



Coppery-chested Jacamar, Photo by Francisco Sornoza



Landscape outside Antsanilla Reserve, Photo by Benjamin Skolnik



WHY BIRD CONSERVATION MATTERS

for Impact Investors

The impact investing sector seeks to generate environmental and social benefits alongside a financial return; prosperous communities, economies and environments are central to achieve their goals. Bird conservation can help to achieve their objectives. Birds contribute to human health, improve agricultural production, generate millions of dollars in ecotourism revenue, and serve as indicators of environmental well-being.

However, **North America alone has lost 2.9 billion birds, or one in four birds, since 1970.** These trends parallel bird declines globally. This great loss of birds, primarily caused by habitat degradation, negatively impacts **human and ecosystem health.**

Reversing these declines can be achieved through actions to improve livelihoods, create economic opportunities, and restore degraded ecosystems at a landscape level. In this way, bird conservation can help to achieve global sustainability and conservation objectives.

Mainstreaming the conservation of birds and their habitat into investment strategies can contribute to goals aiming to improve people's lives, health, communities, sources of income, and environment.



Tapichalaca, Photo by G. Radko

BIRDING TOURISM GENERATES BILLIONS OF DOLLARS

Bird-related tourism generates billions in economic activity globally. In the U.S., birdwatching generates about \$40 billion annually, creating over 860,000 jobs.

Globally, roughly 3 million international trips are taken annually for the main purpose of bird watching. The primary international destinations for U.S. birdwatchers are **countries in Latin America and the Caribbean.**

Birdwatchers visiting Colombia spend an average of **US\$300 per day**, much more than the average tourist. Birdwatching tourism in Colombia is anticipated to be able to generate **US\$46 million annually**, creating 7,500 new jobs.

BIRDS IMPROVE AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION AND REVENUE

Insect-eating birds are natural consumers of crop insect pests, thus offering free pest reduction services in farms. In Jamaica, coffee farms from which birds were experimentally excluded from foraging suffered a higher infestation of berry borer beetle. **Birds increased farmers' revenues by an estimated US\$310 per hectare** by reducing coffee berry borers. At a **200-ha vineyard in Spain**, birds consumed one ton of insects, larvae, and invertebrates, protecting the grape crop from these crop-eating pests. Farmers' revenues increased by improving crop yield and reducing expenses on insecticides.

Birds provide pollination of food-producing plants. In Central America, **hummingbirds and bananaquits are important pollinators** for valuable crops, such as papaya and passion fruit. Countries like Ecuador, which produces nearly **51,000 tons of papaya a year**, benefit from birds.

Crops certified as "bird-friendly," such as coffee, can receive price premiums for producers well above the regular market value of these commodities.



Papaya farm in Yurimaguas, Peru, Photo by CIF Action, Flickr

HOW CAN THE IMPACT INVESTING SECTOR SUPPORT BIRD CONSERVATION?

- Finance or encourage the use of enhanced management techniques in agricultural and energy production systems to incorporate bird-friendly practices.
- Incorporate birds as indicators of the success of restoration and conservation projects or other environmental outputs.
- Incubate and aggregate bird-friendly projects as part of conservation funds.
- Connect local investors or specialty-product buyers to local bird conservation projects and bird-friendly producers.
- Invest in projects that result in habitat conservation and that have biodiversity indicators.
- Incorporate bird conservation in projects with an environmental education component.

YOU CAN GET INVOLVED

A network of partners working on bird conservation at the national and regional scale already exists and can advise on the relevance of birds to impact investors. To learn more about how bird conservation can positively contribute to your programs, projects, and ventures, contact American Bird Conservancy, US Forest Service, and the North America Bird Conservation Initiative.

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