



Danish Agency for Spatial and Environmental Planning will provide support for the project:

“Conservation of the Ruddy-headed Goose in Argentina and Chile”

The Danish Agency for Spatial and Environmental Planning in co-operation with CMS is supporting the project on conservation in Argentina and Chile, of one of the most endangered bird species of the world. Fundación para la Conservación y el Uso Sustentable de los Humedales, the Wetlands International partner in Argentina, will coordinate and implement the project in close cooperation with local researchers and the government.

The Ruddy-headed Goose *Chloephaga rubidiceps* (CMS App .I) is the smallest austral goose inhabiting southern South America. The mainland Tierra del Fuego population of this goose migrates between its breeding grounds in southern Patagonia in Chile and Argentina and its wintering quarters in southern Buenos Aires province, in Argentina. (fig.1)

This population has dramatically decreased since the end of the 1950s and it is in serious danger of extinction with an estimated population of around 1,000 birds. Due to its critical status, the Ruddy-headed Goose has been designated as a “Concerted Action” species.

The main cause of this population decline appears to have been an increase in nest predation resulting from the introduction of the Patagonian Fox to the island of Tierra del Fuego, in 1951. Besides, the species’ wintering grounds overlap with the main wheat growing areas of Argentina, where local farmers have traditionally persecuted austral geese.

Sport hunting during the wintering season in Argentina has also become an important threat to the species’ survival, due to hunters not being able to distinguish the Ruddy-headed Goose from the other austral geese species. Particularly in southern Buenos Aires province the current level of hunting and the lack of controls are threatening the species survival. The conservation of the Ruddy-headed Goose’s Mainland-Tierra del Fuego population depends on the multi sectoral work, involving local farmers, hunting associations, governmental wildlife managers and NGOs.

The project which was approved by the 13th Meeting of the CMS Scientific Council (Nairobi, November 2005), aims to restore the mainland-Tierra del Fuego population of the Ruddy-headed Goose to a more favourable conservation status. It will build on and constitute a follow-up to previous projects undertaken with CMS funding since 1996 and will also contribute to the implementation of the Action Plan under the MoU signed between Argentina and Chile in 2007, for which CMS is the depositary body.

The project will include the following activities and expected results:

- Survey and monitoring of the Ruddy-headed Goose Mainland/Tierra del Fuego population in Argentina and Chile, to assess changes in distribution and population trends in both main breeding and wintering areas.
- Work in partnership with local farmers, governmental officers, NGOs and other local stakeholders to reduce the persecution and hunting pressure during the wintering season in southern Buenos Aires province.
- Education/awareness-raising activities in cooperation with local stakeholders, to inform local communities, hunters and farmers about this Goose conservation needs.
- Present the project's results in technical, scientific and conservation meetings.

The valuable contribution provided by the government of Denmark will help to improve our knowledge of the distribution and current status of this threatened species and will promote conservation measures within the species distribution range in Chile and Argentina.



Ruddy-headed Goose (*Chloephaga rubidiceps*)

Fig1. The mainland Tierra del Fuego population of the Ruddy-headed Goose (*Chloephaga rubidiceps*) breeds in southern Patagonia of Chile and Argentina and winters in the south of Buenos Aires province (Argentina), with a recent estimated size of around 1000 individuals.

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