

OF OCELOTS, ORCHIDS, AND OVENBIRDS

The Gulf Coast Bird Observatory has teamed up with Grupo Ecológico Sierra Gorda to purchase the 100-hectare Las Arenitas tract in the cloud forests of the Sierra Gorda Biosphere Reserve in Mexico. With a generous grant of \$35,000 from the Malcolm C. Damuth Foundation, the GCBO was able to complete this purchase on behalf of our partners at Sierra Gorda. Much remains to be purchased in this region, so we will continue this process as funds are available. If you wish to make a contribution towards our future land protection efforts in Latin America please contact Cecilia at criley@gcbo.org to contribute to the **Tropical Forest Forever Fund**.



Located within the main body of the Eastern Sierra Madre, Las Arenitas is a heavily forested mountainous area that constitutes part of an important biological corridor which extends North and South from the Santa Maria River Canyon to the Moctezuma River. This particular corridor contains some of the most well preserved areas in the Reserve and has extraordinary biodiversity value including that of migration corridor for landbirds. Because this tract lies between two high priority core zones of the Biosphere

Reserve: Cañada de las Avispas and Barranca de Paguas it is an extremely important purchase that it will provide a continuous corridor of native vegetation for wildlife.

Topographically, Las Arenitas is characterized by canyons which have a north-east orientation. They capture humidity and prevent evaporation resulting from sun exposure. The average elevation is 950 meters above sea level and spans a transition zone between temperate and warm humid climates in the sierra and low lands. This microclimatic activity causes oak species to be intermixed with trees typical of tropical deciduous forests. These trees also sustain an ample variety of bromeliads and orchids, several of which are protected. Orchids in Arenitas and its surrounding areas are considered to be the most abundant in the Reserve, literally covering the tree branches.

The property is rich in faunal diversity and includes a variety of resident bird species such as: Crested Guan, Great Curassow, Bearded Wood-partridge, Singing Quail, Thicket Tinamou, Military Macaw, Red-crowned and White-crowned Parrots, Green Parakeet, Emerald Toucanet, Blue-crowned Motmot Elegant Trogon, and raptors such as the Collared Forest-falcon, Bat Falcon and Gray Hawk. Mammals of the area include such feline species as the Jaguar, Puma, Marguay, Jaguarundi, and Ocelot as well as Brocket and White-tailed Deer, Collared Peccary, Porcupine, Agouti, Northern Tamandua, Tayra, Armadillo, Kinkajou, Gray Fox, Raccoon, Coati, other smaller mammals, and a wide variety of bats. More than 300 species of birds have been recorded in this richly diverse region. The list includes virtually every eastern North American migrant, including the majority of the warblers and thrushes, which spend the winter or stop over in this area.