

BirdLife receives leading international conservation award for IBA programme in the Americas

Title

BirdLife in the Americas has received the award for Biodiversity Conservation Projects in Latin America from the BBVA Foundation (Fundación BBVA), which implements the corporate social responsibility programme of the Spanish-based BBVA banking group. BirdLife received the award for its Important Birds Area (IBA) programme in the Americas, which has proved of considerable aid in the design of protected-area networks in Latin America, since birds are a valuable biodiversity indicator, according to the BBVA Foundation jury's citation. Thanks to the scientific work conducted in tandem with teams and institutions in many countries, crucial information has been collated on more than 2,300 key sites in the geographical region boasting the world's most diverse birdlife, the citation continued. The initiative, it added, is also providing a catalyst for new structures and organisations to work collaboratively on conservation issues across Latin American countries. Presenting the award, one of three with a total value of 580.000 euros, BBVA Foundation President Francisco González recognised the continuing efforts made by conservation organisations during the economic crisis. The jury citation also highlighted the thorough scientific process and robust criteria used for the identification of IBAs. The award was received by Amiro Pérez-Leroux, Director of the BirdLife International Americas Secretariat. The IBA programme provides a framework for defining national and international conservation policies, Amiro Pérez-Leroux explained. The work of identifying IBAs is conducted on a network basis, involving multiple agents in addition to the BirdLife Partnership, but the process invariably starts at a local level. BBVA is a multinational group providing financial services in over 30 countries, with a strong presence in the Americas. Established in 2004, the BBVA Foundation Awards for Biodiversity Conservation recognise organisations carrying out environmental conservation programs in Spain and Latin America