



Title October is the month to celebrate birds in the Americas, and as in previous years, both BirdLife Partner and non-partner organizations are joining the celebrations. At least 12 organizations have already started their celebratory activities, ranging from outdoor walks, birding tours, painting and photography competitions, and educational talks, among others. This year the Festival focuses to the conservation of forests and birds that inhabit them. Under the message: "Forests are our wealth, what will you do to look after them?" Considering that tropical deforestation is one of the most serious ecological tragedies of the modern era and that around 4.6 million people depend entirely or largely of water supply that provide forest systems in tropical regions (BirdLife 2011). Several BirdLife Partners, especially in countries in Southern Cone have changed that approach to emphasize the need for conservation of other habitats that are severely threatened in this region. In Argentina, 17 provinces and 70 localities are participating in the Festival, coordinated by Aves Argentinas (BirdLife in Argentina); in Ecuador, 4 provinces have joined the celebrations in addition to several local conservation groups supported by Aves y Conservación (BirdLife in Ecuador); in Chile, several NGOs working with birds have joined CODEFF (the BirdLife Affiliate in Chile) in undertaking a series of activities in each region; and in the Dominican Republic, the Festival is being celebrated by Grupo Jaragua in schools and colleges around the Jaragua National Park . This year several Rio Tinto business units have combined their Rio Tinto Birdwatch events with Festival celebrations. The Rio Tinto Birdwatch is an annual event which takes places as part of the strategic partnership between Rio Tinto and BirdLife International. Claudia D'Acunto, Coordinator of Partners in Aves Argentinas and organizer of the Festival activities in Argentina said: "It has been so great the growth and commitment of our local contacts to the World Bird Festival; the festival has been one of the fundamental underpinnings to start Birding Clubs Network (COAS) in Argentina, which has already 53 clubs, present in 18 Argentine provinces plus the City of Buenos Aires. I am convinced that initiatives such as the World Bird Festival and organized groups such as the COAS are the key to get our conservation message across the community, in a simple and concrete way" As in previous years, the 2011 Festival promises to be a great success. We invite you to join us and share your experiences in this celebration. If you would like to inform us of your activities, or if you require more information about the World Bird Festival, and/or are interested in receiving copies of the educational and outreach materials that have been prepared, please write to: americas@birdlife.org