Title

The winners of the second international photo competition run by *The World?s Rarest Birds* project have been announced. The competition aimed to secure images of some of the most threatened birds on Earth to complete a new book that highlights their plight. *The World?s Rarest Birds*, which is published today by Princeton WILD *Guides,* aims to support BirdLife International?s Preventing Extinctions Programme. This is the second of two international photo competitions that have been run to obtain the images for the book, the first being in 2010. Thousands of images were entered into the competitions by photographers from across the world and over 800 photos are featured in *The World?s Rarest Birds*. *The World?s Rarest Birds* Photo Competition had two categories: Critically Endangered birds and Endangered birds. The winning entries in each category were as follows:

White-bellied Cinclodes (Dubi Shapiro)

Black-breasted Puffleg (Murray Cooper)

CATEGORY 1: Critically Endangered Birds (there are 197 species that are so threatened that they are considered to be at imminent risk of becoming extinct) ***Winner*** **Dubi Shapiro**: a stunning image of a displaying **White-bellied Cinclodes** from the high Andes of Peru. ***Runner-up*** **Murray Cooper**: a beautiful photo of a male **Black-breasted Puffleg** hummingbird from north-west Ecuador. ***Third place*** **Dubi Shapiro**: a fantastic image of a **Madagascar Pochard**, a medium-sized diving duck found only on Madagascar. ***Fourth place*** **Maxim Koshkin**: a striking photo of a flock of **Sociable Lapwing**, a migratory wader that breeds in central Asia and winters mainly in Africa.

Marquesan Imperial-pigeon (Tim Laman)

Commended image of Lulu's Tody-tyrant (Pete Morris)

CATEGORY 2: Endangered Birds (there are 389 species that are considered to be at very high risk of becoming extinct in the foreseeable future) ***Winner*** **Tim Laman**: a beautiful study of a **Marquesan Imperial-pigeon** from the island of Nuku Hiva in French Polynesia. ***Runner-up*** **David Stowe**: a lovely image of a **Swift Parrot** from Australia. ***Third place*** **Myron Tay**: a wonderful photo of a **Masked Finfoot** from South-East Asia. ***Fourth place*** **Greg & Yvonne Dean**: a fantastic image of a flock of **El Oro Parakeets** from Ecuador. Erik Hirschfeld, Editor of *The World's Rarest Birds*, said "We would like to thank all the photographers who kindly submitted their images to the project. Having so many fantastic photos to choose from has enabled us to present the most complete collection of photographs of the most threatened birds ever published.? ?Of the 590 species featured in the book, we managed to obtain photos of 515. That is an amazing 87% of the 590 species that are currently categorized as either Extinct in the Wild, Critically Endangered or Endangered. We are very grateful to Princeton University Press, WILD*Guides*, Lynx Edicions and BirdLife International who kindly supported the project by providing a range of attractive prizes for the competition. I am sure that this support helped to encourage more people to submit their images for use in this important project."

Silvery Wood-pigeon. Commended in the Critically Endangered category (James Eaton)

Swift Parrot. Runner up in the Endangered
Category (David Stowe)

Andy Swash, Managing Director of the publisher WILD*Guides* and joint Editor of the book said "We are delighted to have been able to work closely with BirdLife International in producing *The World's Rarest Birds*. It is undoubtedly a stunning and beautifully illustrated book. But its key message is poignant ? a large proportion of the world?s birds, including every one that is depicted, is threatened with extinction. This is a great concern to many and I just hope that the production of *The World's Rarest Birds* will help to raise awareness and make some contribution to their conservation." Hundreds of fantastic photographs were submitted to the 2012 competition and selecting the winners proved very difficult. One of the judges, professional bird photographer David Tipling, said ?Despite the rarity of the birds featured in *The World?s Rarest Birds*, the quality of the images entered into the competition was truly amazing. I love the idea of encouraging photographers to support an important conservation cause by allowing their images to be published in this way." Ade Long, BirdLife's Head of Communications said, "The response to *The World?s Rarest Birds* photo competitions was astonishing. The number of entries was almost overwhelming, and the quality of the images just breathtaking. This is a fantastic book, but it provides a powerful reminder of the large number of species ? many of them extremely beautiful ? that are on the brink of extinction. The books contains maps and information developed using BirdLife's data on all the world's 10,000 bird species?

> *The Worlds Rarest Birds project has stepped up as a Species Champion in support of the BirdLife Preventing Extinctions Programme.*