

Red Siskin Initiative

Building opportunities for communities, ecosystems and +200 bird species in Venezuela

Who we are?

The **Red Siskin Initiative** is an international partnership working to **understand, protect and restore populations of an endangered bird, the Red Siskin (*Spinus cucullatus*)**, in Venezuela. We focus on this carefully selected, culturally-relevant **flagship species** to protect and restore endangered forest ecosystems and foster sustainable livelihoods.

Achievements

-  Red Siskin genome decoded, available habitat in Venezuela assessed, traffic network and illegal trafficking rates unveiled.
-  The first Red Siskin Conservation Center constructed and in operation in Paya, Venezuela for rescues and ex-situ breeding.
-  +460 hectares of bird-friendly habitat secured through shade coffee farming, benefiting +200 bird species.
-  +18 wild Red Siskins rescued from illegal trafficking thanks to collaboration from local authorities and private aviculturists.
-  Sustainable livelihoods promoted in +70 coffee farming families in Venezuela and +200 aviculturists from America and Europe.

Background

The Red Siskin: a generous ambassador to Venezuela

The **Red Siskin** is an *endemic, culturally relevant and critically endangered bird in Venezuela*. Its decline has been associated with habitat loss and unsustainable extraction as a result of complex social dynamics and the limited availability of resources to promote sustainable livelihoods. At the **Red Siskin Initiative** we are aware that this is a common reality for many species of songbirds in Latin America, for which we propose an opportunity for change.

The strategy

A complex conservation issue, under a comprehensive approach

The **Red Siskin Initiative** advances on the guidelines of its action plan, which since 2015 guides the strategies towards our main objective: the conservation of the Red Siskin and mitigation of main threats. Our pillars: *research, education, rescue, restoration and promotion of sustainable livelihoods* under knowledge and experience integration. To date **we have managed to achieve +30% of our strategic goals** benefitting +200 bird species of the threatened dry forest ecosystem in Venezuela, 4 communities of coffee growers with an impact on +400 ha of forest, 10 workgroups of aviculturists from America and Europe adding to reduce illegal trafficking and raising awareness in an captive audience of +10,000 users worldwide.

Our approach

We combine research, communication and conservation action (Arvelo et al., 2016).



Understanding the Red Siskin



Connecting with people



Rescuing and Raising RS



Ensuring bird-friendly habitat



Promoting only sustainable use



Next steps

Building Resilience through Collaboration

Our next 5 years include key strategies for our action plan, learn about our next goals and how to collaborate:

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| Protect +600 forest hectares by 2024 | Guarantee salaries and resources for RSI Venezuelan staff | Behavior change campaign to discourage IWT | Acoustic monitoring methodology completed | Husbandry manuals for ex-situ management |
| Promote sustainable livelihoods in +2 new coffee producers communities | New storybook for children launched by 2023 | Educational route to discourage IWT at the Red Siskin Conservation Center | +2 new schools in Venezuela from Bridging the Americas educational program | Red Siskin Population Management strategy |