

Project Update: August 2017

It has been a busy summer in Jarabacoa. While there have been some delays in the acquisition of sites for our continuing study, we are on the verge of completing installation on six different private farms. In addition to our advances in the field, I attended the international meeting of Birds Caribbean held in Cuba. Here I reported on the results from the first 14 months of my project to an audience of ornithologists and conservationists from all over the Caribbean. More recently, we acquired another project partner in a big way. Rancho Baiguate is a strong local leader in environmental conservation, sustainable agriculture, and ecotourism. In the coming months, we will be using their facilities as a base in order to facilitate access to our various sites. In exchange for their hospitality, we are conducting projects on the ranch to improve the ecological knowledge base of their organisation.



We have been working closely with our project partner Plan Yaque to gain permission to work on various private properties in the Jarabacoa area. For our project, we are constructing enclosed, protected areas to initiate forest restoration and study the role of birds as seed dispersers in this process. Here Spencer works closely with Plan Yaque technicians to construct and install artificial perches to increase bird visitation to the plot.



One example of the work that we are doing with our new partner Rancho Baiguete involves leading workshops. In this case, we presented a lecture about the ecological importance of birds and the potential for birding tourism in the region. Spencer and his partner Holly, who also conducts research for her thesis in the Dominican Republic, taught the basics of bird identification to Rancho Baiguete staff. Project technician Joaris Gonzalez later shared stories about his experience as a member of our project and as a Dominican pursuing a career in environmental conservation and research.