

**What benefits and incentives
does the Partners for Fish and
Wildlife Program offer?**

By participating in this program you directly collaborate with the conservation of the natural resources of the Caribbean (Puerto Rico and U.S. Virgin Islands).

In addition, the USFWS will offer, as an incentive, technical and financial assistance.



USFWS's Partners under the Shade-grown Coffee Restoration Initiative
in Maricao and Yauco, P.R. Photo: USFWS.



Century plants (*Agave eggersiana*) in St. Croix U.S. Virgin
Islands Photo: USFWS.



Virgin Islands tree boa (*Chilabothrus granti*, former *Epicrates monensis granti*)
Photo: USFWS.

Technical assistance is provided for the design and the implementation of conservation practices agreed in the cooperative and landowners agreements.

Financial assistance is possible through in-cash sharing or fund-matching. Generally, the cost includes labor and materials and is shared between the owner of the land and the USFWS. However, the landowner's contribution is flexible. The collaboration of the participant(s), can be as an in-cash or in-kind (non-monetary) contribution, and labor and materials qualify.

For the participant(s) of the program the limit of money allocated per project or cooperative agreement is set to \$25,000. The established practices should be kept for a period of 10 years.

Postal Address:
PO Box 491, Boquerón
Puerto Rico, 00622-0491

Internet sites:
www.fws.gov/caribbean/ES/
www.fws.gov/partners/



Map source: Esri, GE BCO, NOAA, National Geographic, DeLorme, HERE, Geonames.org, and other contributors

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PARTNERS FOR FISH AND WILDLIFE PROGRAM

BENEFITS, INCENTIVES AND MORE... HOW TO PARTICIPATE!



Introduction

The Caribbean Region is considered a global biodiversity and endemism hotspot. However, less than 13% of the region's terrestrial area is under protection. The U.S. Caribbean (i.e., Puerto Rico and U.S. Virgin Islands) provides habitat for a great number of endemic and imperiled species, including federally listed species (i.e. endangered or threatened), candidate species, at-risk species, migratory birds and aquatic species. These Islands are important stopover sites for a variety of migratory songbirds, seabirds, shore birds and wading birds using the Atlantic flyway. Some of these species are considered at-risk due to habitat destruction or modification. Since many of these species inhabit private lands, the reduction of threats within these lands is essential for their persistence and protection of their habitats. You can contribute to protect the future of hundreds of species of plants and wild animals by participating as a *Partner in Conservation* with the *Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program* (PFW).

What is this program about?

The program provides financial and technical assistance to private landowners, for voluntary, on-the-ground habitat restoration and conservation projects in alliance with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). This program focuses on the enhancement, restoration and protection of ecologically important habitats for the benefit of, listed (i.e., threatened or endangered), migratory, and/or at-risk species. The program recognizes the need to balance residential, tourist, commercial, agriculture, and industrial needs with conservation of important habitats and species and work closely with other Federal, Territorial, non-governmental organizations, and private partners to carry out restoration projects. This program was authorized by the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Act (109-294 of 2006) adopted by the United States Congress (109th), empowering the Secretary of the Interior to provide technical and financial assistance to private landowners who collaborate with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.



Elfin-woods warbler (*Setophaga angelae*) Photo: Mike Morel

What are the Puerto Rico and U.S. Virgin Islands focal areas?

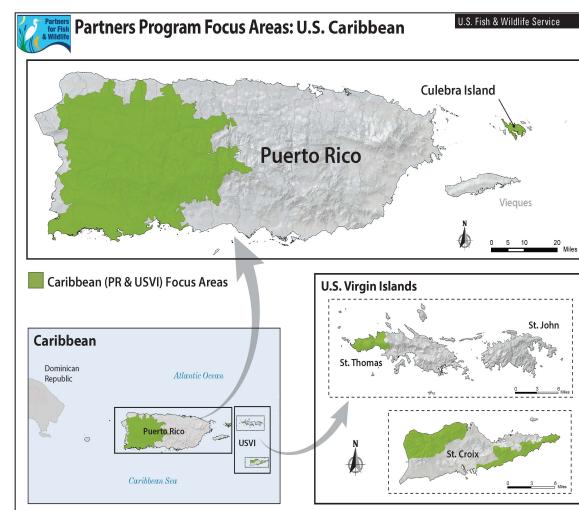
The program covers a wide area of Puerto Rico and U.S. Virgin Islands. In the archipelago of Puerto Rico, the program's focal areas are in Culebra Island at eastern Puerto Rico and in the western portion of the Puerto Rico main island. In USVI, the focal areas are in the northwestern and southeastern portion of St. Croix and in the eastern portion of St. Thomas. The focal areas in Puerto Rico and USVI are dominated by subtropical moist and dry forests. In addition, since the participation is voluntary, the USFWS can evaluate and accept the collaboration of private landowners located outside the designated focal areas.

Other priority areas of the program include:

- Caribbean Strategic Habitat Conservation Areas (SHC),
- lands bordering forests or State reserves,
- lands under Conservation Easements and/or other conservation mechanisms,
- lands adjacent to Protected Areas,
- USFWS Science Applications Program's Caribbean Focal Areas, and
- lands identified as Priority Conservation Areas by other collaborators.

The acquisition of land, public lands or mitigation projects does not qualify for participation in this program.

Focal areas for the Program in Puerto Rico and U.S. Virgin Islands



Who is eligible to participate in this program?

Any person or private entity interested in improving and protecting wildlife habitats on their property, and committed to maintain the conservation practices and restored areas for a minimum period of 10 years. Participants include:

- private landowners (farmers and ranchers among others),
- corporations,
- educational Institutions,
- non-governmental conservation organizations (NGO), and
- private groups.

Federal, state, and local agencies may participate by providing technical and financial assistance (incentives), but their lands do not qualify to participate in the program.

This program, also offers talks and workshops aimed to students and teachers; also the program collaborates in environmental educational projects such as the well-known School Yard Habitat Program.

What kind of conservation activities could be promoted by the Partners for Fish and Wildlife Program?

Program participants establish a cooperative agreement with the USFWS, which includes a Conservation/Restoration Plan describing the most appropriate conservation practices for restoring or enhancing the habitats present on their lands. Some of the most common practices include:

- shade-grown coffee agro-ecosystem,
- forest enhancement by planting native species and invasive species control,
- reforestation of open areas with native trees that provide food and shelter for wildlife,
- riparian restoration (e.g. sediment and erosion control, vegetation buffers),
- habitat conservation of listed plant species and at risk of extinction, and
- wetland restoration.