

Conservation Action for Birds

Beginning on Earth Day – April 22nd and ending on International Biodiversity Day – May 22nd, this month long period is to draw attention to the region's unique bird life. Called the Caribbean Bird Festival, it highlights the unusually high rate of endemism in bird species. 22% of the birds within the region are to be found nowhere else in the world. These Caribbean birds are more threatened than they have ever been in history. The major outcome of the festival is a greater public awareness and pride in the region's internationally significant bird life.

According to Conservation International, the islands of the Caribbean are now recognized as one of the top three areas on the planet for biodiversity conservation action, given the immense species richness of the islands combined and the high risk of extinction that many of them face. Check

www.conservation.org/xp/CIWEB/strategies/hotspots/hotspots.xml

There are eight endemic species of birds in St. Lucia namely the St. Lucia Parrot, Jacquot, *Amazona versicolor* ENDANGERED; the St. Lucia Black Finch (mois son pied blanc), *Melanospiza richardsoni*; THREATENED; the Semper's warbler (pied blanc) *Leucopezia semper* CLOSE TO EXTINCTION OR ENDANGERED; the St. Lucia Oriole (carouge) *Icterus laudabilis* COMMON; the St. Lucia peewee (gobe mouche) *Contopus oberi* COMMON; the St. Lucia warbler (chic chic), *Dendroica delicata* COMMON; the St. Lucia Nightjar (jackpapow), *Caprimolgus rufus* ENDANGERED; the St. Lucia Wren, (Rossignol), *Troglodytes aedon mesoleucus* RARE.

The White breasted thrasher, *Ramphocynclus brachyrus*, gorge blanc, is found only on Martinique and St. Lucia. The largest population of about 1000 breeding adults is found on St. Lucia with about 436 breeding pairs existing between **Praslin** and **Dennerly**. The species is regarded as being **ENDANGERED**.

NGOs. Government agencies, community based organizations, schools, the private sector, churches, individuals should also participate during this month, in activities that will promote the conservation of our local bird species. Bird watching tours can be organized and bird counting or censusing in selected areas can be undertaken.

For more information on possible activities, please contact the Wildlife Officer of the Forestry Department, Mr. Donald Anthony at 4502231/02375 Ext 412