

Bird Conserve Opens In Colombia

Twenty-one native bird species protected at El Dorado Bird Reserve

By Rachael Brugger

The Santa Marta budgie is one of 21 native birds residing in the El Dorado Bird Reserve.
Photo courtesy of ProAves

Three conservation organizations have dedicated efforts to protect an area of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta mountain range in Colombia, which contains the largest number of continental range-restricted bird species in the world.

Fundación Proaves, backed by American Bird Conservancy (ABC) and Conservation International, opened the El Dorado Bird Reserve in February 2008 after seeing that the land was at risk for deforestation, residential development and invasion of non-native species.

To help fund the project, Fundación Proaves will offer ecotours allowing tourists to see the reserve.

“The birdwatching at the El Dorado Reserve is amazing because there are so many species that can be seen there,” said George Fenwick, ABC’s president. “The views of the high peaks above and the beaches down below are absolutely spectacular.”

Twenty-one native birds – including the Santa Marta budgie and the Santa Marta antipitta – fly through the reserve’s 1,700 acres. In 2007, the Santa Marta screech owl was discovered and other subspecies have gained species status.

For information on the El Dorado Bird Reserve tour and other ecotours in Colombia, visit the EcoTurs Colombia website.