

Project Update: August 2014

During May and June 2014, we carried out a series of field courses in the Darién and Urabá in order to train local guides in wildlife observation. We conducted four 1-week long courses involving 43 members of six different communities (Marimonda, Lechugal, Bocas del Atrato, San Francisco, Capurganá, Sapzurro). Each course covered topics such as the use of binoculars and field guides, in field identification of local wildlife, and practical exercises on how to become better guides. Talks addressed the importance of the region's wildlife, bird identification, and migratory species, while interactive sessions were used to show how wildlife tourism is compatible with conservation while simultaneously providing a sustainable income. Feedback from participants was very positive and most criticisms revolved around the need for tools, such as binoculars. As a result of the courses, one community formed a Guide Association and the others are highly motivated to continue developing wildlife observation as a tourist attraction.



Left: Learning to use field guides in Bocas del Atrato. Right: Practicing field identification and the use of binoculars in San Francisco.