservation of grasslands at each of the institutions of secondary education of the region.

We made three class in Paysandú Province and one in Río Negro Province and we to distribute guides and different materials for teenagers and teachers.

G. Teach at least one (1) class on birds and conservation in each of the primary schools of the region, and organize fields trips with the children and their teachers.

We made twenty-eight class in Paysandú and Río Negro Province in primary school and organized a small field trips with children and teacher in open areas of the city or rural schools.

H. Development and promotion of a model for signed conservation agreements with proprietors and with departmental and/or national authorities.

We made a model of signed conservation agreements. (Anexo I)

I. Establish at least four (4) signed agreements for the conservation of grasslands with landowners and authorities.

We made three agreements with landowners, but are very difficult for signed the agreements, because the landowners to prefer a verbally agreements. Is typically in Uruguay that the "field people" to trust in your word and they to be involved in our project, but is not important for they signed a agreement. We to persist in signed the agreements but the landowners speaked with our that is not relevant for they.

We to think that we don't have problems with this landowners, besides we and Mr. Gabriel Rocha, Danny Silveira, Carlos Urruty are very good relation with they.

In three field we continue working: José Rafael Moreira, Estancia "El Porqueno", Julio Menegasi. This landowners are very enthusiastic with our conservation project and birdwatching activities for local community.

J. Hold two (2) workshops on birds to train guides, with a view to the potential development of bird watching in the region.

We made two workshops in Río Negro and two workshops in Paysandú. We work with groups of 20 and 25 people, and besides of the birdwatching training we introduced a flora training.

K. Establishment of at least one bird watching and at least 4 bird watching "hotspots" in the region.

We made specific meeting with local community for designed the areas in the region.

L. Make contact with potential donors of field equipment (binoculars and field guides) to be used for the development of the project and for support and assistance to local bird watching guides.

Birder's Exchange donors five binoculars that we donors to local community. We created a sistem with one responsible in each one of the local community.

AVINA Montevideo donors a fieldguides for birdwatching and book of flora guides.

- M. A second product of all four workshops is the establishment of a regional working group that will implement and monitor conservation related activities, monitoring and conservation efforts etc., in the region.

Fortnightly field trips to monitor birds during nine (9) months in the four areas considered as most promising for conservation. The birds will be observed with binoculars and documented with photographs and film. We will try to register nesting of some species in the area and collect data to establish the migratory movements of some of the species of *Sporophila*. Using mist nets we will capture and tag birds with color bands in order to complete studies of their movements in the area or region.

Today we can count with two local groups in Guichón (Paysandú) and San Javier (Río Negro). They received the special training for Lic. Alexis Cerezo and Mr. Gabriel Rocha. We work in the first year to monitoring programme and in the last winter prepared the second monitoring programme for this spring. Monitoring Manual (Anexo II).