



Bosque de las Nubes

Project title: Expanding the Bosque de las Nubes Private Reserve

Location: Dominican Republic

Coordinates: 18° 6'47.04"N, 71°19'54.22"W

Size: 140 acres

Grant Amount: \$40,000

Date: 2024

Partners: American Bird Conservancy

Project Description

Since 2006, American Bird Conservancy has been working with partners in the Dominican Republic (DR) to stop the loss of key wintering habitat for migratory birds and advance habitat conservation, particularly for Bicknell's Thrush, a neotropical migratory bird species whose population overwinters predominantly in the DR where forest habitat is under threat. Their preferred habitat in the DR is mesic to wet broadleaf montane forests (Rimmer et al. 1999).

Unfortunately, montane forests have been identified as one of the most endangered habitats on Hispaniola (Latta and Lorenzo 2000) with very little native forest cover left. The main threats to these forests are illegal logging, clearing for agriculture or cattle production, and fire.

In the Dominican Republic (DR), American Bird Conservancy (ABC) has defined two high priority BirdScapes—the Septentrional BirdScape in northern DR and the Bahoruco BirdScape in southwestern DR—where we are targeting habitat conservation for Bicknell’s Thrush and a suite of other migratory bird species that stop over or winter in these BirdScapes, such as the Louisiana Waterthrush, Prairie Warbler, Cape May Warbler, and Black-throated Blue Warbler. ABC defines BirdScapes as being the highest priority landscapes for migratory bird habitat protection and restoration. They typically cover 150,000 to 2.5 million acres; large enough to have an impact on population size, but small enough to facilitate measurable results.

With ABC support, our partner SOH-Conservación (SOH) purchased land in southern DR in 2022 and created the Bosque de las Nubes Private Reserve, which is just east of the Sierra de Bahoruco National Park. SOH recently identified an opportunity to acquire two properties to extend their Bosque de las Nubes Private Reserve. One property is 26.7 hectares / 66 acres that is a good candidate for purchase, indicated in the green polygon in the map below. The line bisecting the property is a road that represents the main access to the eastern part of the Sierra de Bahoruco National Park. Having control over agricultural expansion along the road is key to SOH. Acquiring this land will facilitate the expansion of the Reserve and protection of areas further in from the road. This property contains a good mix of natural pine forest, as well as broadleaf forest along the drainages, both of which are important for endemic species as well as migratory birds, including the listed (Vulnerable) Bicknell’s Thrush. The second property to the north (blue polygon) would add another 30 more hectares / 74 acres, for a total of ~57 hectares / 140 acres to be acquired. The shape of the blue polygon on the map is a very rough estimate, as the property boundaries will soon be measured.

SOH’s focal areas for land acquisition are at the boundaries of two protected areas, east of Sierra de Bahoruco National Park and west of the Monumento Natural Domingo Fuerte. The goal is to extend the size of the protected areas by keeping human pressure distant from the boundaries, as well as to improve connectivity in the corridor that connects these two protected areas. These parks and surrounding areas are important for migratory birds, particularly for Bicknell’s Thrush. SOH’s vision is to create a network of reserves and coffee producing farms along the Bahoruco-Bahoruco Oriental corridor, a biodiversity corridor connecting the Sierra de Bahoruco National Park (to the west) and the Miguel D. Fuerte Natural Monument (to the east).

List of Neotropical Bird Species using the Project Site:

Bicknell’s Thrush (Vulnerable), Louisiana Waterthrush, Prairie Warbler, Cape May Warbler, Palm Warbler, Black-throated Blue Warbler, Black-throated Green Warbler, Worm-eating Warbler, Northern Parula, Ovenbird, Baltimore Oriole.

List of Other Bird Species of Concern or Focus:

Hispaniolan Trogon (Near Threatened), Hispaniolan Parakeet (Vulnerable), Hispaniolan Parrot (Vulnerable), Hispaniolan Crossbill (Endangered).

Maps and Photos:

The two properties are in the green and blue polygons shown on the map.

