

*Help your state's migratory birds
by joining*

Southern Wings



Your agency spends considerable time, money and effort managing and conserving good habitat for birds. But when the birds migrate south for the winter, they may face problems that can undermine all your good efforts to conserve them. Southern Wings, a state-agency partnership supported by the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, can help you protect these species after they migrate from your state.

Winter Ranges Missouri Migrants

*Dark red equals
more bird species,
light red equals
fewer bird species*

About 450 species of passerine songbirds such as: flycatchers, vireos, swallows, thrushes, warblers, tanagers, grosbeaks, buntings and orioles have 90 percent of their wintering range south of the U.S./Mexico border. Many non-songbirds—including herons, egrets, geese, ducks, plovers, sandpipers, terns, cuckoos and swifts—also join the passerines in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), where they depend on habitat outside of the protective care of state fish and wildlife agencies for up to eight months of each year.

Temperate and tropical America have hundreds of shared bird species and their people share many conservation goals. Conserving birds throughout their annual cycle is critical to conserving birds within the boundaries of an individual state. Just as state fish and wildlife agencies have built partnerships and worked across state borders and the Canada/U.S. border, the time and opportunity have come to expand those partnerships throughout the Americas, where ever our state priority birds may travel.

Please consider this opportunity to join with other state fish and wildlife agencies in support of bird conservation activities in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC). The LAC focus area for your state will depend on where your state's breeding birds migrate to spend the winter months. To find where your state's birds migrate, go to www.partnersinflight.org.



Southern Wings

An international effort to conserve state-priority migratory bird species on their wintering grounds

Southern Wings was developed by a task force of the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies' Bird Conservation Committee in March 2008. Southern Wings is a partnership of state fish and wildlife agencies that support the common vision of providing a funding mechanism for bird conservation projects in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC).



Painted bunting

JIM RATHER - MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION

Southern Wings provides a funding mechanism that:

- is solidly based on the biology of birds that occur in the states and spend time on LAC wintering grounds
- allows for relatively easy and seamless financial participation by interested states
- achieves the benefits of match and leverage of state funds
- requires progress and accomplishment reporting to the states

Southern Wings conserves birds by:

- Monitoring status of populations
- Protecting, restoring, managing bird habitats
- Helping LAC partners acquire lands in critical core habitats for migrant birds
- Determining the effects of management
- Educating the public
- Enabling public enjoyment and appreciation of birds

Southern Wings is developing:

- An easy, transparent, flexible process for states to conserve their migratory species of greatest conservation need during winter
- A way for state support to be even more effective through partnerships and the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act



WINCE MURPHY

▲ In Honduras, Pico Bonito National Park is a vital wintering and stopover habitat for 200 or more North American migrant birds. Over 400 species of birds can be observed along a 20-mile transect from the Caribbean coast, over the 8,000-foot tall mountain range and into the dry Aguan Valley to the south. This pristine region is vital to the Honduran people because of the clear streams that provide water for agriculture and recreation.

Mombacho Volcano in Nicaragua ▶



Your help is needed

Southern Wings already is a multi-state effort, but more collaboration is needed. By coordinating bird conservation partnership efforts and working on well-defined projects within a larger framework set out by the bird conservation initiatives, Southern Wings will build on our major success north of the U.S./Canada border and complete the conservation effort throughout the annual migration cycle of all birds.

Currently about 20-25 states participate in partnership bird conservation projects in LAC. Many states annually budget for projects in LAC and work with non-governmental agencies in the U.S. to conduct the actual collaboration with LAC partners. National level NGOs in the U.S. include the American Bird Conservancy, National Audubon Society, Ducks Unlimited and The Nature Conservancy.



BRAD JACOBS



BRAD JACOBS

▲ This cloud forest in Nicaragua looks like many of the volcano forests throughout tropical America. The foliage of the trees and shrubs collects the moisture carried by the trade winds and add it to the volcanic soils. Without the vegetation, the ground becomes desert-like and would cease to provide habitat for most of the species that winter or reside in the area as permanent residents. Land restoration, protection and acquisition are possible ways for states to help with Latin American conservation actions.

Eighty-six percent of state fish and wildlife directors responding to a questionnaire indicated positive support to use state agency funds for international conservation partnership efforts to conserve priority bird species that breed in their state and migrate to Latin America and the Caribbean.

What state directors can do

- Discuss the “bird conservation beyond your border” concept with your staff.
- Determine your state’s interest and ability to participate.
- Decide where your state should focus wintering ground conservation efforts.
- Voice your state’s support and the Regional Association’s support for Bird Conservation Committee efforts to continue the development of these important initiatives.

Why act now

- Human populations in Latin America and the Caribbean during the next 45 years will increase by 100-360 million.
- Eighty-five percent of the increase will be in less developed regions that presently have habitat for migrant birds.
- Of forest lost in the last 30 years globally, over 40 percent was lost in Latin America.
- By 2032, over 80 percent of land and its wildlife could be adversely impacted by development.



Scissor-tailed flycatcher

Examples of LAC partnerships

New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife

- Red Knot conservation from Nunavut, Canada, to Tierra del Fuego, Chile
- Partnered with N.J. Audubon, International Wading Study Group, Vittoria Wader Study Group in Australia, British Trust for Ornithology, Manomet Bird Observatory, Wildlife Conservation Society, Defenders of Wildlife, University of Chile, and CEMAVE in Brazil



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Upland sandpiper

Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency

- Began working with Southern Wings in 2002
- Began in 2004 working with the University of Tennessee on a bird monitoring project in the Yucatan, Mexico, and a NMBCA grant. Expanded the partnership within the Central Hardwoods Joint Venture. Expended about \$20,000 in support for the project over four years.

Missouri Department of Conservation

- Partnered with El Cielo Biosphere Reserve in Tamaulipas, Mexico, where approximately 70 species of Missouri's breeding songbirds winter; Amigos de Sian Ka'an Biosphere Reserve; Universidad Autónoma de Tamaulipas; Asociación de Promotores Campesinos de la Reserva de la Biosfera El Cielo; Central Hardwoods Joint Venture; American Bird Conservancy; Gulf Coast Bird Observatory; Point Reyes Bird Observatory; and Bird Studies Canada
- With the above partners, provided grants for Southern Wings projects

New Mexico Game and Fish

- Monitors desert grassland birds in Chihuahua, Mexico
- Contributes \$8,800 a year for cross-border desert grassland bird monitoring in Chihuahua

Idaho Department of Fish and Game

- Provides internships for partners from Mexico
- Annually contributes \$5,000 to Southern Wing efforts, which is matched by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Monitors the birds on their Mexican winter range that breed and migrate through Idaho

Other states involved with LAC partnerships include: Arizona, Vermont, Montana, Wisconsin, Florida, Colorado, Nevada, Nebraska, Oregon, Texas, Ohio and Alabama.



JIM RATHERT - MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION

Blue-winged teal

Help protect winter bird habitat in Latin America and the Caribbean

As a director of a fish and wildlife agency, please consider the possibilities for a Southern Wings project in your state. Winter bird habitat depends on your help.

For more information, contact:

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