

# **Mist Netting Survey of Overwintering Migrant Songbirds in the Caroni Swamp, Trinidad.**

## **Summary**

The Caroni Swamp has a rich avifaunal diversity with 157 species of resident and migrant birds being recorded in this wetland by ornithologist Richard French (Cuffy 2002). Nearctic-neotropical migratory songbirds refer to passerines (perching birds) that breed in the temperate zone but spend the winter in the tropics (Studds and Marra 2005). Trinidad is located along a main migration pathway from North America to South America and several species of migratory songbirds have been recorded from September to April (French 1991). However, relatively little is known about the migrant songbird population of the Caroni Swamp. Therefore the primary objective of this study is to investigate the migrant songbird population of the northern Caroni Swamp by conducting an extensive mist netting survey during the overwintering period.

Mist netting enables the collection of relevant biometric and demographic data from the migrants, which are subsequently banded and released. Mist netting surveys from October 2012 to March 2013 are currently in progress at six sites in the vicinity of the No. 9 Drain and the Blue River. The project team consists of Kareena Manickchan (M.Sc. student); Carl Fitzjames (certified bird bander); Vishnu Debie; Kaveer Manickchan and Shiva Manickchan under the supervision of Dr Howard Nelson and Dr Luke Rostant of the Life Sciences Department of the University of the West Indies, St Augustine. It is anticipated that this study will reveal important features of the Caroni Swamp migrant songbird population including: the identification and number of migrant songbird species present; the duration of their stay; relative abundance; age and sex ratios and body condition. This project will also provide a foundation for further studies of migrant songbirds in the Caroni Swamp and is important to conservation efforts on both a local and international scale.

## References

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