Using Strategic Alliances to Achieve International Designations of Priority Sites: Case of Laguna Cabral in Dominican Republic

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- Grupo Jaragua (GJ) was established in 1989. Before its creation, technical personnel (that today are part of GJ), had participated in background studies to designate Jaragua National Park as a protected area, back in 1983, in conjuntion with the National Direction of Parks and the German Service for Social Technical Cooperation (DED).
- The proposal for Jaragua-Bahoruco-Enriquillo Biosphere Reserve was elaborated by the Ministry of Environment and Grupo Jaragua, and approved in November 6, 2002 by UNESCO.
- GJ leaded the process of IBAs designation, as BirdLife International affiliated NGO. The organization also coordinated the KBAs for the DR, participating in the production of the Caribbean Ecosystems Profile.

- In 2007 formally submitted the proposal to include La Placa as a protected area, today already established as Biological Reserve Loma Charco Azul.
- Since 2005 has participated in the formulation to designate the wetlands of Jaragua and Laguna de Cabral, this last one recently designated as RAMSAR Site.
- Recently produced the required documents to include formally Jaragua National Park and Los Haitises National Park as UNESCO World Heritage Site Indicative List.

- 1983 Laguna Cabral (LC) was declared as Wildlife Refuge.
- 1995 Grupo Tinglar begins promoting birds conservation and the site by means of capacity building of the first group of birdwatching guides in the DR.
- 1995-2007 Several projects were conducted, specially promoting the site as an important spot for biodiversity and sustainable development for surrounding communities: Cabral, La Lista, El Peñón and Cristóbal.



Members of the El Péñón Ecological Society monitoring birds, this helped with the scientific information.



- 2000-2008 Ducks count sponsored by Ducks Unlimited say that LC is a very important wetland for migratory birds, specially ducks.
- 2005 As a result of the monitoring data LC is recognized as an IBA.
- 2005 A group of technicians leaded by the BirdLife Program of Grupo Jaragua and Grupo Tinglar draft a proposal to the National Ramsar Authorities to designate Laguna Cabral as a Ramsar Site.



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 After several letters and meeting with national authorities, 6 years later on February 2011, Laguna Cabral is listed on the Ramsar Convention as an Wetland of International Importance.

Good

 DR has designated a second Ramsar Site, adding an important habitat for congregatory birds.



 LC is recognized as an international ecosystem for the conservation of biodiviserty of the Caribbean.

Bad

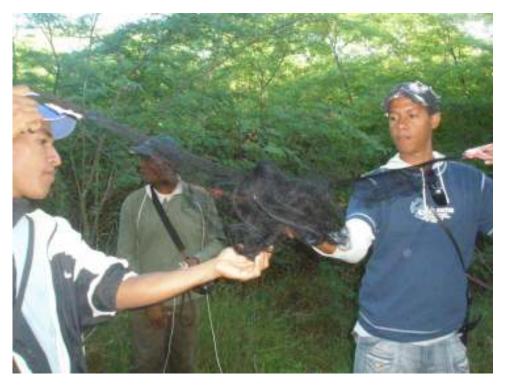
- Even the Enriquillo Lake was designed as Ramsar Site in 2002, there are not clear policies to manage the site accordingly to the Ramsar Wetlands Convention.
- A very slow process to get the designation, because of bureaucratic matters of the Ministry of Environment (the National Authority).



Canoa, a traditional boat still present, used by fishermen in Laguna Cabral Wildlife Refugee

Ugly

- Small recognition of the key actors that accomplished all the work.
- A big challenge for the management of the site, specially regarding the continuous flooding of the area and the Enriquillo Lake.



Entangled net. Local guides learning how to monitor terrestrial birds

Perspective

 With the celebration of the Caribbean Endemic Bird Festival 2011, the local Authorities declared their interest in working together for the conservation of the Ramsar Site.



Grupo Tinglar and Local authorities from municipalities surrounding Laguna Cabral in the CEBF 2011

Challenges

- Spread the word among people about the Ramsar designation of Laguna Cabral.
- Lobby to get attention of national authorities for the investment in the site, specially in infraestructure for ecotourism and promotion.
- Put together the interest of local authorities and the conservation efforts carried by the conservationist.
- Continue with the good relationship between national authority of Ramsar, the Majors of the sourrounding municipalities and the local comunities.



