

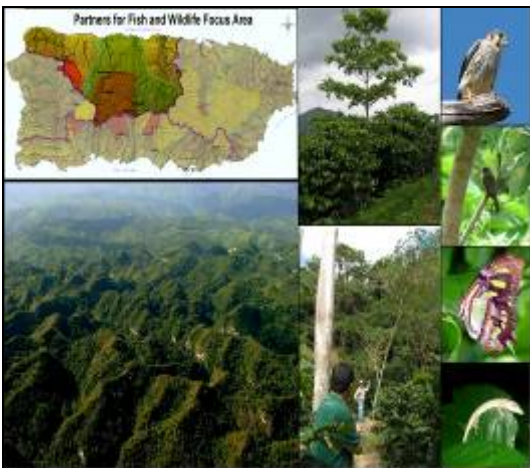


## Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program: Puerto Rico and U.S. Virgin Islands

### Background

The Caribbean Islands comprise of one of the most diverse ecosystems within the United States. Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands provide great opportunities to protect and restore tropical forest ecosystems, neotropical migratory bird wintering grounds, endemic species, and habitat for more than 75 federally listed species.

Since 1999, the Partners program has served as a bridge to owners and managers of private lands to develop land practices that benefit these Trust Species. The program offers technical and financial assistance to private landowners to **voluntarily** restore important fish and wildlife habitats.



Partners for Fish and Wildlife Projects: Focus area, karst area, coffee shade project and wildlife species.

### Accomplishments

❖ The Partners program developed a shade coffee model in coordination with other partners (Federal and PR Commonwealth agencies and local non-governmental organizations) to reverse a government promoted practice. Since 1920's the shade canopy of many coffee plantations were cut to make way for "sun" coffee plantations destroying habitat for most of the native and migratory bird species. The partner's model promotes habitat for resident and migratory birds and other wildlife species.

❖ In 2005 the White House Conference on Cooperative Conservation, recognized the Service's shade coffee initiative and the benefits of this practice to federal trust resources.

❖ In 2006, the Partners program in the Caribbean identified the north central area of Puerto Rico as the focus area for the next three to five years to benefit listed species, particularly the Puerto Rican Parrot.

❖ The Partners program supports more than 100 private landowners and local NGO's with the following habitat restoration and habitat

### Partners Program Accomplishments 1999 2006

- 621 acres of wetland
- 2125 acres of uplands
- 16.5 miles of stream and riparian habitat
- Over 100 partners; including landowners and organizations

accomplishments:  
❖ In FY 2006, the program received \$65,000 for habitat restoration project.

### Priorities

The priorities of the program in the Caribbean are the following:

- Assist landowners with habitat enhancement and restoration projects on private lands
- Continue the implementation of the shade coffee model
- Conduct educational activities
- Continue leading the Interagency Habitat Conservation Committee, a multi-agency group aimed at optimizing use of private lands funds (started by the Service in 2005)

### For More Information

Please contact the Boquerón Field Office, Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program at 787-851-7297 ext. 241 or visit us on the internet at

<http://www.fws.gov/partners/>