The Red Siskin Recovery Project is an international partnership that aims to recover sustainable populations of the Red Siskin in Venezuela through captive breeding and reintroduction to agroforestry ecosystems and to maintain a viable population in Guyana through land protection and community stewardship.

The Red Siskin, Sporagra (Carduelis) cucullata, is a highly endangered and iconic bird in northern South America that is threatened mainly by wildlife trafficking for the pet trade but also habitat loss. Formerly distributed across most of northern Venezuela only a few isolated colonies remain today with a total population that may number less than a thousand birds.

Another small but viable population was discovered in southern Guyana in 2000. This species has a high level of recognition and societal attachment in both countries. Listed in the US ESA and CITES Appendix I, the species is classified as CR in Venezuela and EN internationally since 1952.
Key activities and priorities are summarized below.

- Field Research – Characterizing habitat and key behaviors; Habitat modeling to identify reintrooduction sites; Distance sampling and mark-recapture to estimate population parameters.

- Genomic Research – Whole genome sequencing; Developing molecular tools to assess genetic purity and manage breeding; Estimating genetic diversity and phylogenetic relatedness.

- Captive Breeding – Establishing a research population in the US to support Venezuelan zoos that will breed birds for release in country.

- Habitat Protection - Establish IBAs leading to officially protected areas in Guyana; Collaborate with other groups to protect tropical dry forests and other areas in Venezuela.

- Reintroduction – Plan to release birds in natural areas and secure shade coffee farms certified as “Bird Friendly” by Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center.

- Education and Threat Reduction – Education programs at zoos, and to villages, schools, customs and enforcement agents; National campaigns against wildlife trafficking planned; Create formal monitoring and reporting systems; Trafficking research.

- Capacity Building – Training in conservation research and ecotourism focused on Amerindian villages and women in Guyana; Science-based captive breeding and reintroduction in Venezuela.

- Sustainable Economic Alternatives – Establish a stringent shade coffee certification program in Venezuela; promote a burgeoning eco/cultural-tourism industry in Guyana.