

American Bird Conservancy New Birding Website

New website aims to promote birding tourism and save critical bird species.

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American Bird Conservancy (ABC), in collaboration with several wild bird conservation groups in Latin America, has launched a new website to promote birding tourism and save critical bird species. The new site, www.conservationbirding.org, gives readers information on birdwatching destinations in South America, with hopes to expand offerings to Old World bird sites as well.

ABC and its in-country partners have identified key bird conservation sites in Latin America to protect through creating a network of reserves. In a webinar on February 17 to promote the site launch, speakers from ABC cited a statistic that Americans spend an average of \$34 billion on birdwatching travel per year. The site, organizers said, will attempt to direct some of those funds toward protecting birds in the wild in the identified reserves.

The site details seven birding routes in Ecuador, Peru and Columbia, with seven birding reserves in those countries and two in Brazil. ABC plans to add details on more than two dozen more reserves and routes. High-definition video pop-up windows hover at points along Google Earth maps to inform readers on trip highlights. Itineraries list day-to-day excursions for trips in the field, and links provide audio for recorded bird calls.

Parrot species highlighted on the site include the Santa Marta parakeet or Santa Marta conure (*Pyrrhura viridicata*), a species that ABC partner Fundación ProAves is protecting in Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, Colombia. The 19,000-foot peak is accessible only from inside the 1,600-acre El Dorado Bird Preserve, which offers sanctuary to this endangered species. An itinerary to trek the park, as well as links to accommodations and volunteer opportunities, are listed on the site.

Another parrot being protected, in conjunction with the Center for Biodiversity at the University of Cochabamba, is the red-fronted macaw (*Ara rubrogenys*) in west-central Bolivia. Links to trips in the vicinity of Machu Picchu, Peru are also featured on the site.