

Project Update: October 2009

The current local situation in Gibara village of trapping and illegal trafficking of wild birds has been for a long time a problem ignored by the authorities that considered the situation less important, focussing their interest on other economic, political and social problems.

The *Communitarian Bird Festival - Protegiendo las Aves* takes place every year and gets the focus of the authorities on the territory. The presentation of the results at several meetings *in* and *out* of the island has had positive effects on that. The festivals covered several institutions and every event created a level of awareness and knowledge of this situation. It was specially focussed on new generations.

The tradition is already a massive behaviour among the people in the municipality of Gibara that reaches more than 16,000 inhabitants. The preliminary counts showed that more than 7000 wild birds, including endemics and migratory species, were caught by the local "pajareros". It was the time to combine the environmental education programme with the practical use of the Cuban laws to control trade.

Through the former actions we understood that the problem focused on the citizens who don't know the Cuban laws in relation to the biodiversity. The next step is to effectively apply the existing laws, such as 81 Law of Environment and punitive 200 Law and improve the promotion campaign from radio and TV stations. We were contacted by the CITMA authorities (Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment of Cuba) and visited the place to show the problem during the high season of trapping coincides with the autumn migration period. The results showed 32 people trapping birds on a single "trapping day".

We are organizing a coordination meeting with different institutions belonging to the government and the central state organizations, to find a way to minimize the problem.

For the next year project, the main objective will be to design a strategy from the top to the base, starting with the authorities, and improving new actions, controlling and following the measures every year, especially during the high season of trapping birds.

