

**Environmental Impact Assessment
and
Environmental Management Plan**

April 2017

CEPF Grant 100476

SAVE Brasil

Saving the Blue-eyed Ground-dove and its Unique Cerrado Habitat
Botumirim, MG

Grant Summary

1. Grantee organization.
SAVE Brasil.
2. Grant title.
Saving the Blue-eyed Ground-dove and its Unique Cerrado Habitat.
3. Grant number.
100476.
4. Grant amount.
122.133,38 (US dollars).
5. Proposed dates of grant.
From Oct-17 to Oct-19.
6. Countries or territories where project will be undertaken.
Botumirim, MG, Brazil (Espinhaço ridge)
7. Summary of the project.

Sociedade para a Conservação das Aves do Brasil - SAVE Brasil (Society for Bird Conservation in Brazil) is a non-profit, non-governmental organization dedicated to the conservation of Brazilian birds and nature. Following a participatory approach, we work together with governments, civil society organizations, universities, business and communities, to develop and implement strategies, programs and actions that contribute to a better, healthier and more beautiful planet for animals, plants and people. SAVE Brasil represents the global partnership of BirdLife International, the world's largest nature conservation Partnership active in more than 120 countries. After working in conservation for more than 10 years, SAVE Brasil has reached significant achievements. Now, it is time for the Blue-eyed Ground-dove (*Columbina cyanopsis*). This species is one of the rarest birds in the world and was remained unseen for 75 years, until a population was rediscovered in 2015, in Botumirim city, state of Minas Gerais/Brazil. This rediscovery represents one of the recent years' most amazing findings of the Neotropical ornithology and it has been recognized as a unique opportunity to understand the ecology of this very mysterious species, in addition to implement a long-term program to ensure the conservation of this dove and its habitat. The Blue-eyed Ground-dove is considered Critically Endangered by BirdLife International/IUCN. The biome in which Botumirim is inserted is the Cerrado, one of the savannah type habitats with greatest plant diversity in the world, with around 10,000 species. Botumirim is also identified by SAVE Brasil/BirdLife International an Important Bird and Biodiversity Area (KBA - IBA BR138), and with the rediscovery of the Blue-eyed Ground-dove it should be considered an AZE site (Alliance for Zero Extinction) on the next revision. However, there are no protected areas in the region although the creation of a State Park is being articulated by the state government and SAVE Brasil will also purchase land to create a private protected area while the State Park process is ongoing and waiting to be completed. The overall goal of the presented project is to ensure the long-term conservation of the Blue-eyed Ground-dove and its unique Cerrado habitat. The CEPF grant will support SAVE Brasil in developing the conservation strategies needed to achieve such goal. Amongst these strategies are: develop the species research, habitat protection, raising awareness about the importance of the species conservation, local community engagement, and promote ecological tourism in the area.
8. Date of preparation of this document.
April, 20th, 2017
9. **Status of area to be impacted:** This section should describe the applicant's understanding of the site.
Botumirim is 90km away from Montes Claros, north of Jequitinhonha river in the center-north region of Minas Gerais State. Next to the city raises a plateau that belongs to *Espinhaço* ridge,

where its top is known as “Campina do Bananal”. *Campos rupestres* cover the rock fields over this plateau. Botanical families as Bromeliaceae, Cactaceae, Clusiaceae, Ericaceae, Eriocaulaceae, Melastomataceae, Orchidaceae, Poaceae, Velloziaceae e Verbenaceae are common and prevails in the landscape. The ridge foothill has some fragmented semideciduous forests patches also. Shrub and herbaceous formations composes the *Campos rupestres*. The project area is focused on the *Campos Rupestres* areas, since it seems to be the Blue-eyed Ground-Dove’s habitat. This vegetation type is naturally sparse therefore there is almost no need to subtract vegetation and neither to open new trails.

10. **Approach:** This section will describe proposed actions during the project. Specifically, what do you intend to do and how will you do it?

The proposed Blue-eyed Ground-Dove’s project will develop several activities in Botumirim and the scientific research part of it is what flags the safeguards policies. It was proposed initially the necessity of handling live animals using mist nets to capture and mark the birds. However, after some planning meetings our scientific board decided to avoid such approach until more basic information about the dove’s behavior and biology is produced. Our aim is to get a better understanding of the species behavior and to find new populations in order to reduce the risks involving the species handling. It is a high risk to handle the species with such a small number of individuals (less than 20). Nevertheless, it is important to mention that our team has the recommended skills and experience to handle birds using the proposed methods and they already have every legal authorization required to do so. We intend to define the species’ home range, foraging and reproductive behaviors in addition to habitat characteristics and use without capture. For this reason, in the presented proposal only non-invasive methods will be adopted. We are planning the smallest interaction with the birds and environmental impacts during the project executions in the Blue-eyed Ground-Dove area due to its rarity and level of threat. The *Campos Rupestres* are sparse enough to easily allow the research team’s movement in the bird habitat without the need of opening trails or clear cutting areas. Therefore, vegetation suppression will be avoided, although we might need to remove very few and specific branches from small shrubs. Since almost nothing is known about the species yet, at the initial stages of the research some specific areas used by the species will not be identified. Thus, several searches across the area will be performed and some major tracks will be discreetly signaled (ribbons in trees and shrubs) and removed after the end of the project activities. Most of the time, the project’s team will use small roads and paths already present in the area to avoid new interventions.

11. **Anticipated impact:** this section will describe the impact and how this impact has been determined.

The Blue-eyed Ground-Dove area is located next to a small route, used nowadays by some of Botumirim’s inhabitants. Our previous observations of the dove’s presence are almost exclusive to those low-disturbed areas, in other words, the human presence is not a completely new experience for the species. Our intended actions will not change the routine already established by the local traffic, on the contrary, will be diminished by the regulation-use. We have determined the insignificant impacts after executing some field expeditions to the areas. Were possible to see the possibilities executing the research and even the birdwatching without new trails.

12. **Mitigation measures:** Describe measures that will be taken to mitigate negative impacts.

A visitation-plan and protocol as well as a conduct-guide will be constructed with the local partners and affected communities to avoid inadequate practices. The landowner of the area will also permit a better restriction to prevent impacts. Once more, with the absence of bird handling and scanty vegetation impacts, mitigations initiatives won’t be necessary.

13. **Actions to ensure health and safety:** Describe actions that will be taken to ensure the health and safety of workers as well as the site. Include a description of waste management and/or disposal.

Small interventions, when needed will be executed by the researchers and no other workers will be present at the site. Since no trail will be constructed, there will not be waste produced. Small branches, when cut will be disposed aside. Every team member will always wear pants and adequate field shoes. Rubber boots or snake protection (“*perneiras*”) will be wear always when visiting areas where snakes are present. All the project participants have been vaccinated to avoid yellow fever that may be present at the project areas and it is a SAVE Brasil’s policy to provide travel insurance for anyone involved with our projects. Besides yellow fever, there is no information on malaria or any other tropical disease that require extra caution and specific measures to avoid them.
14. **Monitoring and Evaluation:** This section aims to outline what steps the proponent will take to monitor and evaluate the impact of the proposed intervention.

We have avoided all the possible negative interventions by deciding not to handle the species through mist net capture to band individuals. Our intention is to prevent impacts in such small population. Likewise, we have chosen not to open new trails and cut the vegetation. Therefore we are considering our actions not as negative interventions requiring monitoring.
15. **Permission of the landowner:** Please verify permission of the landowner to undertake actions on the site, and verify that you have the required permits to undertake this work.

The project has already obtained the authorization from the current owner. However, SAVE Brasil will buy the propriety soon, thus further permissions will not be needed.
16. **Consultation:** This section aims to outline the range of informed consultations that the grantee has had both with experts to optimize the potential for success, and with stakeholders, particularly local communities, who are potentially affected by the proposed actions. Include dates of consultations.

Since the ornithologist, Raphael Bessa rediscovered the species and asked SAVE Brasil to develop the project, several well-recognized professionals have been working together to build its scope. Decisions are being made with consultations including the involved organizations, local stakeholders, and collaborators coming from different fields. We already searched for partnerships and are working close to local partners such as the Botumirim’s city hall, Minas Gerais State Forestry Institute and the local NGO called Grande Sertão Institute. The last meetings were made last march in Botumirim and Montes Claros, the biggest city nearby. The first step to evaluate the project’s positives and negatives impacts in the area was developing a feasibility study. This study helped us to learn about the local realities established in the city and these learnt aspects are always take into consideration. Some activities are planned to occur in the next months with the community such as a public release of the project, which will facilitate the public participation and suggestions during our upcoming activities. SAVE Brasil is used to work in remote areas, where the cities have less than 15 thousand inhabitants, and so we always work close to them, in order to establish a positive bond with them, respecting their cultural activities and local behaviors in addition to build, along the local stakeholders, strategies to raise alternatives sources of income. These social activities always permeate our ultimate goal, biodiversity conservation.
17. **Disclosure:** CEPF requires that safeguard documents are disclosed to affected local communities and stakeholders prior to project implementation. Please describe efforts to disclose this impact assessment and environmental management plan and provide dates.

Before the beginning of the project a public release will be held in Botumirim city council. The event will happen this coming May. About fifty of the most representative people in the city are

expected to be present at the event. SAVE Brasil intends to present the safeguard documents and show the plan to avoid negative impacts. During this event, we will also share with the local community how can they reach our team in any case they feel in need to and it is related to the project or its activities.

18. **Grievance mechanism:** All projects that trigger a safeguard are required to provide local communities and other interested stakeholders with means by which they may raise a grievance with the grantee, the relevant Regional Implementation Team, the CEPF Secretariat or the World Bank. Affected local communities should be informed of the objectives of the grant and the existence of a grievance mechanism. Contact information of the grantee, the Regional Implementation Team and the CEPF Grant Director should be made publicly available, through posters, signboards, public notices or other appropriate means in local language(s). Grievances raised with the grantee should be communicated to the Regional Implementation Team and the CEPF Grant Director within 15 days, together with a proposed response. If the claimant is still not satisfied following the response, the grievance may be submitted directly to the CEPF Executive Director via the dedicated email account (cepfexecutive@conservation.org) or by mail. If the claimant is not satisfied with the response from the CEPF Secretariat, the grievance may be submitted to the World Bank at the local World Bank office. Please describe the grievance mechanism that you will use for your project, and how you will ensure that stakeholders are aware of it.

SAVE Brasil will install a permanent base in Botumirim where, at least one project's staff member will always be present. A governance will be established through the constant presence of a staff member, and we are encouraging an open communication with the community at all times. We will also have a fixed sign in the field base with all communications lines in a clear and accessible display for anyone interested in contact either SAVE Brasil's headquarter, or the CEPF Regional Implementation Team. The intention is to disclose all the information necessary to permit grievance when and if needed.

Any grievances raised with SAVE Brasil will be communicated to the Regional Implementation Team (RIT) and the CEPF Grant Director within 15 days, together with a proposed response. If the claimant is still not satisfied following the response, the grievance may be submitted directly to the CEPF Executive Director via the dedicated email account (cepfexecutive@conservation.org) or by mail.