

Agreements that seek to protect 474 hectares of threatened forests in Argentina, Paraguay and the Dominican Republic are signed

Title During the 2012 BirdLife Americas Partnership Meeting three agreements were signed for land acquisition in key IBAs in Argentina, Paraguay and the Dominican Republic. These purchases, made possible through the support of the [Aage V. Jensen Charity Foundation](#), are part of BirdLife's [Forests of Hope](#) program, and have the goal of securing at least 474 hectares of forest and contributing to the conservation of 72 species of global concern. In Argentina, the BirdLife Partner [Aves Argentinas](#) will acquire 100 hectares in the buffer zone of [Cruce Caballero Provincial Park \(IBA AR122\)](#), the last remnant of primary forest in Argentina with the Critically Endangered Parana Pine (*Araucaria angustifolia*). A total of 314 bird species has been recorded at the site, of which 74 are endemic to the Atlantic Forest and 20 are of global conservation concern. This area is of particular importance to the Vinaceous-breasted Amazon (*Amazona vinacea*), an Endangered species, and the Vulnerable Helmeted Woodpecker (*Dryocopus galeatus*). The populations of threatened birds in the Park are dwindling due to isolation and edge effects, as a result of neighboring areas being cleared for agricultural purposes. Once purchased, the new reserve areas will be co-managed by a local conservation group and the Argentinian National Parks Authority.



Guyra Paraguay
signs land
purchase

agreements.

In Paraguay, [San Rafael Forest \(IBA PY046\)](#) is the largest remnant of Atlantic Forest remaining in the country. Despite having been declared a protected area in 1992, all the land is privately owned and its effective protection is widely recognized as the top national conservation priority. San Rafael is home to 12 globally threatened bird species and 67 Atlantic Forest endemics (the highest diversity of any site in Paraguay). Since 2002, the BirdLife Partner, [Guyra Paraguay](#), has secured 7000 hectares of Atlantic Forest and natural grasslands in San Rafael, [through innovative efforts including shared ownership with an indigenous group](#), and a [payment for ecosystem services scheme](#); successfully balancing the rights and needs of indigenous groups, small-scale poor farmers, and biodiversity conservation. Through this new opportunity, 274 hectares will be acquired in the heart of San Rafael, and co-owned and managed with a Mbya-Guaraní indigenous community. San Rafael or "Tekoha Guasu" (great home in the native Guarani language) is part of the ancestral lands of the Mbya-Guaraní people.



Aves Argentinas and Grupo Jaragua sign the land purchase agreements.

[Grupo Jaragua](#), BirdLife in the Dominican Republic, will acquire 100 hectares of unprotected forest in the Jaragua-Bahoruco corridor, thereby helping to maintain the connectivity between two IBAs: [Jaragua National Park \(DO007\)](#) and [Sierra de Bahoruco \(DO006\)](#). These two IBAs are home to more than 40 species of conservation concern, including Endangered bird species such as the Black-capped Petrel (*Pterodroma hasitata*) and Bay-breasted Cuckoo (*Coccyzus ruficularis*), six species of Critically Endangered frogs and two endemic Endangered mammals. Grupo Jaragua has recently purchased 100 ha of a forest in this same corridor, made possible by the generous support of Hans Swegen, the Lekholm Family, IUCN National Committee of the Netherlands and USFWS Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act. For more information visit: <http://www.birdlife.org/community/2012/07/grupo-jaraguas-first-land-purchase-initiative-saves-100-ha-threatened-caribbean-forest/> In addition to the land purchases in the three countries, the project is seeking to develop sustainable finance mechanisms for long-term management and effective protection, and to build the capacity of the BirdLife Partnership through sharing experiences and documenting best practices regarding land purchase as a tool for forest conservation. For more stories from the Americas, visit our newsletter: <http://birdlifeamericasnewsletter.org/2012/08/More%20news.html>