



UPDATES ON ACTIVITIES FOR 2014

17 January 2014

WORK ON HISPANIOLA

Information from Ernst Rupp, Grupo Jaragua:

Recap of the 2013 season: Please see

<http://www.fws.gov/birds/waterbirds/petrel/pdfs/Grupo%20Jaragua%20May%202013%20Report.pdf>

Plans/goals for the 2014 breeding season (commencing late January):

- Locate, map and monitor nests and nesting success on Loma del Toro.
- To detect presence of nesting petrels in areas indicated by results of 2013 radar surveys:
 - Conduct on-the-ground visual surveys and conduct nighttime aural and/or thermal-imaging surveys
 - Deploy song meters to conduct continuous automated acoustic monitoring of petrel presence and abundance.
- Collaborate with Environmental Protection in the Caribbean (EPIC) and Société Audubon Haiti to conduct radar surveys in the Dominican Republic and Haiti to identify Black-capped Petrel flight paths and record indices of abundance.
- Monitor petrel behavior near at communications towers; negotiate with telecommunications companies to remove smaller antennae with guy wires and to shield lights at Loma del Toro.
- Participate in deployment of three satellite transmitters on breeding petrels at Loma del Toro.
- Participate in a technical exchange by inviting Haitian biologists to accompany field expeditions to search for and monitor nests. Nest searching and thermal imaging at communications tower near La Visite.
- Continue work with community in Boukan Chat, to assess current land use with respect to petrel nesting colonies, build trust, and gain support for plans for long-term conservation of these sensitive areas.



Information from Adam Brown, EPIC:

Research Overview

2014's plan is to locate flyways and nesting locations of Black-capped Petrels on Hispaniola, specifically surveying a second year of high density sites in Haiti as well as within areas that have not previously been surveyed throughout Hispaniola. Primary methods include using marine radar, night vision, and audio/visual. Within lowland areas, appropriate valleys will be surveyed using radar to look for flyways that petrels are using between at-sea and nesting activity areas. If flyways are located, we will travel inland to the head of the drainages and survey again using radar, night vision, and audio/visual in an attempt to locate nesting locations.

Within the radar survey protocol, we will count each of the targets on the radar that fit the confines of a petrel, including those traveling greater than 50 km/hr. These targets will be tallied and recorded as an activity index for the location. This activity index can then be compared to future years and other locations. These data will be shared with each of sponsoring and partner groups/ agencies.

Planned Calendar of Survey Events

- 2-4 February 2014** – Surveys in Cordillera Central, Dominican Republic, specifically targeting petrel activity flying to and within Valle Nuevo National Park.
- 5-7 February 2014** – Surveys in Sierra de Nieba, Dominican Republic, specifically targeting flyways on the south slope leading up to potential nest locations on the crest.
- 8-10 February 2014** – Surveys in Sierra de Bahoruco, Dominican Republic, specifically targeting flyways on the north slope leading up to the crest
- 11-16 February 2014** – Surveys in the west slope of the Sierra de Bahoruco (Haitian side) and the east slope of slopes of the Massif de La Selle, Haiti.
- 17 February 2014** – Surveys in north slope on the western edge of Massif de La Selle, the flyway leading up to La Visite National Park, Haiti.
- 18-21 February 2014** – Surveys along western crest of Massif de La Selle, Haiti.
- 22 February – 2 March 2014** – Surveys throughout Massif de La Hotte, focusing on flyways leading up to and nest areas near Pic Formon and Pic Macaya.

Outreach Overview

Our plan this year is to build on previous year's outreach that included a Diablotin-themed summer camp near Sierra de Bahoruco. This year EPIC, artist Caroline Collier, Grupo Jaragua, and Société Audubon Haiti have developed a children's themed activity book. The book has been printed in Spanish, Creole, and English. It has 15 plates, each addressing issues that surround petrels, including conservation, nesting, its remarkable foraging migration, and its human neighbors.

The book will be distributed by EPIC, Grupo Jaragua, and Société Audubon Haiti, to schools within communities throughout Hispaniola. This book will become a portion of a larger Black-capped Petrel-themed teaching syllabus that will be available in the future throughout the Caribbean. A PDF of the book is available to any group or agency that would like to use it, free of charge. To get a copy at this time, please contact Adam Brown of EPIC at abrown@epicislands.org.



UPDATE ON “SAVE THE DEVIL” FEATURE FILM PROJECT

A friendship between Adam Brown (above) and Aaron Straight, a filmmaker, has brought Trifilm Productions, Inc. to the Diablotin conservation effort. Trifilm has a 25+ year history of commercial, film, and TV experience with clients ranging from Bill Gates to George Lucas, and Aaron has experience working and filming in Haiti. Thanks to support of many people and organizations, a movie and a movement have been launched. Aaron will be joining the 2014 field investigations to film.

Information from Aaron Straight, Senior Creative Director @ trifilm.com

Three weeks from now, motley crew of Haitian, Dominican, German, and American scientists and filmmakers will pack two weeks of food and water, radar equipment, and 10 cases of film gear into and onto a couple of tough vehicles in Port-au-Prince, Haiti. This is the beginning of a long awaited journey through small rural villages and impossible roads crossing through rivers and over mountains to find the story of the Diablotin.



The story is one of two families fighting for life. One is a family of birds on the brink of extinction living in one of the last places left on earth they can hide and one is a family of Haitian farmers struggling daily to feed their children. The two families compete for the same resources. No one wants the families to starve and no one wants the Diablotin to disappear forever. Follow the journey as the team camps with the farmer family in Boucan Chat and sends regular updates from the field on Facebook [<https://www.facebook.com/savethedevilMOVIE>], twitter [https://twitter.com/save_the_devil] and on the project website www.savethedevil.net. Wish us luck and thank you for your support. Also, please keep a look out for the official movie trailer coming soon!

UPDATE ON THE MASS-PRODUCED ARTIFICIAL BURROW PROJECT



Information from David Lee

The effort to mass produce artificial burrows or nestboxes for the Cahow (Bermuda petrel) has borne fruit! Designed by David Wingate, the mold sponsored by Bermuda Audubon, and the initial run of production funded by NFWF via Birds Caribbean Seabird Program, these boxes will help improve productivity where nest sites are limited.

The entrance tunnels lock in place and can be configured various ways to fit the landscape. The box and the tunnels would be covered with dirt and rocks, the white lid comes off but could also be covered. These are strong enough to stand on and the plastic is thick and does not degrade with UV light. There are air vents under the lid to let any hot air out. With entrance modification, these structures could likely be used for other burrowing seabirds, including Audubon's Shearwaters, tropicbirds, and Black-capped Petrel.

WORKING GROUP CONSIDERATIONS

Announcement from Jennifer Wheeler

I will depart my position with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service at the end of January 2014. This is a happy and exciting decision for me: I have the unique opportunity to take some time off from professional employment to concentrate on personal projects and interests. However, I am committed to continuing my involvement with the International Black-Capped Petrel Conservation Group and I will now do so only as an affiliate of BirdsCaribbean (the NGO formerly known as Society for the Conservation and Study of Caribbean Birds). Please note that I can be reached at JAWheeler411@gmail.com

Announcement from USFWS

The USFWS Southeast Region, Migratory Bird Program (Program) has a long history of involvement and working relationships with partners in support of Diablotin conservation. Over the past decade, it has invested significant funds in research, monitoring, status assessment and conservation planning, and USFWS remains committed to the petrel as a Focal Species and high priority both within the Southeast Region and nationally. In the absence of Jennifer's successful leadership role on behalf of the Service, Troy Wilson (Regional Nongame Bird Biologist; Troy.Wilson@fws.gov) will serve as the USFWS's lead for Black-capped Petrel, and will be supported by other regional and national Program staff to represent the USFWS in discussions and to support to the international working group in achieving our mutual interests in the conservation of this species.

2014 Strategic Planning Activities

The International Black-capped Petrel Working Group has always had an open and inclusive nature. All who are interested in the conservation of the species are part of the group. Participation is voluntary and products of the group are a result of member organizations and individuals contributing their energies and resources to projects. However, the working group would likely benefit from some additional structure. This might include committees for various purposes and a more frequent schedule of meetings than every other year at BirdsCaribbean Regional Meeting.

As a start, individuals most involved in the oversight or implementation of current field activities (e.g., Ernst Rupp, Adam Brown, Jim Goetz, Holly Freifeld), are forming a committee to undertake a series of discussions in early 2014 to address topics such as aligning planned activities, establishing recovery goals, and collaborative fundraising. They will be reaching out to a limited group of others to engage in these discussions; limited inclusion is necessary for the sake of being productive. However, there is every intent to present the recommendations from these discussions with the full working group. Please contact Jennifer at JAWheeler411@gmail.com for more information or if you have ideas for additional committees or activities that would benefit the Diablotin.

Prepared by Jennifer Wheeler (JAWheeler411@gmail.com), 17 January 2014, with assistance of contributors.

Group members can stay in touch with one another using the Diablotin@yahoogroups.com list. Join by sending an email to Diablotin-subscribe@yahoogroups.com.