**Rare Birds Discovered in Guyana**

A research team led by National Museum of Natural History scientist Michael Braun and Mark Robbins of the University of Kansas has discovered a previously unknown population of red siskins, a bird feared to be nearing extinction in the wild. Once widespread in the coastal mountains of Venezuela and Colombia, the red siskin was nearly wiped out by trapping after it became popular both in that region and in Europe in the 1800s. The bird was particularly valued for its bright red feathers and in Latin America it is known as *el cardinalito*, or the little cardinal.

The research team was conducting a survey of birds in Guyana, when Robbins came across the new population. Census estimates put the population size at several thousand birds, larger than any known elsewhere in the wild. The discovery was made in April of 2000 with sponsorship from NMNH’s Biodiversity of the Guianas Program, but was kept under wraps until a conservation plan could be developed providing legal protection for the birds in Guyana.

Conservation efforts are being undertaken by an international coalition of concerned groups, including American Bird Conservancy, American Federation of Aviculture, Bushnell Sports Optics, Guyana Environmental Protection Agency, Conservation International, the National Aviary, Rupununi Conservation Group, Rupununi Development Corporation, Smithsonian Institution, the University of Guyana and the University of Kansas. The goal of the conservation plan is to avoid damage to the wild population, and not to prevent people from raising the birds in cages. Red siskins have been protected in neighboring Venezuela since the 1940s, and have a history of being bred with canaries to yield brightly colored pet birds.

The researchers’ discovery was published in the latest issue of *The Auk*, the journal of the American Ornithologists Union (*The Auk* 120: 291-298. 2003).

**Future Meetings**

The 15th Annual International Society for Ecological Restoration (SER) Conference will be held 19-22 November 2003, in Austin, Texas. The conference, entitled “Assembling the Pieces: Restoration, Design & Landscape Ecology,” will focus on the design aspects of restoration. Practitioners have come to realize that restoration cannot be done in a vacuum. This year, SER is reaching out to a larger community of professionals to learn from their skills in engineering, architecture, hydrology, geology, philosophy, etc., to have a conversation about how to design the most meaningful and valuable restorations. SER has always been interdisciplinary and this year’s conference draws on that strength and even expands it. The complete brochure and registration materials are available online at <http://www.ser.org>.

The American Museum of Natural History’s Center for Biodiversity and Conservation, in collaboration with Conservation International, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Xerces Society, is convening a two-day symposium to examine the status of invertebrate biodiversity, entitled “Expanding the Ark: The Emerging Science and Practice of Invertebrate Conservation,” on 25-26 March 2004, at AMNH. Speakers from around the world will consider a broad range of perspectives on how best to advance an invertebrate conservation agenda. Expanding the Ark will provide a venue to engage the scientific community, conservation practitioners, and the public in a dialogue on the fate of invertebrate biodiversity, and to map concrete approaches for future action. A limited number of posters will be accepted for presentation. For de-
tails regarding abstract submission, please visit the sym-
oposium website at <http://research.amnh.org/biodiversity> or E-mail biodiversity@amnh.org. The submission dead-
line for abstracts is 9 January 2004.

Information Highway Hi-Lites

Biflora <http://www.biflora.org/> is a work-in-progress botanical database documenting the unique and endan-
gered flora of the island of Hainan, China—a biodiversity “hotspot.” Recently launched by the Bicoll Group of Shanghai and Munich, Biflora aims to 1) make as much scientific information about Hainan’s plant species available online, 2) help decision-makers develop conservation strategies for the island, and 3) support basic academic research. The Web site itself is easy to navigate and quite attractive. And, while only a few species records are currently available, more entries are soon to come.

- from the NSDL Scout Report for the Life Sciences
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Wakuzu: Friends of the Colobus Trust <http://www.colobustrust.org/> is a not-for-profit organization based in Kenya dedicated to the “conservation, preservation, and protection of primates, in particular the Angolan Black and White Colobus monkey.” Wakuzu’s extensive homepage features the latest updates on the Colobus population in the Diani area, as well as detailed information about the organization’s projects and initiatives. First time visitors may wish to check out the section titled Diani’s Primates, which offers an excellent introduction to Colobus monkeys and other species in the area.

- from the NSDL Scout Report for the Life Sciences

Current Literature


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