

# Threatened antwren to benefit from creation of new State Park in Rio

Title Sérgio Cabral, Governor of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, has signed an historic decree creating an important new protected area - *The Costa do Sol State Park*. The new park is the only place in the world that the Critically Endangered Restinga Antwren *Formicivora littoralis* is found and encompasses 9,840 hectares of unique habitat - the Restinga de Maçambaba - that has been long-identified as a priority IBA by *SAVE Brasil* (BirdLife in Brazil). Speaking at a formal announcement ceremony on 15 April that was held in the city of Búzios, at the headquarters of the Lagos São João Consortium (CLSJ), Cabral said "Parks attract tourists and the *Costa do Sol State Park* will be innovative, the first in Brazil to involve so many municipalities. The environment is, undoubtedly, a tool of economic development, especially in a beautiful region like this. We are preserving nature so people can benefit from this region". The ceremony was also attended by the vice-governor of Rio de Janeiro, Luiz Fernando Pezão; the State Secretary of Environment, Carlos Minc (former Ministry of Environment); the president of the State Environmental Institute (INEA), Marilene Ramos; the executive sub-secretary of the Secretary of Environment, Luiz Firmino Martins Pereira; and the director of Biodiversity and Protected Areas of INEA, André Ilha, in addition to the mayors of the six municipalities that the park covers - Saquarema, Araruama, Arraial do Cabo, São Pedro da Aldeia, Cabo Frio and Búzios. The state government and Lagos São João Consortium, together with *SAVE Brasil* and local civil society organizations, have been working in partnership, advocating for the park to be created for several years. *SAVE Brasil's* participation has been supported by BirdLife Species Champions Dr. Urs-Peter Stäuble and Birdfair (The British Birdwatching Fair) through a BirdLife Preventing Extinctions Programme project that aims to save Restinga Antwren and protect the many other threatened species present in the area. The project is also supported through the IUCN's [Save Our Species](#) fund. Speaking after the announcement ceremony, *SAVE Brasil's* Director of Conservation - Pedro Develey - commented "We are delighted by this important announcement which should act as a beacon of hope to environmentalists lobbying for protected areas throughout the world. The new park will help conserve ecosystems that are among the most threatened in the state of Rio de Janeiro, including the restingas, marshes, lakes and lagoons, areas of mangroves, forest, sandy and rocky shores, and 15 coastal islands. Securing official protection is a huge achievement." *The Costa do Sol State Park* encompasses the entire range of the endemic and Critically Endangered Restinga Antwren and other rare, endemic and/or threatened animal species found there include; Tropical Mockingbird *Mimus gilvus*; Sand Lizard *Liolaemus lutzae*, and Golden Lion Tamarin *Leontopithecus rosalia*. The lagoons and marshes are used by migratory birds as feeding, reproduction, or resting areas and among

the threatened plant species are various bromeliads, cactus and the Pau-brasil *Caesalpinia echinata*.



Restinga Habitat © Pedro Develey/Save Brasil

An important stage in gaining support for establishment of the new park came in December 2010, when the **Plano de Ação Nacional para a Conservação do Formigueiro-do-litoral** (National Action Plan for the Conservation of the Restinga Antwren) was published. The Plan was developed by Instituto Chico Mendes para a Conservação da Biodiversidade (ICMBio, Brazilian environmental agency) and SAVE Brasil, in collaboration with INEA, the Rio de Janeiro State University (UERJ), BirdLife Species Guardian for Restinga Antwren - Pingo D'Água, PROBIO III, The World Bank and BirdLife International. In addition to help received through the BirdLife Preventing Extinctions Programme, additional recent support facilitating SAVE Brasil's capacity development has been gratefully received from Arcadia and the Aage V. Jensen Charity Foundation. The electronic version of the plan (in Portuguese) is available for download at SAVE Brasil's website, on the link **Publicações**. For more information about the work developed by SAVE Brasil for the conservation of the Restinga Antwren, **click here**.