Protective Wing
Bird sanctuary, Chiang Mai, Thailand

Main authors
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Summary by the jury
Each year, thousands of birds are smuggled in and out of Thailand for their exotic colors and bird calls, to be sold on the world’s growing black market. Rescued birds usually die in confinement because they are retained in cages for up to five years as evidence during prosecution of smugglers. The Bird Sanctuary in Chiang Mai in northern Thailand serves as both an educational facility and a bird rehabilitation center including a small hotel and bird viewing tower, in a site that simulates the natural habitat. Palm fiber, an agricultural waste, is used as a construction material for the building enclosure – the façade as habitat and food source for all birds in the area.

Appraisal by the jury
The jury greatly values the project’s political message concerning the devastating effects of bird trafficking on the survival of endangered wildlife. The author’s ideological stance aligns with the principles advocated by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), especially its “Red List of Threatened Species” – an eminent document guiding worldwide conservation policy and action. Considering architecture as an instrument of “action”, the project literally establishes the link between political activism and building practice, combining architectural qualities with conservation, education, research and eco-tourism in a complete and convincing way.

Project data
Context Architecture, building and civil engineering
Client Kaomai Lanna Resort
Background New construction and conversion
Planned start January 2015

Further authors
Felix Baroux, student, École Nationale Supérieure d’Architecture et de Paysage de Bordeaux, France; Pacharapan Ratanakorn, designer; Pratchaya Lertrucksadee, designer; Nattapong Chumkesorn, architect, Tamfun Vatayanon, designer and Sorawut Kittibanthorn, architect, Architecktidd, Bangkok, Thailand

Image 1: Bird smuggling and urban sprawl: Each year nearly 10,000 birds are smuggled into and out of Thailand. Natural environments are being replaced rapidly.

Image 2: Chiang Mai Bird Sanctuary: Designed as a bird haven – allowing ground birds, water birds, and birds of prey to fly in an integrated facility that resembles their natural habitat.
Image 3: Site 1: Boutique hotel, learning facilities and home for injured birds.

Image 4: Site 1: Boutique hotel, transforming old tobacco-curing barns into bird hospices.

Image 5: Site 2: Existing site ecology.

Image 6: Site 2: Everything happens within six meters.

Image 7: Site 2: Bird rehabilitation facility.

Image 8: Site 2: Main information center and bird viewing tower.

Image 9: Site 2: Meditation pods and walkway viewing platform.


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