

PIASKOWSKI, VICTORIA D. and OMAR A. FIGUEROA, WI Zoological Society of Milwaukee County, Milwaukee, Zoological Society of Milwaukee County WI 53202. vickip@webzonecom.com and Foundation for Wildlife Conservation, Belize. **Modification of point counts to enhance avian species detectability during the non-breeding season in Belize, Central America.**

We conducted 10 min. fixed radius point counts in various habitats (pine savanna, riparian broadleaf forest, cohune palm forest, pasture, and citrus and cashew plantations in Belize, Central America during the 1997-1998 non-breeding season. Points were at least 100 m apart and all species seen or heard within a 50 m radius and outside this 50 m radius were recorded during a 10 min. count period. To determine if additional species could be detected, we supplemented the counts in two ways. First, a tape recorder was used to simultaneously record all vocalizations during each 10 min. count and reviewed later in the day. Second, after the initial 10 min. count and recording period, a Ferruginous pygmy owl call was played for three min. and the bird species detected within a 50 m radius were compiled for a total of 10 additional minutes. We found that both the simultaneous recording of point count sessions and the owl call playback enhanced the species detected at most points, regardless of the habitat type. Reviewing the tape recording of each 10 min. count resulted in the detection of one to two additional species at most points. The owl playback elicited responses from both resident and migratory bird species. The above methods proved useful in enhancing detectability of both migratory and resident bird species during the non-breeding season in Belize.

Piaskowski, V, Figueroa, OA