

**3rd Meeting of the Signatories to the Memorandum of  
Understanding on the Conservation of Southern South American  
Migratory Grasslands Bird Species and their Habitat**

*Florianopolis, Brazil, 2 - 4 December 2024*

UNEP/CMS/GRB-MOS3/Doc.5.1b

**IMPLEMENTATION REPORT**

*(Prepared by the Government of Brazil)*

Summary:

This report outlines the activities implemented during Brazil's coordination period by the signatory countries of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on the Conservation of Southern South American Migratory Grassland Bird Species and their Habitats.

This report can be further supplemented with document UNEP/CMS/GRB/MOS3/Doc.4.1

## IMPLEMENTATION REPORT

### 1. Introduction

This report outlines the activities implemented during Brazil's coordination period by the signatory countries of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on the Conservation of Southern South American Migratory Grassland Bird Species and their Habitats (*MdE Pastizales*). It highlights the progress made, challenges, and prospects for the future of regional conservation efforts for migratory grassland birds and their habitats.

The Grasslands MoU was established on August 26, 2007, with the signing of representatives from Argentina, Bolivia, Paraguay, Uruguay and Brazil, who committed to join efforts for the conservation of migratory bird species that depends on the natural grasslands of southern South America. This commitment aims to address conservation challenges at a regional scale, promoting cooperation among countries to protect critical habitats and mitigate the threats that affect these birds and their ecosystems.

### 2. Main Results (2018-2023)

During Brazil's coordination period, meetings were conducted to update the Action Plan and monitor its implementation, with consistent support from the CMS Secretariat and Manomet. Efforts were focused on 11 priority species, including Charadriiformes (*Calidris subruficollis*, *Numenius borealis*) and Passeriformes. Various significant initiatives supported the MoU's implementation, such as awareness campaigns, scientific research, conservation programs, and national action plans.

Regarding the species listed in the MoU, efforts were focused on improving their conservation status, reducing threats—particularly those linked to agricultural impacts—and the developing new research and innovation projects to enhance conservation strategies. Progress under the Grasslands MoU between 2018 and 2024 was driven by joint actions from the signatory countries, guided by the International Action Plan. Regional achievements include the monitoring of listed species, with population surveys and studies, with an emphasis on population trends and consolidating information on habitats and threats.

Notable initiatives for the conservation of natural habitats include the protection of critical grassland areas through nature reserves and protected areas, as well as the implementation of sustainable management practices in pastures, fostering the integration of local communities.

A key aspect of the instrument was the strengthening of cooperation among countries, promoting the exchange of technical knowledge between experts and institutions from the signatories and conducting awareness campaigns for the conservation of migratory birds. The detailed information below was extracted from the national reports submitted to MOS2 and MOS3, providing an overview of the results achieved. However, it does not encompass all actions carried out by the member countries, as additional details can be found in the Action Plan's monitoring spreadsheets. The submission of national reports, a crucial mechanism for implementing the MoU, is strongly emphasized.

#### **Creation and Strengthening of Conservation Areas for Key species**

Under this topic, the creation of new protected areas benefiting the listed species was reported, alongside ongoing initiatives to restore degraded grasslands and mitigate harmful agricultural practices.

Argentina reported the creation of the Ciervo de los Pantanos National Park (2018), the Ansenusa National Park (2022), and the Campo San Juan Federal Park (2022). The country also highlighted its participation in the Ramsar Regional Initiative for the conservation and sustainable use of the Cuenca del Plata.

Brazil emphasized the importance of the Lagoa do Peixe National Park, a critical habitat for *Calidris subruficollis*, and noted that proposals for new protected areas are currently under study.

Paraguay underscored the significance of the Bay of Asunción, which supports a diverse range of migratory bird species.

Uruguay reported the establishment of protected areas where hunting is prohibited and highlighted the creation of Birdwatchers' Clubs, promoted by Aves Uruguay, with plans for nationwide expansion. The Alianza del Pastizal has also raised awareness among rural producers about the importance of wild birds and encouraged their protection.

### **Habitat Management in Non-protected Areas:**

Argentina highlighted the implementation of the Carne de Pastizal protocol in both natural and productive areas, focusing on grassland conservation. It also reported the designation of the Mar Chiquita reservoir as the 10th site in the Hemispheric Network for Shorebird Reserves in Argentina and the identification of Key Biodiversity Areas (KBA) and Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas (AICA), following BirdLife International's criteria.

Brazil emphasized the promotion of certified meat through the Alianza del Pastizal, ensuring sustainable practices in native pastures. A significant increase in sustainable pasture management in private areas was reported, benefiting species like *Sporophila cinnamomea* and *Xanthopsar flavus*. Training programs for rural producers managing native pastures sustainably were highlighted, along with the positive impact of fire control and pasture rotation on conserving endangered habitats and species.

Paraguay reported the adoption of sustainable production practices in grasslands, including the certification of meat and rice through the Alianza del Pastizal and monitoring efforts led by Guyra Paraguay.

Uruguay implemented a ban on hunting and trading MoU species on both public and private lands. It also reported the application of the Pastizal Conservation Index (ICP) to evaluate the conservation status of grasslands and the effectiveness of management plans, along with agreements to support poultry activities aligned with conservation goals.

### **Fundamental Research**

Argentina reported that studies are being conducted by CECOAL (CONICET), focusing on migratory movements, niche modeling, and the demography of grassland birds, such as *Xanthopsar flavus*, *Alectrurus risora*, and species from the genus *Sporophila*. Recent publications highlight the sustainable management of habitats and the conservation of endangered species, including *Xanthopsar flavus* and *Alectrurus risora*.

Brazil reported an increase in research publications since 2018 addressing the conservation of birds in the South American Pampa biome. These studies explore the effects of various land management strategies on bird communities, showing that natural grasslands support greater diversity of threatened species compared to improved or cultivated pastures. These findings underscore the importance of preserving intact grassland habitats to support declining bird

populations. Moreover, studies have identified the specific habitat preferences of various grassland bird species across different landscapes, including urban, agricultural, and forested areas. Increased research has also highlighted gaps in knowledge regarding the life history strategies and movement patterns of South American grasslands birds, stressing the need for long-term monitoring to better understand these patterns and their implications for conservation.

Paraguay reported ongoing projects on biodiversity in pastures, focusing on the impact of agricultural practices and initiatives related to migratory species. The use of technological tools, such as MOTUS antennas for tracking migratory birds, was also mentioned, with Bahía de Asunción being the first site in the Southern Cone to implement this system.

Uruguay reported on studies regarding the ecology of wild birds and the impact of productive activities. The "Connecting Sites and People for the Conservation of *Tryngites subruficollis*" project, in partnership with Aves Uruguay, Alianza del Pastizal, and other regional institutions, was also highlighted.

### **Population and Habitat Monitoring:**

Argentina reported continuous monitoring of endangered species, conducted by CECOAL and Aves Argentinas, as well as actions under the National Plan for the Conservation of Shorebirds, which include sustainable management strategies.

In Brazil, despite the lack of a continuous program, significant progress has been made in the population and habitat monitoring of MoU Grasslands birds. Key activities include academic research and monitoring rural properties. The Campos Sulinos Network, a coalition of universities and research centers in southern Brazil, studies grassland bird communities and organizes knowledge through the SISBIOTA/PPBio project. The monitoring of *Calidris subruficollis* was highlighted, including studies conducted at the Lagoa do Peixe National Park and Torotama Island. Furthermore, in the GEF Mar Project, CEMAVE/ICMBio and the Lagoa do Peixe National Park have been conducting monitoring to integrate these practices into the park's routine, focusing on migratory species.

Paraguay reported continuous monitoring of grassland birds and waterfowl in areas such as Yacyretá Island, with regular censuses conducted by Guyra Paraguay.

Uruguay reported on the "Aves Pampeanas" project, which implemented monitoring in critical areas like Arerunguá and Salto. Alianza del Pastizal carried out biodiversity surveys on properties, showing improvements in areas where sustainable management practices were followed.

### **Facilitation and Systematization of Information:**

Argentina reported the ongoing updates of several online information platforms, including SIB (Biodiversity Information System, APN), eBird Argentina, AICA, and KBA Argentina, all of which are part of the strategy outlined in the National Plan for the Conservation of Shorebirds in Argentina.

In Brazil, information is centralized in the SALVE System and the ICMBio portal, ensuring access to data on species and actions under the Campos Sulinos PAN. Additionally, comprehensive information on the conservation status of birds in the MoU is available through the Atlas of Bird Records – ARA/CEMAVE (<http://ara.cemave.gov.br/>).

Paraguay reports continuous updates of biodiversity data provided by government institutions and Guyra Paraguay.

Uruguay published the Red List of the Birds of Uruguay, which includes information on endangered species and conservation recommendations. It also reported the management of the eBird Uruguay platform, which promotes the recording and use of birdwatching data.

### **Training for Producers and Society**

Argentina highlighted the promotion of good livestock practices by institutions such as INTA, Fundación Vida Silvestre Argentina, and Alianza del Pastizal, along with the publication of manuals and extension kits for pasture conservation.

In Brazil, training programs and workshops for rural landowners and public agents have had a positive impact on conservation efforts, particularly by promoting sustainable pasture management.

Paraguay reported the promotion of good livestock practices, with training provided to rural producers for sustainable pasture management.

Uruguay facilitated training for technicians and rural producers on sustainable management practices, in collaboration with various projects.

### **Outreach and Education**

Argentina has developed the Illegal Wildlife Trafficking Program through Aves Argentinas, focusing on community education and the reporting of illegal hunting and trafficking activities. Additionally, the country organized symposiums on grassland and livestock birds at ornithology meetings.

In Brazil, environmental education campaigns, supported by non-governmental organizations and universities, have significantly raised public awareness about the importance of southern grasslands. Several articles and social media posts on the conservation of southern grasslands and species have been published, and birdwatching events and activities in the region have promoted conservation and best practices.

Paraguay mentioned educational campaigns led by the General Directorate of Environmental Management, which included workshops in schools and municipalities.

Uruguay published educational manuals and resources to support conservation efforts.

### **Legislation**

Argentina has adopted several laws, decrees, and resolutions, including National Law No. 27,456/2018 (Ciervo de los Pantanos National Park) and National Law No. 27,673/2022 (Ansenuza National Park). The country has also proposed legislative measures for the conservation of grasslands in provinces such as Entre Ríos and Buenos Aires.

In Brazil, regulations such as MMA Ordinance No. 148/2022 (updating the national list of endangered species) and Decree No. 51,882/2014 (officializing the Pastizal Conservation Index - ICP) were published. Despite these advances, setbacks occurred in state legislation in Rio Grande do Sul and Santa Catarina, impacting the protection of native pastures.

Paraguay and Uruguay referred to various environmental protection and conservation laws.

## **Control**

In Argentina, control and supervision are carried out by national and provincial authorities, along with the security forces in each jurisdiction.

In Brazil, routine inspection operations are conducted by the Environmental Military Police in states with native grasslands, as well federal agents from IBAMA and ICMBio for infractions within Protected Areas. However, these operations have been sporadic since 2018. The lack of integration between these operations and strategic planning for protecting key areas—both for capturing PAN species and preventing the degradation of native grasslands—needs to be addressed and strengthened in the coming years.

In Paraguay, environmental inspections are conducted by the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development, focusing on wildlife protection and combating illegal trafficking. In Uruguay, inspections are carried out by the Department of Fauna and other official bodies empowered to enforce laws against wildlife crimes.

## **Institutional Strengthening**

Argentina reports the implementation of projects that promote sustainable practices and the conservation of migratory birds in wind energy development and land management.

In Brazil, institutional strengthening has been supported through the issuance of Ordinances and Normative Instructions.

In Paraguay, institutional strengthening is achieved through training programs conducted by the Human Talent Management Directorate, as well as agreements signed with municipalities, governments, other state entities, and NGOs.

Uruguay reported collaborations with NGOs and academic institutions, including Aves Uruguay, Alianza del Pastizal, and the Institute of Biological Investigations "Clemente Estable".

## **Agreements and Conventions**

Brazil highlights strategic partnerships, such as those developed by Alianza del Pastizal, to promote sustainable agricultural and livestock practices and foster development.

Paraguay reported that the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development has signed agreements with municipalities, governments, other state institutions, NGOs, and international organizations for conservation efforts.

Agreements with **CITES**, **CMS**, and **CBD** were also mentioned.

## **Capacity-building**

Argentina reports training in sustainable livestock practices for pastures, promoted by various institutions, including SSA, INTA, Fundación Vida Silvestre Argentina, Aves Argentinas, Alianza del Pastizal, and activities within the GEF ARG 19/G28 Project.

In Brazil, training programs for inspectors and researchers, such as those conducted by ICMBio, have enhanced the capacity for monitoring and managing conservation areas. ICMBio/CEMAVE manages the National Banding System (SNA), a tool used to systematize information on the occurrence, displacement, and longevity of species, with data included into the online network.

Paraguay reports that the Human Talent Management Department, through its Training Department, provides leadership training programs for the institutions.

Uruguay mentions hosting scientific dissemination days on bird conservation and applicable regulations, as well as educating stakeholders on bird conservation and regulations in protected areas.

### **International Cooperation:**

Argentina reports partnerships funded by organizations such as the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act (NMBCA) and the Global Environment Facility (GEF), along with active participation in the Alianza del Pastizal, in collaboration with partners from Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay.

In Brazil, collaborations with Argentina, Uruguay, and Paraguay have strengthened the transnational approach to conserving birds and habitats in the Pampa biome. Joint projects facilitate the exchange of data and conservation methods, while also promoting the protection of cross-border ecological corridors.

Paraguay reported that the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development benefits from cooperation through the GEF Project.

Uruguay highlighted projects in partnership with Canada (CWS) and the USA (FWS) for studying migratory birds, such as *Tryngites subruficollis*, and collaborations with ornithological NGOs from other countries in the region for developing research projects.

### **3. Final Comments on the MoU and Action Plan**

Between MOS2 and the most recent monitoring, the evaluation of the Action Plan revealed that 51% of the actions were progressing as planned, 37% were in progress but faced implementation challenges, and 12% had not yet been initiated. Monitoring the objectives of the Action Plan showed that most activities are underway, though many are encountering issues with implementation.

Despite significant progress, challenges remain, such as pressures from land-use changes and the impacts of climate change. Nevertheless, the collective efforts of the signatory countries strengthen the commitment to long-term conservation.

During the coordination period, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the execution of activities and in-person meetings is notable. There were also difficulties in monitoring and implementing actions due to the absence of meetings between 2020 and 2023. Additionally, the lack of funding and human resources proved to be a significant obstacle to the implementation of the MoU.

The importance of submitting national reports is emphasized, as they serve as a crucial tool for measuring the implementation of the MoU and ensuring alignment between conservation, sustainable development, and cooperation within the framework of the Grasslands MoU.

This report can be further supplemented by the **Report on MoU Coordination** (UNEP/CMS/GRB/MOS3/Doc.4.1), the National Reports, and the monitoring spreadsheets detailing the actions of the action plan from **MOS2** and **MOS3**.