

Cooperative Work among Scientists of Two Worlds

Victoria D. Piaskowski and Omar A. Figueroa

Interest has been on the rise for developing collaborations between scientists and conservation professionals from countries in the temperate and tropical ends of migration systems. For example, Latin American scientists at the 1992 Ecology and Conservation of Neotropical Migrant Landbirds conference outlined suggestions for future cooperative work between North and Latin America. How far have we come in 10 years in addressing these objectives? For research to have an impact on conservation, scientists and others from the different countries must be involved in many aspects of the research project: scientific, cultural, social and political. The Birds Without Borders-Aves Sin Fronteras project began in Belize in 1997 with three goals: research on migratory and resident bird species, application of the research results to conservation, and training of Belizeans to conduct the research with the end result being autonomy of Belizeans in designing and conducting their own projects. We will begin by discussing the lessons from this program and then open the discussion to develop an overview of how well types of cooperative programs are doing, and to provide suggestions for future work.