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### PROPOSAL FOR INCLUSION OF SPECIES ON THE APPENDICES OF THE CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF MIGRATORY SPECIES OF WILD ANIMALS

A. PROPOSAL: Listing of the Buff-breasted Sandpiper (*Tryngites subfrucollis*) in **Appendix I** of the Convention on Migratory Species of Wild Animals.

B. PROPONENT: Government of the Argentine Republic.

C. SUPPORTING STATEMENT

1. Taxonomy

1.1_	Class:	Aves
1.2	Order:	Charadriiformes
1.3	Family:	Scolopacidae
1.4	Species:	<i>Tryngites subruficollis</i> (Vieillot)
1.5	Common names:	Playerito Canela, Chorlito Canela (Spanish) Buff-breasted Sandpiper (English) Bécasseau Roussâtre (French)

2. Biological data

2.1 Distribution (present and historical)

The buff-breasted sandpiper is a neo-arctic migratory species which breeds sporadically along the North-eastern coasts of North America (66-76 degrees North), from the centre of Alaska up to Devon Island in Canada. After the breeding period it migrates along the Americas to the South, down to its main non-reproductive gathering area in the Pampas of Argentina and Uruguay (Bent 1962, Blanco et al 1993, Lanctot & Laredo 1994).

In the Argentine it has been seen in the provinces of Buenos Aires, Córdoba, Formosa, Misiones, Corrientes, Santa Fe, Entre Ríos, and Jujuy. Also in Uruguay (mainly in the Rocha Department), Paraguay and Southern Brazil, and less often in the remaining South American states, with the only exception of Chile (Bent 1962, Lanctot & Laredo 1994).

2.2 Population (estimates and trends)

It used to be considered "abundant" in the Arctic region. Nowadays it has become rare and scant (Lanctot & Laredo 1994). According to the Canadian Wildlife Service (Morrison et al. 1994) and in the opinion of other authors as well (Lanctot) it is likely that the population of this species will carry on decreasing. Today the total population is estimated to be around the 5000-10000 figure.

Rappole et al. (1983) already considered it prone to a serious population decline during the present decade, as a result of its small population size, its restricted distribution rank (outside the breeding period) and the concentration of an important part of its population in particularly vulnerable locations.

In the mid-seventies the Estancia Medaland in the province of Buenos Aires (the main non breeding site for the species) was home to some 2000 individuals (Myers & Myers

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1979). Today the censuses have provided far smaller figures (Issach, personal communication). This indicates of a population decline.

Given its small population, Harrington & Page (1991, quoted by Lanctot & Laredo 1994) give priority to the species as regards population monitoring.

### 2.3 Habitat (short description and trends)

In the rearing area the species is restricted to the ecoregion of tundra, where the utilisation of habitat is dependent on sex and breeding conditions (Lanctot & Laredo, 1994).

During migration the species frequents areas of short grasses (pastures, golf courses, cemeteries, airfields), wetland borders, rice fields, fields that have just been tilled, sugar cane plantations where the stubble has just been burnt, open fields, etc. (Lanctot & Laredo 1994).

In South America the species is principally associated to the biome of the Pampas or the "Region of River Plate pastures", and in particular the sub-region of the "Flood-prone Pampas" (Blanco *et al* 1993). Here the species frequents cattle fields with little or no cultivation. It inhabits pasture fields and short pastures in low lying areas in the vicinity of wetlands (Blanco *et al* 1988, 1993, Myers & Myers 1979).

### 2.4 Migrations

Most buff-breasted sandpipers leave the province of Buenos Aires in early February (Myers & Myers 1979). Migration northward takes place over the central part of the Continent, over Central Amazonia and the Brazilian Pantanal (Antas 1983) and over Venezuela, Guyana and Surinam (Bent 1962). Then they fly over the Gulf of Mexico and the central states of the USA and Canada and reach the Arctic Coast in late May, early June. (Lanctot & Laredo, 1994).

Migration south starts in mid June to early July for non breeding male and female birds, and in late July for breeding females. The itinerary is the same as in the northward migration, but on a wider front in North America, going from British Columbia to Nova Scotia. The birds reach the Argentine Pampas during the second week in September and stay there until the following January (Blanco *et al*, 1993, Lanctot & Laredo 1994, Myers & Myers 1979)

## 3. Threat data

### 3.1 Direct threats

We know of no significant direct threats to the population of the species. Lanctot & Laredo (1994) point to the species' susceptibility to disturbance of nests and sleeping places as a possible threat; however this is of little importance since most breeding grounds are in remote areas, with difficult access for humans.

### 3.2 Habitat destruction

Habitat destruction constitutes the main threat for the species during migration and the non reproductive period. In the Pampas the potential conversion in the use of land from cattle raising to agricultural production, as well as the destruction of wetlands, might lead to the disappearance of many important habitats for the species. At present flood-prone

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and saline soils constitute a real impediment to cultivation (Soriano 1991). This favours cattle raising instead, and indirectly helps the species. All the same, future use of this land will depend on local and regional economic conditions connected to the development of agriculture.

The Integrated Master Plan for the Basin of the Salado River, being carried out by the government of the province of Buenos Aires in order to develop the area in the economic and social spheres, and in particular in the agricultural sector, constitutes a very serious threat for the environment in general and this species in particular, since the species practically restricts itself to this area outside the breeding season.

Oil exploration and extraction activities, and their consequences, seem to us to be a potential threat for the habitat of the species in the breeding area, though they are not intense, and remain very localised.

### 3.3 Indirect threats

The use of pesticides in agriculture - as much in the habitats in the USA and Canada during migration as in the Argentine and Uruguayan Pampas - is a potential threat for the species (Lanctot & Laredo 1994).

### 3.4 Threats connected especially with migrations

The disappearance of important habitats used during the annual migration is one of the principal threats for the species (and other migratory birds of the genus). During this period they concentrate in vast numbers in a few wetlands, inland and on the coast, thereby increasing vulnerability (Myers et al. 1987). Should some of these "migration passage sites" be affected as to quality/quantity of habitats, the species would be seriously threatened.

### 3.5 National and international utilisation

No available data on utilisation of the species by man.

## 4. Protection status and needs

### 4.1 National protection status

There are practically no reserves or national parks in the Argentine that protect the Pampas' biome, where the species concentrates mostly outside the breeding season. Exceptions are the provincial reserve Parque Costero Mar Chiquita (Buenos Aires), the Campos del Tuyú reserve (belonging to FVSA) and what private protection against catching is afforded by some landowners. The province of Buenos Aires also protects a part of the Bay of Samborombón, but the best protection results from the condition of the soil that limits the advance of agriculture and occupation by man.

Small numbers of individuals of the species have also been recorded in the Laguna de los Pozuelos Natural Monument (APN) in the province of Jujuy (Laredo 1990) and in the Provincial Reserve Laguna de Mar Chiquita in the province of Córdoba (Michelutti, personal letter).

In Uruguay the main non reproductive concentration zone of the species is protected by the Bañados del Este Biosphere Reserve.

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### 4.2 International protection status

The species is listed in Appendix II of CMS, within the Scolopacidae family.

In the Northern Hemisphere it is protected by the "Migratory Bird Treaty Act" (USA), the "Convention for the Protection of Migratory Birds" (USA and Canada), the "Convention for the Protection of Migratory Birds and Game Mammals" (USA and Mexico), the "Convention for the Protection of Migratory Birds and Birds in Danger of Extinction and Their Environment" (USA and Japan), and the "Convention for the Conservation of Migratory Birds and Their Environment" (USA and Russia).

### 4.3 Environmental protection needs

(1) To finalise identification and to bring effective protection to those sites that are home to an important percentage of individuals of the species during the non-reproductive period (i.e. Estancia Medaland), as well as to the sites used during the annual migration.

(2) To estimate the total population size for the species, so as to be able to better determine its present situation and its conservation needs.

(3) To carry out studies on the use of habitats by the species in the Pampas and its relation with local cattle raising practices.

(4) To promote the setting up of agreements among the states that share the species in order to guarantee its conservation.

## 5. Range States

Argentina, Barbados, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guyana, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Surinam, Uruguay, USA, Venezuela.

## 6. Comments by the Range states

## 7. Other comments

## 8. References

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