



WPA news

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Sonchai K.

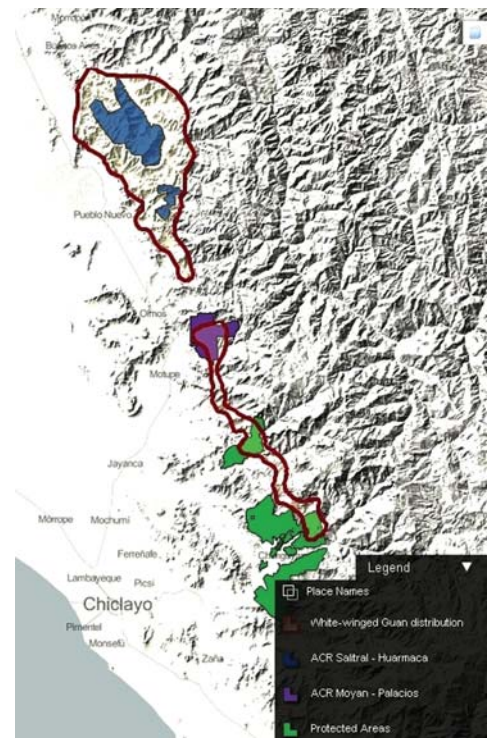
Could people survive without Galliformes?

New protected areas for the Critically Endangered white-winged guan

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The white-winged guan *Penelope albipennis* is a cracid endemic to the dry forests of northwestern Peru and threatened by hunting, habitat destruction, and habitat fragmentation. To date the total wild population is estimated to be no more than 250 individuals currently distributed along a strip of forest approximately 175–190 km long and 5–40 km wide. The distribution of the white-winged guan used to be continuous, but now the Olmos-Jaen road subdivides the species habitat range into a larger northern area (1553 km²) and a smaller and narrow southern area (347 km²). The northern area holds approximately 70% of the total wild population.

Cracidae Peru recognized that these protected areas would not be sufficient to support the white-winged guan and ensure their long-term conservation. Initiatives to improve the situation began in 2006 when Asociación Cracidae Peru developed a national strategy for the species, identifying the need to increase the number of protected areas. In 2009, the government took a further step and made the decision to support studies to determine the conservation potential of several new sites in northwestern Peru. These sites would then form a corridor of protected areas throughout the bird's habitat. The Program for Support of Protected Areas (PROFONANPE) promoted these studies, with the financial support of the German Cooperation through KfW. Nature and Culture International carried out in situ research, and BirdLife International Peru Program led the bird and wildlife inventories.



White-winged guan distribution & protected areas



White-winged guan and chicks

Until recently, this endemic species was protected only in two areas both located in the southern area of the bird's habitat. The first is the Laquipampa Wildlife Refuge, a State Protected Area created in 1982 by the Peruvian government following the recent rediscovery of this species after 100 years of being considered extinct. The second is the Chaparri Private Conservation Area created in 2001, which still contains a small wild population and a reintroduced population.

Both the Peruvian government and the Peruvian NGO Asociación

These efforts resulted in the development of two new Regional Conservation Areas in 2011 with the prime goal of "conserving the habitat and populations of the white-winged guan. In the northern area of the species range the Bosques Secos de Salitral Conservation Area (288 km²) was set up in the Piura region, and in the southern end of the species range in the Lambayeque region, the Bosque Moyá (85 km²) Conservation Area was created.

This new complex of conservation areas will offer white-winged guan more protection throughout its range, particularly in the south section, which is a smaller and narrower area and small susceptible to outside pressures.

However, we are far from ensuring a future for this species. Further steps are needed to ensure that these new protected areas are functional. This includes establishing and enforcing the boundaries of the conservation

areas and providing administrative staff and wardens with clear objectives. Furthermore, it is imperative to maintain local educational and outreaching campaigns to change people's perception towards the guan (i.e. to stop thinking of it as food but as a development alternative).

Finally, reintroduction of individuals is necessary to keep connectivity and genetic refreshment especially in the southern part of the species range. Several sites fulfill the requirements for a successful reintroduction. Here, the Crax Perú Association, which manages most of the white-winged Guan captive population, is responsible for studying, reproducing and reintroducing the guans. This NGO is currently presenting proposals to release guans in the two new protected areas, and a priority is to reinforce the white-winged guan's southern population.

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