

Project Update: December 2009

I finished my second field season a few weeks ago. Both field seasons were very different (the first very dry, the second very wet), but my team and I were able to obtain large amounts of data on both. We found more than 70 Pampas Meadowlark nests and colour banded some 30 individuals (the total Uruguayan population is estimated in 200-300 individuals). We calculated with great detail the areas of more than 20 Pampas Meadowlark territories (for the first time in the case of this species and probably for any other globally threatened South American grassland bird!). We recorded the songs of more than 100 males, which probably represent 70-80% of the whole Pampas Meadowlark male population. Each male has a unique song, so this database will be extremely useful during future census work. During our fieldwork we strengthened our relationship with many landowners (several new ones), and almost all of them allowed us to work on their ranches. This cooperation is also going to be very important in the future.

Concerning public awareness, I gave many talks at schools, conservation meetings, etc. At the start of the project (Oct 2008) I was invited by the Convention on Migratory Species to give several talks on grassland bird conservation as part of a regional workshop on this topic.

There are several other interesting conservation outcomes, which I will describe in my report. In sum, I am extremely pleased with the results of the project and I want to thank The Rufford Small Grants Foundation for its continuous support.