

Bird banding centre opened in Cuba

Title On July 17th, 2010, the Johann Christoph Gundlach Cuban Bird Banding Centre (CBBC) was officially opened. The CBBC is located at the Siboney-Jutic; Ecological Reserve (an Important Bird Area), managed by the Eastern Centre of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (BIOECO) in Santiago de Cuba. The main goals of this permanent banding centre are to study Cuban birds' moult patterns, postnatal dispersion, sex ratios and life expectancy, to obtain survival estimates and to assess the importance of Cuban habitats for bird migration. BIOECO are also aiming to create a database to help ornithologists and conservationists from Cuba, the Caribbean basin and North America to better preserve this shared resource of birds. The initiative is part of Cuban efforts to implement the Caribbean Biological Corridor (together with Haiti and the Dominican Republic), and it is expected that in the future the CBBC will serve as a training facility for young ornithologists and conservationists from across the region. The banding centre represents the culmination of long-term investment by the Cubans and a number of collaborators in bird research and banding. Supported by the British Birdfair, BirdLife's project with CNAP (BirdLife in Cuba) "*Eastern Cuba: saving a unique Caribbean wilderness*" facilitated the training of the CBBC's director Dr. Freddy Rodríguez Santana in Canada (at Long Point Bird Observatory, run by Bird Studies Canada - BirdLife in Canada) and in Jamaica (at Windsor Research Centre - BirdLife project partner in Jamaica). NABU (BirdLife in Germany) supported the training of training of six Cuban biologists in bird banding at the Greifswalder Oie Bird Banding Office, Germany, and also the production of the first Cuban-labelled bird bands. The Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology, through the MacArthur Foundation-funded project "Training and Monitoring for Biodiversity Conservation in Cuba and Hispaniola" has also contributed to key aspects of setting up this first Cuban bird banding centre. Photo: Freddy Santana - director of CBBC - during his training at Long Point Bird Observatory in Canada