

Round one of the Conservation Awards Programme for 2026

Mike Dawson

NBC announces the first set of conservation awards for 2026.

In March 2026, NBC Council assessed nine applications from seven countries, approving awards for six. Unless otherwise specified, funding was provided by the March Conservation Fund.



PERNAMBUCO PYGMY OWL, BRAZIL (US\$3,000)

This project will use passive acoustic monitoring across 80 sites in remaining fragments of Atlantic Forest to determine the presence of Pernambuco Pygmy-Owl *Glaucidium mooreorum* (Critically Endangered). It will evaluate how land cover, structural connectivity and anthropogenic disturbance affect this and other owl species. The results will directly inform Brazil's National Action Plan for Raptor Conservation, identifying priority areas for protection.

YELLOW-NAPED PARROT, HONDURAS (US\$3,000)

A follow-up to a previous award (see *Neotrop. Birding* 32: 60–63) made to Green Island Challenge to help recovery of Yellow-naped Parrot *Amazona auropalliata* (Critically Endangered) on Guanaja. By providing nest boxes and hiring local people to protect them, the species' population has risen to 1,000 birds. NBC's award will fund an additional 'parrot protector'.

GREAT GREEN MACAW, COSTA RICA (US\$3,000)

Great Green Macaw *Ara ambiguous* (Critically Endangered) is resident at La Amistad Caribe but the logging of almond trees has reduced natural nest-sites. The project will encourage the species to breed by providing and protecting 15 nest boxes, and by restoring habitat. NBC funding will support nest maintenance, monitoring, community engagement and censusing.

PERUVIAN THICK-KNEE, CHILE (US\$3,000)

Peruvian Thick-knee *Hesperoburhinus superciliosus* (Vulnerable) is among the world's most poorly studied shorebirds. Using historical records and GPS data compiled in 2025, this project will

survey all known sites in northern Chile, plus additional dry riverbanks where individuals may reside undetected. The project will also assess potential threats, colour-flag birds to enable local birdwatchers and communities to track their movements, identify critical habitats across the year and provide a population estimate. This will generate information for conservation planning and support national shorebird conservation priorities.

BRUJO FLYCATCHER, ECUADOR (US\$3,000)

A Near Threatened Galápagos endemic, Brujo Flycatcher *Pyrocephalus nanus* has declined severely across several islands; on Santa Cruz, recent conservation actions have increased the population to c.60 individuals, but its long-term viability remains uncertain due to genetic risks associated with small population size. With funding from the estate of the late Suzanne Capewell, this project will assess the genetic health of one-third of the Santa Cruz population using whole-genome sequencing. The project will quantify genetic diversity, in-breeding, loss of heterozygosity and genetic load, to enable a direct assessment of extinction risk. Sharing results with the Galápagos National Park Directorate will guide conservation actions, including the potential need for genetic rescue or targeted translocations.

PALE-BROWED TINAMOU, ECUADOR (US\$1,289)

Funded by an anonymous donor, the project will use passive acoustic monitoring to assess the population numbers, population density and ecology of the Pale-browed Tinamou *Crypturellus transfasciatus* (Near Threatened) in Tumbesian dry forests. The goal is to establish a solid scientific basis for identifying critical conservation areas and assessing how habitat fragmentation and degradation affect the survival of this species.

MIKE DAWSON

Neotropical Birding and Conservation, Beds, UK

✉ chair@neotropicalbirdingandconservation.org