

Project Update: September 2009

The SCSCB, through the Caribbean Wildlife Art Working Group, is undertaking activities to promote a wildlife movement among artists and to improve the recognition of this style between them and the local art critic. The first step was to prepare a programme to teach at the Academy of Fine Art, and it was approved by the national center for Academy of Fine Art on the Island of Cuba. Up to now we have been able to establish a series of courses every year, where the students learn different techniques and understand the natural processes and learn about local biodiversity richness. There was not this kind of experience before on Cuba or any traditions to paint nature.

Up to this point more than 64 students have been undertaking courses and some of them done their graduation thesis on this matter on themes such as birds, conservation problems, Cuban snails and Cuban bats. In all cases the final qualification has been 100 points.

Four art shows of the students were shown in local galleries and a field expedition was undertaken to natural areas in order to take pictures and provide experiences for the paintings.

It was the first step in improving the interest of professional artists on biodiversity themes. Many of them continued working on it and presented several art expositions in important local gallery sites, promoting it to amateur artists too.

The job of this group is to link several cultural institutions to promote actions in relation to the conservation of birds. This is the case with the Communitarian Birds Festival - Protegiendo las Aves, part of the Caribbean Endemic Bird Festival that takes place in Gibara Town (eastern Cuba) every year. We have reached the sixth year - the WG is the principal sponsor of this festival and is the leader of the organising committee. The festival takes place during a whole week and includes actions that involve students and adults in tackling the tradition of keeping trapped birds in cages and the illegal trafficking generated after the so called "special period" in Cuba.

The members of the group have agreed to donate paintings to raise funds for SCSCB and to support local bird conservation projects.

Through the link with the central gallery, the group organized the First Photo Nature Saloon. There were three awards; a first prize of 15000 MN, second prize of 1000 MN and third prize of 500 MN. Four special mentions were also made. This action will continue in 2010 with the second event. More than 70 artists participated with a high amount of media coverage on radio and television programmes.

We are preparing several environmental education materials such as a Field Guide to the Endemic Birds of Cuba, extracted photographic field guide for field notes, a multimedia CD about birds of Cuba and others.

A photographic databank had been increasing every year and the pictures had been used by many people during environmental educations programmes.

We helped in prepared the illustrations for recent publications such as *The Birds of Cuba*, *Birds of the Cuban Wetlands* and *Handbook to the Amphibians of Cuba*.



EXPO COLECTIVA

"Los Humedales en el Arte"

Estudiantes Academia de Artes Plásticas "El Alba"
Profesor: Nils Navarro P.



Desde el 22 de Octubre 2008

Museo de Historia Natural "Joaquín F. de la Vara",
Gibara, Holguín

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