



photo: Laura Erickson



# EL JAGUAR PRIVATE RESERVE

**THREATS/ CHALLENGES:** The Golden-winged Warbler is one of the most threatened, non-federally listed migratory bird species in North America. Without significant, immediate conservation action, the likelihood that this species will require protection under the Endangered Species Act is high. It is well known that the loss and deterioration of wintering ground habitat for migratory birds, including Golden-winged Warblers is leading to their population declines. Recent surveys have revealed that northern Nicaragua is one of the most important wintering locations for the species.

Land use conversion from primary forest to agriculture, including sun coffee and potatoes, is reducing habitat available for Golden-winged Warblers and other bird species, and reduces the number of individuals that the area can support due to decreased food and cover. Logging and cattle production further limit wildlife habitat.

**IMPORTANCE OF EL JAGUAR:** The highlands of Jinotega in northern Nicaragua are becoming increasingly fragmented as agriculture, including sun-coffee production, is creeping up the mountain sides. These highlands are historically important wintering areas for many species of migratory birds. Since 2005, El Jaguar Reserve has become one of the most important sites for migratory birds in the Neotropics. El Jaguar Reserve became an IBA (Important Bird Area) in 2006 as it hosts seven globally threatened bird species, three range-restricted species in Mesoamerica, and 17 biome-restricted species. Of the 290 bird species found in the highlands at least 40 species are migratory including the Golden-winged Warbler, Wood Thrush, Kentucky Warbler, and Hermit Warbler.



Local landowners, who are helping to grow and plant trees for GWWA conservation ( Photo: A. Rothman)

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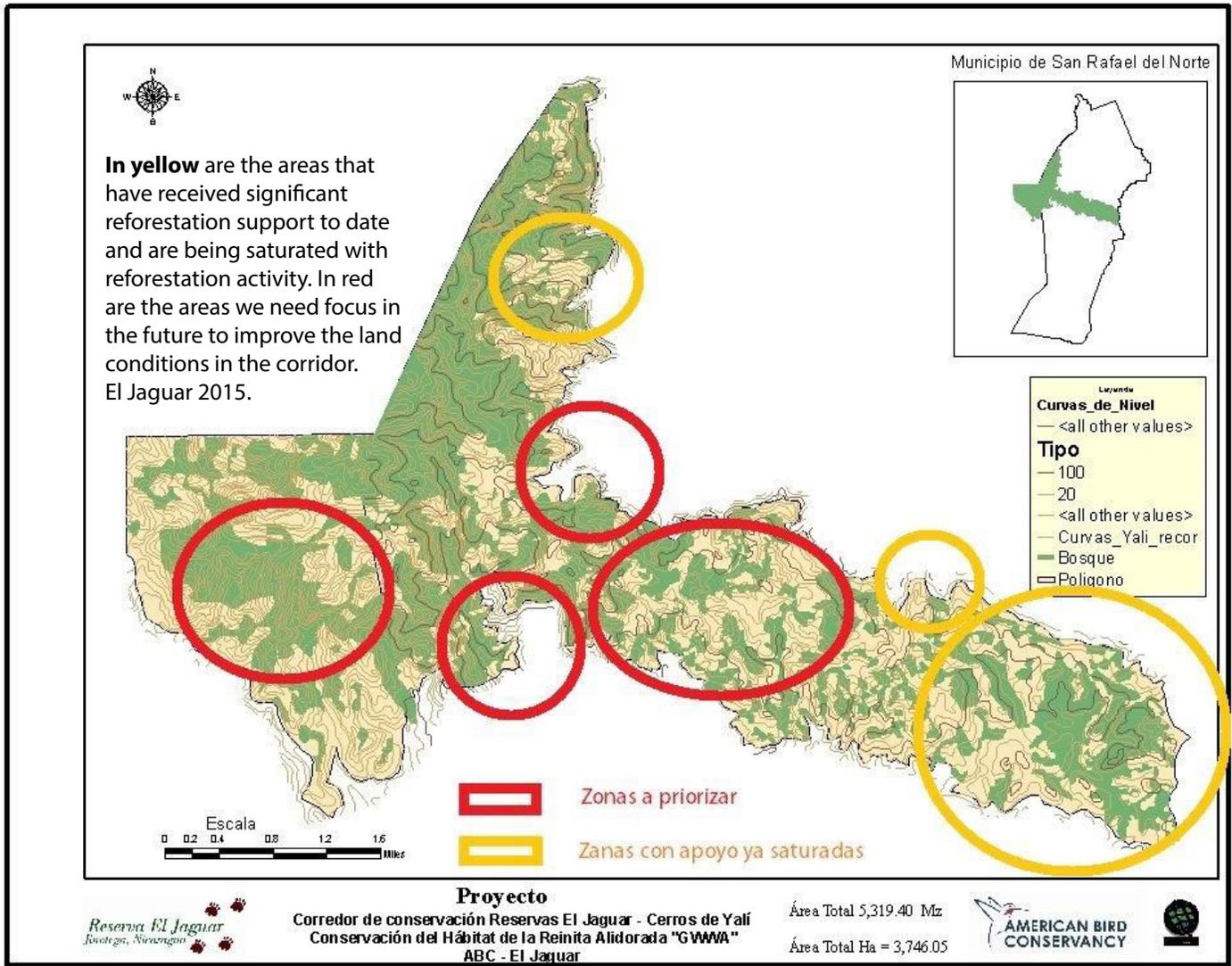


#### **PROJECT GOAL AND OBJECTIVES:**

The Golden-winged Warbler working group identified the goal of increasing the population by 50% by 2050. This project aims to contribute to that goal. The work being conducted in Nicaragua with Southern Wings funding is a pilot wintering grounds conservation effort that will lead to additional on the ground conservation projects for Golden-winged Warblers.

**Project Goal:** Maximize the amount of suitable habitat available for wintering or stopovers of migratory birds through the creation of a six mile corridor from the El Jaguar Reserve to the Volcan Yali Forest Reserve.

1. **Objective:** Reforest 10% of degraded habitat within the corridor and increase habitat on as many properties as possible within the proposed corridor in the next 5 years.
2. **Objective:** Decrease the rate of deforestation within the corridor by 4% in the next 5 years
3. **Objective:** Protect 1,000 acres of forest within in the Corridor through conservation agreements, fencing off of forest, or acquisition by 2017.
4. **Objective:** Create at least 5 new private reserves within in the corridor by 2017.



**PARTNER DESCRIPTION:** Liliana and Georges Duriaux – Chavarría, the owners of the El Jaguar Private Reserve (270 acres) are our partners for this project. Liliana is a preminent ornithologist in Nicaragua, and co-author of the new Field Guide to the Birds of Nicaragua. George’s background is in sustainable rural development, having formerly worked a Swiss development agency. Their mission with the El Jaguar Reserve is to protect the biodiversity of cloud forest and to produce high quality environmentally friendly coffee in harmony with nature and with local community involvement. To do this, they understand they must not only protect their reserve, but work with landowners to conserve habitat in the buffer zones of their reserve. They have also become the voice of Golden-winged Warbler conservation in Nicaragua



# SPECIES OF CONSERVATION CONCERN:

Olive-sided Flycatcher, **Golden-winged Warbler**, **Golden-cheeked Warbler**, Dickcissel, Summer Tanager, Yellow-breasted Chat, Wilson's Warbler, Hooded Warbler, MacGillivray's Warbler, Mourning Warbler, **Kentucky Warbler**, **Canada Warbler**, **Louisiana Waterthrush**, Northern Waterthrush, Ovenbird, Worm-eating Warbler, Black-and-white Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, Chestnut-sided Warbler, Cedar Waxwing, **Wood Thrush**, Blue-headed Vireo, Alder Flycatcher, Acadian Flycatcher, Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Ruby-throated Hummingbird, and **Broad-winged Hawk**.

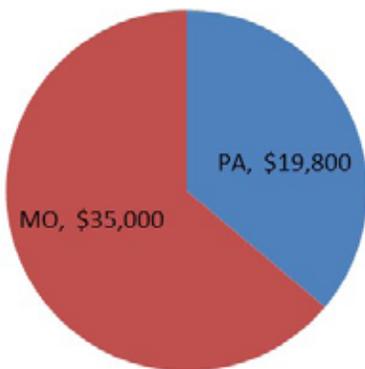
**Bold** = priority



**SUMMARY:** We are training local landowners to increase sustainability of agricultural practices, planting native tree seedlings, and conducting education programs about natural resource management and conservation. By doing this, we will restore habitat, help decrease the rate of conversion of habitat to agricultural lands, reduce pesticide use (which pose health risks for migratory birds), and support bird-friendly methods of production for crops such as coffee.

Southern Wings support to date has allowed the partners to do the following.

## Funds Contributed (through FY2014): \$54,800



- ♦ Create four tree nurseries in local communities and maintain a fifth at El Jaguar.
- ♦ Grow and plant 50,000 seedlings to reforest 423 acres (175 hectares) across 14 properties.
- ♦ Host more than 12 workshops and meetings with neighboring landowners and government authorities to promote conservation in the corridor.
- ♦ Increase shade cover on two coffee growers' cooperatives with the help of the forest technician (Ingrid Torres).
- ♦ Fenced 10 of 250 proposed acres for conservation.

In the next phase of the project, the objectives are to 1) continue conducting outreach and training programs for local landowners to maintain and increase participation in conservation activities within the corridor; 2) expand the El Jaguar – Yalí Corridor model to other Golden-winged Warbler Focal Areas identified in Nicaragua; and 3) develop a conservation evaluation program to evaluate the results of our conservation efforts in the Corridor on Golden-winged Warblers and other species of conservation interest.