



golden-winged warbler

## SUCCESS STORIES

### CONSERVING NORTH AMERICAN MIGRATORY FOREST BIRDS IN THE CARIBBEAN LOWLANDS - GUATEMALA

Southern Wings partners with American Bird Conservancy (ABC), Fundación para el Ecodesarrollo y la Conservación (FUNDAECO), and Izabal Agro-Forest to promote and facilitate the conservation of forests bird species in the U.S., through the protection and conservation of their wintering habitats in the Caribbean Lowlands of Guatemala.

The Izabal region of Caribbean Guatemala is home to over 150 species of Neotropical migratory birds. It encompasses over 780 mi<sup>2</sup>, stretching from the country's Caribbean shoreline to the hills of the Izabal Department. ABC includes this region in ABC's BirdScape initiative as the Conservation Coast BirdScape (Figure 1). The Conservation Coast is critical for many Species of Greatest Conservation Need, such as golden-winged warbler, Kentucky warbler and wood thrush.

More than 65% of the region's original forest cover has already been lost due to the expansion of cattle ranching, annual crops, and oil palm plantations. The partners work on habitat protection, restoration, and management in accordance with the 2020-2030 Conservation Coast BirdScape Conservation Plan. The conservation actions include land acquisition and conservation of primary forest (Figure 2), as well as restoration of degraded lands with agroforestry practices (Figure 3 and 4), such as shade-grown cacao and spices and silvopastures.



wood thrush

# SUCCESS STORY: CONSERVING NORTH AMERICAN MIGRATORY FOREST BIRDS IN THE CARIBBEAN LOWLANDS - GUATEMALA

## PROJECT SUCCESSES

Over 11,000 acres of habitat has been conserved and 33,000 acres leveraged for forest conservation with private landowners and local communities. Partners installed the first three Motus Wildlife Tracking System (MOTUS) stations in Guatemala.



**Figure 2.** Primary forest in one of the two parcels in the Tameja Mountain recently added to FUNDAECO's network of private reserves. Notice FUNDAECO's Director of Reserves standing in the middle of the vegetation in the center of the picture.



**Figure 3.** Cacao plants growing in Izabal Agro-Forest's nursery. Both cacao and native hardwood trees are planted in agroforestry systems to restore previously degraded lands.



**Figure 4.** Planting hardwood trees to restore degraded parcel. Cacao plants are subsequently planted between the native hardwoods as part of the agroforestry system.

## ON THE GROUND PARTNERS

- American Bird Conservancy
- Fundación para el Ecodesarrollo y la Conservación (FUNDAECO)
- Izabal Agro-Forest

## STATE FISH AND WILDLIFE AGENCY PARTNERS

- |             |           |
|-------------|-----------|
| • Missouri  | • Iowa    |
| • Tennessee | • Texas   |
| • Arkansas  | • Indiana |

## MOVING FORWARD, FUNDING IS NEEDED TO

- engage and work with new farmers to restore degraded lands with agroforestry practices, such as shade-grown cacao and silvopastures;
- establish new private reserves;
- conduct avian monitoring to gauge progress toward meeting long-term objectives, inform our approach, and adapt as needed; and
- achieve the objective of conserving an additional 19,750 acres through agroforestry and silvopasture systems by 2030.

## CONTACT

**Deb Hahn**  
International Relations Director  
Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies  
202-838-3458  
dhahn@fishwildlife.org