



MIDCONTINENT SHOREBIRD CONSERVATION INITIATIVE (MSCI)

FACT SHEET - South American Grasslands and Associated
Wetlands Planning Unit

GEOGRAPHY

Major landscapes: Orinoco Llanos and savannas of the Guianan Highlands, the Beni Savanna, the Araguaia Depression and Pantanal, portions of the Gran Chaco, and the Pampas.



Countries:

-  Venezuela
-  Colombia
-  Bolivia
-  Brazil
-  Paraguay
-  Argentina
-  Uruguay

Main habitats: Seasonally flooded grasslands interspersed with shrublands, palm savannas, temporary and permanent wetlands, rivers.

Other characteristics: This is a discontinuous planning unit, where the portions in the south are drier than those in the north, including those closer to the crest of the Andes; agricultural lands are present in these drier parts of the planning unit.



TARGET / KEY SPECIES

Buff-breasted Sandpiper, American Golden-Plover, Upland Sandpiper, Stilt Sandpiper, Hudsonian Godwit, Pectoral Sandpiper, Wilson's Phalarope, Lesser Yellowlegs, Tawny-throated Dotterel and Pantanal Snipe.



MAIN THREATS

This list reflects the highest-ranked threats identified for this planning unit. However, it does not encompass all threats affecting the unit. For a comprehensive assessment of threats and their relative importance, please refer to pages 24–36 of the MSCI Strategic Framework.

Threat Ranking in the South American Grasslands and Associated Wetlands		
Threat	Impacts	Rating
Climate change	Increases drought frequency and extreme weather events shift vegetation structure, alter wetland hydroperiods, reduce invertebrate productivity, and disrupt the predictability of resources needed to sustain long-distance migrants.	Very High
Habitat conversion and incompatible agricultural practices	Causes fragmentation and degradation of grassland ecosystems, reducing the availability, quality, and spatial continuity of habitats required by shorebirds.	Very High
Incompatible water management	Alters natural hydrological regimes (especially in agricultural landscapes) through wetland drainage, groundwater diversion for irrigation, and channelization of streams and rivers, thereby diminishing prey resources, shortening wetland permanence, and increasing risk of wetland conversion within grassland systems causing overall habitat loss.	Very High
Fire management and suppression	Plays a fundamental ecological role by maintaining native grassland structure, recycling nutrients, and preventing the encroachment of woody vegetation. Fire suppression policies adopted during the 20 th century have disrupted natural fire regimes, leading to vegetation changes that increase the risk of more severe and damaging fires.	High

PRIORITY STRATEGIES AND MAIN OBJECTIVES

To address the complex and interlinked threats affecting shorebirds and their habitats in the South American Grasslands and Associated Wetlands the MSCI Strategic Framework identifies a set of complementary strategies that operate across scales and sectors. If you are implementing actions in this geography, please consider these indicators to monitor your progress towards achieving your results, and to better understand how you are contributing to implementing the MSCI Strategic Framework.

Examples of objectives and indicators relevant for the South American Grasslands and Associated Wetlands (see www.midamericasshorebirds.org for a complete list of objectives and indicators ^{1,2,3})	
Strategy: Develop, expand, and share beneficial management practices ¹	
Objectives	Indicators
Use collaborative approaches to develop new and improve existing beneficial management practices	Number of BMPs that are developed or improved for shorebird conservation
Implement demonstration sites for beneficial management practices and measure their benefits for shorebirds and human well-being	Area (e.g., hectares) of demonstration/pilot sites where BMPs are implemented
Strategy: Improve knowledge of environmental stressors' effects and address information gaps ²	
Study and measure the effects of environmental stressors on conservation targets across their lifecycles	Number of projects studying the effects of environmental stressors on conservation targets
Collect data for, and develop, integrated population models for conservation targets	Number of conservation targets for which an integrated population model is available
Strategy: Integrate climate resiliency in conservation planning and implementation ³	
Prioritize conservation of critical sites/areas based on vulnerability to climate change	Number of sites for which a climate change vulnerability assessment has been conducted
Integrate the effects of climate change in the management of the most vulnerable sites, including through nature-based solutions	Number of sites where climate change adaptation recommendations have been formulated and/or implemented

1. See pages 51 and 53 of the MSCI Strategic Framework for a complete list
2. See pages 54 and 56 of the MSCI Strategic Framework for a complete list
3. See pages 57 and 59 of the MSCI Strategic Framework for a complete list