

Bolivian Government Signs MOU on the Conservation of Southern South American Migratory Grassland Bird Species and Their Habitats

La Paz, Bolivia, 23 September 2009 - The General Director of Protected Areas and Biodiversity of the Ministry of Environment and Water of Bolivia, Mr. Omar Rocha has signed the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the Conservation of Grassland Birds of South America on behalf of his government.

The MoU was promoted from the UNEP/CMS with committed support from the CMS Scientific Advisors and National Focal Points of Paraguay, Uruguay, Argentina, Brazil and Bolivia, and it was originally signed during the workshop for policy makers held in Panama in August 2007.



Aletrurus risora © Adrian Azpiroz

It is important to emphasize the participation of the Government of Bolivia, by signing the Memorandum it has demonstrated a clear sign of commitment and effort towards the conservation of these migratory species that occur in the Bolivian grasslands. This initiative represents a substantial advance in terms of conservation and monitoring measures for migratory bird species and their habitats.

Many migratory bird species representatives of South America grasslands have suffered a drastic reduction and fragmentation of their habitat. Due to its delicate condition some have been listed in CMS Appendices I and II (as in the case of *Numenius borealis*, *Tryngites subruficollis*, *Aletrurus risora*, *A. tricolor*, *Sporophila palustris*, *S. zelichi*, *S. cinnamomea*, *S. hypochroma*, and *Agelaius (Xanthopsar) flavus*)

Likewise other migratory species of grassland birds have been included in CMS Appendix II with the aim of fostering cooperation agreements between countries (such as the case of *Polystictus pectoralis pectoralis* and *Sporophila ruficollis*); Following the criteria and categories of the IUCN, the global conservation status of species such as *Numenius borealis* and *Sporophila zelichi* is "Critically Endangered", that of *S. palustris* is "Endangered", that of *Aletrurus risora*, *A. tricolor*, *S. cinnamomea* and *Agelaius flavus* is "Vulnerable" and *Tryngites subruficollis*, *S. hypochroma*, *S. ruficollis*, and *Polystictus pectoralis pectoralis* is "Near Threatened".

All these species are representative of the Neotropical region; they perform annual migrations between breeding and wintering areas, involving, during at least part of the year, grassland ecosystems of Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay, on whose conservation they depend.

The main causes of these endangered species populations declining are habitat fragmentation and grassland burning, and/or illegal capture and trade.

In addition while the countries concerned are making efforts to ensure the conservation of these species, concerted and coordinated actions to prevent the disappearance of the last populations and to improve the conservation status of species are still required;

In this scenario the countries have agreed to work in coordination to improve the conservation status of species in their breeding and wintering areas and to this end, in a spirit of mutual understanding and cooperation through the MoU, they are committed to provide effective protection to populations of mentioned grassland bird species and the habitats on which they depend for their conservation.

As with other similar agreements, the CMS Secretariat acts as depositary of the MoU and welcomes national and international organizations to achieve effective coordination of this initiative.

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