

From Jamaica...

Jamaica has more endemic bird species than any other island in the Caribbean. And from September to May, almost two-fifths of the song birds in Jamaica are migrants from North America. This rich birdlife is threatened by the country's extremely high deforestation rate of 5.3% per year, which is one of the highest in the world. At least three endemic bird species are considered extinct and many are endangered. Conservation efforts are hampered by the general population's lack of environmental awareness and knowledge of Jamaica's natural heritage.



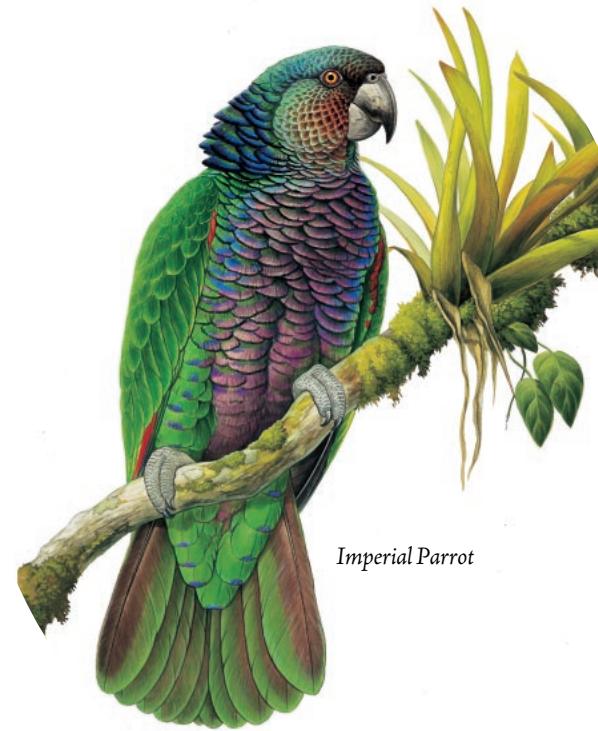
Some of Jamaica's many endemics include (from left to right, top to bottom): Crested Quail-Dove; Jamaican Tody; Chestnut-bellied Cuckoo; Jamaican Lizard-Cuckoo; Ring-tailed Pigeon; Red-billed Streamertail; Black-billed Streamertail; Black-billed Parrot; Yellow-billed Parrot; Jamaican Mango; Jamaican Becard; Jamaican Petrel; Jamaican Woodpecker; Jamaican Owl; Jamaican Poorwill

Environmental education is a high priority for Jamaica and *Winged Ambassadors* has supported several projects to enhance people's understanding of their local wildlife and the importance of protecting it. Highlights include:

Teacher's Guide to the Birds of Jamaica. BirdLife Jamaica (formerly Gosse Bird Club) published a guide to help teachers develop children's appreciation of birds and other wildlife. The guide complements the book, **Birds of Jamaica**, by A. Downer and R. Sutton, and includes a series of activities to make students aware of birds and their habitats, and the need to conserve them. Using the guide, students learn how to identify birds, collect basic data, and set up simple conservation projects on school or community grounds. An accompanying color poster illustrates five birds which are discussed in the guide.

Library of Natural Sounds. West Indies College produced a recording of songs and calls from many of Jamaica's birds. The College used a combination of previously existing recordings along with new ones obtained from the field to create this definitive collection. Software accompanies the recordings which identifies each species and discusses pertinent natural history and conservation issues. The Library of Natural Sounds is used to train young people, and provide information to ornithologists, educators and natural resource managers about Jamaica's birds.

Wildlife Slide Show, "Why Conserve?". Jamaica Junior Naturalists created a special narrated slide show about the country's wildlife. The show introduces basic conservation concepts and issues aimed at stimulating the interest of Jamaica's youth to protect the environment. The 10 minute narration emphasizes the need to use natural resources wisely and the value that ecosystems such as mangrove forests and coral reefs provide for both wildlife and humans. Jamaica Junior Naturalists presented the show to each parish library in Jamaica for an audience of older schoolchildren and adults.



Imperial Parrot

Dominica...

Known as the "Nature Island of the Caribbean", Dominica's pristine forests and lush green valleys are home to more bird species than any other island in the Lesser Antilles. Two charismatic parrots, the Imperial Parrot, and the Red-necked Parrot, are found only in Dominica.

Winged Ambassadors partnered with several organizations to raise public awareness about the need to conserve wildlife in Dominica. The Conservation Education Campaign to Save the Imperial and Red-necked Parrots, conducted by the Forestry Division of Dominica and RARE Center for Tropical Conservation, delivered a conservation message to every person on the island through songs, music videos, publications, posters, bumper stickers, sermons, and school visits. As a result of the campaign, 200 acres of forest were set aside as a Parrot Reserve. *Winged Ambassadors* has also collaborated with the Forestry Division to publish the booklet, "Wildlife of Dominica".

Dominican Republic...

The Dominican Republic forms the eastern two-thirds of the island of Hispaniola and is the second largest country in the Caribbean. Endemism is high on the island and 26 bird species are found only here. Among these is the Bay-breasted Cuckoo, which is endangered due to habitat loss and its use as a cure for arthritis.

Winged Ambassadors works with local partners to implement environmental education projects in the Dominican Republic. Through evening classes, the "Postgraduate Studies in Environmental Education" of the Instituto Tecnológico de Santo Domingo trains actively employed professionals in environmental education techniques. Participants can apply these lessons immediately during their day jobs.

Winged Ambassadors is collaborating with the Vermont Institute of Natural Science and American Bird Conservancy to study the ecology of the Bicknell's Thrush. This research will provide crucial information about the endangered thrush's winter habitat in the Dominican Republic.



Bay-breasted Cuckoo

Bahamas...

The Bahamas are an extensive chain of 2,700 islands and cays located just southeast of Florida. Only 30 of these islands are permanently inhabited by approximately 280,000 people. A large number of birds migrate between the Bahamas and North America. Endemic species include the Bahama Woodstar, Brace's Hummingbird, and the Bahama Yellowthroat.

Winged Ambassadors is partnering with the Bahamian Department of Agriculture to enhance bird conservation in the archipelago. Efforts include the publication of a booklet entitled, "Natural

Bahama Woodstar



History of Cat Island", with a special section on migrant and resident birds. The Department is also producing a hunter's guide listing all the species found in the Bahamas and detailing their protection status.

This year, the Bahama Woodstar will be featured on a poster which will be accompanied by a conservation information factsheet.

Antigua, Barbuda, Cayman Islands, Grenada, Guadeloupe, Haiti, Montserrat, Nevis, St Kitts, St Lucia, St Vincent, Turks & Caicos...

Winged Ambassadors collaborates with conservation organizations on most of the Caribbean islands. Some endeavors have a regional focus and involve many partnerships. The "West Indian Whistling-Duck and Wetland Conservation Project" connects groups from Antigua, Barbuda, Bahamas, Cayman Islands, Dominican Republic, Jamaica, and the Turks & Caicos in an effort to protect this endangered duck.



West Indian Whistling-Duck

The main focus is a Caribbean-wide education and awareness program to lessen wetland loss and reduce illegal hunting pressure. Activities include: production of a duck conservation and natural history slide show, a coloring book for children, and a wetland education workbook; construction of Watchable Wildlife Ponds where the public can view ducks; and distribution of special plastic identification cards for hunters which distinguish the ducks that can be hunted legally.

The "Birds of Our Islands" poster series is another region-wide effort to conserve birds in the Caribbean. *Winged Ambassadors* partnered with the Caribbean Conservation Association to produce educational posters focused on both resident and migratory birds of the Lesser Antilles. The posters are used in schools and other public facilities to increase local awareness about bird conservation issues.

"Decattiere Nature Trail" is an example of an island specific project supported by *Winged Ambassadors*. Managed by St. Lucia's Forestry Department, the income generating trail attracts ecotourists and provides excellent viewing of the magnificent St. Lucia Parrot. RARE Center for Tropical Conservation assisted in the design of the trail. RARE Center also was involved in the Conservation Education Campaigns for Montserrat and St. Vincent. These campaigns elevated local knowledge and appreciation for the Montserrat Oriole and the St. Vincent Parrot.

To further bird conservation in Haiti, *Winged Ambassadors* collaborated with the University of Florida and Haiti-NET in "Green Actions", a series of training workshops on wildlife conservation and protected areas management for Haiti.

Winged Ambassadors Bird Conservation in the Caribbean



St Vincent Parrot

From large, gaudy parrots to small, migratory warblers, the birds of the Caribbean represent a wide diversity of species. Many of the islands have a special endemic avifauna found nowhere else in the world. Hundreds of migratory birds are dependent upon the islands either as a stopover site for resting and refueling, or as a place to spend the nonbreeding season. These species are a source of pride to the Caribbean people who treasure their uniqueness and value their role as consumers of agricultural insect pests and seed dispersers. As a key tourist attraction, they also provide an important boost to the local economy.

The long-term survival of these birds is in jeopardy. Deforestation, wetland loss, overhunting, and predation from introduced predators threaten most bird species. Several endemics (restricted species), such as the Cuban Macaw and the Grand Cayman Thrush are now extinct. Islanders concerned about these problems are dedicated to preventing further extinctions.

Winged Ambassadors, the hemisphere-wide conservation initiative of the Fish and Wildlife Service, is assisting Caribbean efforts to protect birds. For more than 15 years, the initiative has helped local people in the region conserve key bird habitat, and has provided training to resource managers in bird conservation techniques, and promoted environmental education programs to inform communities about the plight of birds. Projects such as the Conservation Education Campaign to Save the St. Vincent Parrot, The Birds of Our Islands Poster Series, and the Conservation of the West Indian Whistling Duck support local endeavors to help birds.

Winged Ambassadors recently produced **A Guide to the Birds of the West Indies**. Published by Princeton University Press, the book focuses on conservation issues. Artwork from the guide is being used for environmental projects including a poster series featuring endemic birds from 12 different islands. The birds that appear in this brochure are all from the guide.

Please read on to learn more about these and other projects supported by *Winged Ambassadors*.

