

# BirdLife projects flying high in UNEP-GEF top-twenty

Title This year, the Global Environment Facility (GEF) celebrates 20 years of funding environmental projects around the world through the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP). During these 20 years, the GEF has granted \$9.5 billion to over 2,700 environmental projects in more than 165 countries. To mark its 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, the GEF has announced and profiled its 20 best projects funded through UNEP. This '20-best' list features two projects in which BirdLife International was a key player. "These two projects exemplify the global and collaborative nature of the BirdLife Partnership's work, and their recognition in the UNEP-GEF top-twenty is confirmation of the significance of these conservation efforts", said Leon Bennun, Director of Science, Policy and Information at BirdLife International.

*Sustainable Conservation of Globally Important Caribbean Bird Habitats: Strengthening a Regional Network for a Shared Resource* ran from 2003-2007, receiving around \$1 million from the GEF. Based in the Bahamas, the Dominican Republic and Jamaica, this project enabled the development of a strong network of organisations committed to the conservation of Caribbean birds and biodiversity at Important Bird Areas (IBAs). It also involved working with local governments, NGOs and regional support groups to enhance conservation efforts and improve public awareness at IBAs. The project successfully raised further awareness through training around 450 teachers, through small scale eco-tourism ventures and through events such as the Caribbean Endemic Bird Festival. "This GEF project achieved significant results and impact, with some excellent and important products including the publication of *Important Bird Areas in the Caribbean*, Local Conservation Groups established at seven project sites, successful workshops in media communication and strategic and financial planning, some success in getting IBAs adopted by governments in three countries, and tens of thousands of people in the Caribbean exposed to bird and site conservation issues", said David Wege, Senior Caribbean Programme Manager with BirdLife International. To find out more about this project, [click here](#). The second project listed in the 'top-twenty' in which BirdLife was a partner is *Enhancing Conservation of the Critical Network of Sites Required by Migratory Waterbirds on the African/Eurasian Flyways* - a [Wings Over Wetlands \(WOW\)](#) project. This project, carried out in collaboration with Wetlands International, AEWA, Ramsar and the Government of Germany, ran from 2006-2010 and received \$6.35 million from the GEF for conservation efforts that have benefitted 118 countries along the African-Eurasian flyway. The project involved close collaboration between participating states along this flyway to improve the effectiveness of conservation efforts for migratory waterbirds. It also developed an array of award winning and innovative conservation tools that offer access to information on around 300 species of migratory waterbirds and the Critical Sites they rely upon. The partnership formed through this project has been cemented via a Memorandum of Cooperation, through which the participating partners continue to collaborate in the conservation of migratory waterbirds. "The Wings Over Wetlands project has put flyway-scale

conservation firmly on the map. WOW's legacy includes a joined-up, cross border conservation approach to planning for migratory waterfowl, and a new era of cooperation", said Dr Vicky Jones, Global Flyways Officer at BirdLife International. To find out more about this project, [click here](#).