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## Third Report of the Trinidad and Tobago Rare Birds Committee: Rare Birds in Trinidad and Tobago in 2001 – 2003

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# Third Report of the Trinidad and Tobago Rare Birds Committee: Rare Birds in Trinidad and Tobago in 2001 – 2003

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The Trinidad and Tobago Rare Birds Committee (TTRBC) was established in 1995 with the principal aim to assess, document and archive the occurrence of rare or unusual birds in Trinidad and Tobago (Hayes and White 2000; White and Hayes 2002). The Committee has now assessed all records submitted during 2001, 2002 and 2003. In all 244 records were adjudged, representing 103 different species. As a result of these submissions, 10 additional species have been added to the official list of Birds of Trinidad and Tobago. Of those assessed, in only 19 cases (8%) did the Committee feel that the identification had been inconclusive. The records tabulated below follow the nomenclature and taxonomic order of the American Ornithologists Union (AOU) 7<sup>th</sup> edition, 1998. Highlights of sightings submitted in 2002 have been published previously (Kenefick 2004).

The Committee comprises the following members: Martyn Kenefick (Secretary), Richard French, Geoffrey Gomes, Floyd Hayes, Bill Murphy, Courtenay Rooks and Graham White. We are aware that a number of other rare birds are found each year in Trinidad and Tobago and urge finders not only to report their sightings to us but to document same. A list of those species considered by the TTRBC can be accessed together with our Photo Gallery from the home page of the TTFNC at <http://www.wow.net/ttfnc>.

## RECORDS ACCEPTED

**Cory's Shearwater, *Calonectris diomedea*.** A single bird was flushed by the Trinidad-Tobago ferry, several km south of Scarborough on 10 May, 1998. (FH *et al.*). On 17 May, 1998, one was seen flying SE from Galera Pt. (FEH *et al.*). Tide-line corpses were found on 20 November, 2001 at Manzanilla (AA; RW) and on 4 April, 2002 in Blue Waters Bay, Tobago (RES). Finally, one was seen swimming close inshore at Manzanilla on 17 March, 2003 (DH). This rare seabird has been recorded less than once per annum. Many sightings are of tide-line corpses.

**Manx Shearwater, *Puffinus puffinus*.** Up to five were recorded between 5 October – 7 November, 2002 close inshore at Galera Pt. (MK). This is only the second record of this passage migrant in the last 10 years.

**White-tailed Tropicbird, *Phaethon lepturus*.** Sightings of single birds were made amongst the seabird colony on Little Tobago on 26 November, 2000 (MB *et al.*), 29 September, 2001 (PB *et al.*) and 3 February, 2003 (MK). It is likely that this is the same bird seen periodically since April 1998. There are undocumented reports of two birds present during 2003 engaged in behaviour indicative of a breeding attempt.

**Rufescent Tiger-heron, *Tigrisoma lineatum*.** On 1 August, 2001, an adult was flushed from a woodland stream at Cumuto (MK; HS). At the same site, a juvenile was seen on 25 January, 2003 (MK). An

adult was found close to the eastern edge of Nariva Swamp on 3 February, 2002 (GG) and a presumed different adult much further south in Nariva on 22 April, 2003 (GW). This is a rare and very localised resident of swamp forests in Trinidad.

**Purple Heron, *Ardea purpurea*.** A juvenile found on Caroni Rice Project on 24 September, 2002 remained until 10 October, 2002 (MK). This is the first record for Trinidad and Tobago and the second for South America.

**Gray Heron, *Ardea cinerea*.** A juvenile first found on 26 August, 2001 at Caroni Rice Project (FEH; NL *et al.*) remained until at least 26 September, 2001. The same individual was subsequently seen at Trincity Ponds on 27 September, 2001 (PD; BM *et al.*) and finally on 16 December, 2001 at Nariva (CR). This is the third record for Trinidad and Tobago.

**Cocoi Heron, *Ardea cocoi*.** A single bird was present at Buccoo Marsh from 25-29 June, 1998 (FEH *et al.*). This species is an uncommon dry season visitor to Trinidad, much rarer in Tobago.

**Little Egret, *Egretta garzetta*.** Single birds were found during the period under review as follows: 13 May, 1998 at Valsayn ricefields (FH *et al.*); 21-29 June, 1998 in Lowlands, Tobago (FH *et al.*); 11 July - 8 September, 1998 at Caroni Rice Project (FH *et al.*); 16 October, 2000 at Turtle Beach (FH *et al.*) and 24 May, 2001 at Caroni Rice Project (MK). The status of this species is now becoming clear. It is present in both islands, albeit in small numbers. To date, whilst suspected, no evidence of breeding has been found. In view of its regular occurrence, it is no longer considered a Review Species by TTRBC.

**Western Reef-heron, *Egretta gularis*.** A dark morph juvenile was first found close to Buccoo seafront, Tobago on 16 December, 2000 (MK). This represents the first record for Tobago; second for Trinidad and Tobago and second for South America. The bird remained in the Buccoo/Bon Accord area at least until 11 January, 2002.

**Reddish Egret, *Egretta rufescens*.** An extraordinary record of one bird found close to the mangrove at the Hilton complex, Lowlands on 21 July, 2003 (GeoW) unfortunately eluding a hundred or so ornithologists gathered for an international conference! This is only the fourth documented record of this species for Trinidad and Tobago.

**White Ibis, *Eudocimus albus*.** An adult was seen amongst a roosting flock of Scarlet Ibis at Caroni Swamp on 15 August, 1985 (GW). There have been no subsequent documented sightings to date. White Ibis are an extremely rare visitor, presumably from northern South America. Whilst birds in adult plumage are unmistakable in appearance, separating birds in juvenile plumage

from Scarlet Ibis is extremely difficult – indeed some authorities believe the two to be con-specific.

**Glossy Ibis, *Plegadis falcinellus*.** An adult was present on Caroni Rice Project between 1 July - 26 August, 2000 (MK). The same or a different individual was found at the same site between 28 December, 2000 - 8 January, 2001 (MK). A juvenile originally found on Caroni Rice Project, 10 October, 2002, moved to Valsayn rice fields on 22 November, 2002 (MK). An occasional visitor to Trinidad, Glossy Ibis are not recorded every year.

**Jabiru, *Jabiru mycteria*.** One was present on Buccoo Marsh, Tobago from 30 September - 5 October, 1998 (SW). This is only the third record for Trinidad and Tobago.

**Maguari Stork, *Ciconia maguari*.** A sub-adult found at Orange Valley on 17 August, 2001 (MK), remained until at least 23 September, 2001. This is the first record for Trinidad and Tobago.

**Wood Stork, *Mycteria americana*.** A single bird was seen briefly at Brickfields, on 18 October, 2000 (GW). Once no more than uncommon in occurrence, this species has now become extremely rare and there are no documented records for Tobago.

**King Vulture, *Sarcoramphus papa*.** An adult was found soaring low over Trinity Hills in south Trinidad on 9 October, 2003 (GG). This species remains a truly rare visitor to Trinidad usually with one sighting every 3-4 years.

**Caribbean Flamingo, *Phoenicopterus ruber*.** A flock, peaking at a phenomenal 137 birds was observed on the tidal mudflats close to Carli Bay from 9 - 12 August, 2003 (GW; MK). The previous largest group total in Trinidad has been six!

**Comb Duck, *Sarkidiornis melanotos*.** A flock of up to 21 birds, all in female or immature plumage, were regularly seen at the Caroni Rice Project between 13 - 31 August, 2000 (FH *et al.*). This constitutes the fourth record for Trinidad and Tobago. A further immature was seen briefly at the same locality on 1 October, 2000 (MK). An adult male showed well, again at Caroni Rice Project on 14 - 15 June, 2002 (MK).

**American Wigeon, *Anas americana*.** An immature male was present on Bon Accord sewage lagoons from 10 - 11 January, 2002 (MK) and on 5 February, 2003, another immature male was found at Lowlands lakes (MK). Formerly a rather common winter visitor, in recent times records have been few and far between.

**Northern Shoveler, *Anas clypeata*.** Two non-breeding plumaged adults were found at Lowlands lakes on 5 February, 2003 (MK). Unconfirmed reports of at least four birds in total have been received. This species remains a rare winter visitor.

**Northern Pintail, *Anas acuta*.** An adult female, seen between 9 - 13 June, 2001 at Caroni Rice Project (MK) constitutes the first record for Trinidad and Tobago. Subsequently, three females were found at Bon Accord on 14 December, 2003 (DT).

**Ring-necked Duck, *Aythya collaris*.** An adult male, commuting between Bon Accord and Lowlands, Tobago, was recorded from

26 November, 2002 - 5 February, 2003 (Rff; AJ; MK). With just four previous records, this duck is a rare winter visitor.

**Lesser Scaup, *Aythya affinis*.** An immature or female was seen at Cacandee Lagoon on 17 December, 2003 (MK). A very uncommon winter visitor. There have been just four records in the last eight years.

**Hook-billed Kite, *Chondrohierax uncinatus*.** An adult male circled over the Blanchisseuse Rd. on 26 March, 2002 (CS *et al.*) and another male was observed behind Blue Waters Inn, Tobago on 1 April, 2002 (CS *et al.*). An adult male flew low over a citrus estate at Tableland on 16 January, 2003 (MK; GW) and an adult female was seen perched on a tree on Chacachacare, 18 January, 2003 (MK). This is a decidedly uncommon raptor, seen about once per year.

**Snail Kite, *Rostrhamus sociabilis*.** An immature was found at Caroni Rice Project 19 May, 1998 (FH *et al.*). An immature female at the Caroni Rice Project first recorded 4 July, 2000 (Kenefick 2004) remained throughout 2002 and was joined by a sub-adult male 4 - 22 November, 2002 (MK). Despite these recent records, this species remains a very rare visitor from mainland South America.

**Crane Hawk, *Geranospiza caerulescens*.** A single bird recorded from Waller Field on 20 January, 2001 (RES *et al.*) represents the first documented account for Trinidad and Tobago. It is likely that the same individual was seen at Aripo Agricultural Stn. on 12 March, 2001 (CS *et al.*). Two adults were found close to the coast road at Nariva on 27 March, 2002 (CS *et al.*). On both 3 and 4 January, 2003, an adult was seen flying out from roost over Waller Field (CR; MK; GW). It is unclear whether this is the same individual recorded in January 2001.

**Great Black-hawk, *Buteogallus urubitinga*.** Two adults were seen displaying on 16 - 17 March, 2002 from the Saut d'Eau lookout (GG). This species remains a rare and very local breeding resident in Trinidad.

**Swainson's Hawk, *Buteo swainsoni*.** A light morph bird was seen soaring over Grande Riviere on 16 May, 1998. The same individual was relocated over Matelot, 10 km further west, the following day (FEH *et al.*). There have been only four previous documented records from Tobago of this long distance migrant. This is the first record for Trinidad.

**Rufous Crab-hawk, *Buteogallus aequinoctialis*.** An adult was seen over the high tide roost at Brickfields on 7 May, 2003 (MK; GW). There are several undocumented reports of the same individual, in the same area subsequently. The status of this species remains unclear. It may be a very localised resident, or more likely a casual visitor from mainland South America.

**White-tailed Hawk, *Buteo albicaudatus*.** An adult flew over San Francique, Penal on 6 June, 2001 (HK) and an immature at Caroni Rice Project 22 - 30 November, 2001 (AA; MK; RW). Finally an adult was found at Caroni Rice Project on 1 January, 2003 (GW). Historically, this species was resident in Trinidad. It is now just a casual visitor from the mainland.

**Black Hawk-eagle, *Spizaetus tyrannus*.** Two adults were found at Santa Flora on 18 June, 2002 (JW). On 16 Sept., 2003, two birds were seen circling the Toco Rd., just north of Cumana (MK). Formerly considered a rare visitor, increased sightings in recent years may be indicative of localised residents.

**Crested Caracara, *Caracara plancus*.** An adult was found perched on rocks at Galera Pt. on 10 August, 2000 (GW) and a sub-adult was seen close to the coast road at Nariva on 27 March, 2002 (CS *et al.*). On 14 March, 2003, an adult and a juvenile were found at Fullerton Swamp (MK; CR). Finally, on 11 June, 2003 an adult was caught in car headlights feeding on a road kill after dark on the M2 Ring Road (HK). Despite these recent records, this species remains a rare visitor from the mainland.

**Eurasian Kestrel, *Falco tinnunculus*.** A female was found hunting the grassy fields between the mangrove and Waterloo Rd., at Carli Bay on 17 December, 2003 (MK). It was last recorded on 1 January, 2004. This constitutes the first record for Trinidad and Tobago, second for the Caribbean and second for South America.

**Plomado Falcon, *Falco femoralis*.** Records for the period are as follows: an adult on Caroni Rice Project 1 Sept., 2000 (MK); an immature hunting the same locality 28 July - 5 October, 2001 (MK); a sub-adult at Icacos at 12 December, 2001 (CR *et al.*); an immature was regularly seen at Caroni Rice Project between 31 August - 10 October, 2002 (MK); a second bird at the same locality on 30 October, 2002 (MK). In 2003, an immature hunted the high tide roost at Brickfields on 14 September, (MK). An immature at Lowlands lakes on 7 October, (BM) constitutes the first record for Tobago. Finally a sub-adult over Nariva Swamp on 8 October (BM). This species is becoming more regularly found in Trinidad, especially in areas holding flocks of migrating shorebirds.

**Rufous-necked Wood-rail, *Aramides axillaries*.** At least one, possibly two birds were found in the mangrove at Cacandee on 18 December, 2000 (MK; GW). Whilst shy by nature, this species remains a rare and very localised breeding resident in Trinidad.

**Yellow-breasted Crane, *Porzana flaviventer*.** One was heard calling from a shallow freshwater marsh at Louis D'or, Tobago on 22 December, 2002 (MK). It was subsequently seen and photographed on 22 February, 2003 (NG *et al.*) This is the first record for Tobago.

**Paint-billed Crane, *Neocrex erythrops*.** One was found, exhausted, in the Maraval Valley during March 1996. It was taken into care at the Emperor Valley Zoo, Port of Spain (per GG). Just before dawn on 16 September, 2001 one was dazzled in car headlights on a track through the Caroni Rice Project (MK). These are just the second and third records for Trinidad.

**Spotted Rail, *Rallus maculatus*.** An extremely secretive rare resident of freshwater marshland. The only record for the period is that of a road kill at Carapichaima on 6 July, 1997 (GW).

**Azure Gallinule, *Porphyryla flavirostris*.** Two birds were found at the Caroni Rice Project on 10 May, 1999 (GW) and 22 August, 2000 (MK). The status of this species is still under review for any records away from their stronghold in Nariva Swamp.

**American Coot, *Fulica americana*.** Single adults were found on 24 March, 2001 at Bon Accord sewage lagoons (MK) and at Buccoo Marsh on 6 February, 2002 (MK) and 10 September, 2002 (R ff). This species is a rare winter visitor to Tobago, with no documented records for Trinidad.

**Caribbean Coot, *Fulica caribaea*.** Single birds present at Buccoo Marsh, Tobago on 28 November, 2000 (MB) and 2 February, 2002 (RES *et al.*). The status of this species is unclear. Whilst it formerly bred in Tobago, it is essentially non-migratory and most recent records refer to casual visitors from other islands.

**Killdeer, *Charadrius vociferous*.** On 6 January, 2003, three Killdeer were seen in a dry field at Caroni Rice Project (CR; MK). At Nariva, one was found on 17 March, 2003 (DH). Once a fairly common winter visitor, these are the first documented records since 1995.

**Upland Sandpiper, *Bartramia longicauda*.** In the rather unusual setting of Brickfields, three were found on 14 September, 2001 (NL). A single bird fed on the short grass at Caroni Rice Project from 19 - 25 September, 2001 (MK) and on 26 October, 2001 one was found on Lowlands golf course (NH). One was seen amongst a large party of waders in a flooded field close to the highway at Trincity on 7 October, 2003 (BM). This species remains a decidedly uncommon passage migrant through Trinidad and Tobago, more likely seen in drier grassy areas than mudflats.

**Long-billed Curlew, *Numenius americanus*.** A single bird found at Buccoo Marsh on 30 September, 1999 (SW) constitutes the first record for Trinidad and Tobago.

**Black-tailed Godwit, *Limosa limosa*.** A single bird first found on Caroni Rice Project on 14 September, 2001 (FEH; MK) constitutes the first record for Trinidad and Tobago and South America. Extraordinarily, it was relocated on the tidal mudflats at Waterloo where it remained until at least 30 September, 2001.

**Marbled Godwit, *Limosa fedoa*.** A single adult was found at Brickfields at the high tide roost on 6 April, 2000 (MK); with another seen from 7 September - 12 October, 2000. (MK *et al.*). At the same site, up to two were present for an extended stay from 7 September, 2001 - 26 November, 2001 (MK *et al.*). This is still a very uncommon passage migrant and found exclusively on tidal mudflats.

**Red Knot, *Calidris canutus*.** A single bird was found at Speyside on 7 September, 2000 (R ff). Whilst this species is a fairly common passage migrant to Trinidad, records from Tobago are extremely rare.

**Curlew Sandpiper, *Calidris ferruginea*.** An adult, moulting into breeding plumage was present at Caroni Rice Project from 1-5 May, 2002 (MK). This represents the first record of this species for Trinidad and Tobago.

**Ruff, *Philomachus pugnax*.** This species has probably historically been under recorded in Trinidad and Tobago. An immature found at Caroni Rice Project on 25 - 26 August, 2000 was only the fourth documented record for the island (MK). However, this sighting was

shortly followed by five more during this review period as follows: on 22 December, 2000, one at Lowlands lakes (FEH; GW); on 14 October, 2001 an adult male at Caroni Rice Project (MK); at the same locality an immature on 18 October, 2001 (MK) and an immature female, between 29 December, 2002 - 25 January, 2003 (MK). A single bird was regularly seen on Lowlands golf course from 23 - 28 October, 2003 (NH).

**Buff-breasted Sandpiper, *Tryngites subruficollis*.** At Valsayn ricefields, five birds were found on 3 May, 1998 (FEH *et al.*). During this review period the following birds were found on Caroni Rice Project: one on 24 May, 2000 (MK); up to three between 27 September and 2 October, 2000 (MK); one on 1 - 2 June, 2001 (MK); up to five between 19 September and 5 October, 2001 (MK) and two on 17 September, 2002 (MK). On 15 October, 2000 at least seven were found at dusk on Crown Point airfield. This is the first record for almost 100 years from Tobago. Another was found the following day at Speyside (FEH; MK). Finally one was seen at Lowlands golf course on 28 October, 2003 (NH). Recent trends show this species becoming a regular passage migrant to both islands favouring short grassy fields as opposed to mudflats.

**Wilson's Phalarope, *Phalaropus tricolour*.** On 1 October, 2000, after a period of high winds, two birds, an adult and an immature, were found in a flooded field at Caroni Rice Project (MK). This is just the third record for Trinidad and Tobago.

**Pomarine Jaeger, *Stercorarius pomarinus*.** Two adults passed Galera Pt., flying north on 30 April, 2002 (MK). There has been little northward seabird migration study in Trinidad and Tobago, hence the status of such birds is relatively unknown.

**Lesser Black-backed Gull, *Larus fuscus*.** A bird in first winter plumage was seen around the south-western peninsula of Tobago from 14 - 17 November, 2003 (EG). Whilst in recent years a small number of this species have been regularly seen in Trinidad, their occurrence in Tobago is much rarer.

**Franklin's Gull, *Larus pipixcan*.** On 3 December, 2000 a first winter plumaged bird was found amongst the Laughing Gull roost at Brickfields, constituting the third record for Trinidad and Tobago (MK). At Kings Wharf, San Fernando, two birds also in first winter plumage were found on 22 January, 2001 (MK). Finally on 22 April, 2001 a first summer individual was found at Kings Wharf. How many individuals involved is impossible to confirm – a minimum of two and a maximum of four. This gull is a rare winter visitor to Trinidad and may have been overlooked historically due to its close similarity in appearance to the abundant Laughing Gulls on our western coastline.

**Black-headed Gull, *Larus ridibundus*.** At Waterloo, up to two adults were occasionally seen between 1 March - 18 May, 2000 (GW; MK). On 26 February, 2003 a single bird moulting into adult plumage was reported from Brickfields (NL). From Tobago, a first winter plumaged bird was seen around the south-western shores on 21 November, 2003 (EG). This gull is a decidedly rare visitor to Trinidad and Tobago, recorded less than one per year.

**Large-billed Tern *Phaetusa simplex*.** On 15 May, 2001 an adult and an immature were found at Lowlands (RT). This is a common

visitor to Trinidad but reports from Tobago are extremely rare.

**Yellow-billed Cuckoo, *Coccyzus americanus*.** Records during the review period as follows. From Tobago, one record from Speyside on 19 October, 2002 (MW) and single birds at Bon Accord 21 December, 2002 (MK), 24 February, 2003 (BM), 12 October, 2003 (CD) and 2 December, 2003 (MK; R ff). From Trinidad, one at Galera Pt. on 4 October, 2001 (MK; HS) and one at Cacandee on 2 November, 2003 (MK). Whilst numbers of this species have increased in recent years, it is still a very uncommon autumn passage migrant, possibly over wintering.

**Mangrove Cuckoo, *Coccyzus minor*.** One was seen flying across the sewage lagoons at Lowlands on 7 January, 2001 (MK). This species is a very localised and decidedly uncommon breeding resident to Trinidad. Its shy nature probably distorts its true abundance. There are far fewer records from Tobago.

**Short-eared Owl, *Asio flammeus*.** One bird of the sub-species *A. f. pallidicaudus* was found in a weedy field at Caroni Rice Project on 12 September, 2001. It was relocated a short distance away on the 16th, together with a second individual. This constitutes the first documented record of this species for Trinidad and Tobago (MK).

**White-collared Swift, *Streptococne zonaris*.** On 8 July, 2003, one was hawking insects over Grafton sanctuary (MK). On 7 October, 2003, at least five were seen flying over Gilpin Trace (BM). Whilst a frequent visitor to Trinidad, often encountered in large flocks, historically there is only one previous record from Tobago. Interestingly, the first bird ever recorded in Barbados was on 6 July, 2003.

**Rufous-shafted Woodstar, *Chaetocercus jourdani*.** One, in immature or female plumage was found at Asa Wright on 28 August, 2000 (R ff). Almost all records of this extremely rare visitor to Trinidad are from Asa Wright Nature Centre.

**Scaled Antpitta, *Grallaria guatemalensis*.** One bird heard calling from a densely forested steep slope close to Paria Junction on 5 September, 2002 (R ff.) In character, Antpittas are shy and elusive, hiding in the darkest and steepest areas of the forest. This species remains a rare and localised resident in Trinidad.

**Spotted Tody-flycatcher, *Todirostrum maculatum*.** A nest found close to Fullerton Swamp on 19 April, 1998 (FEH *et al.*), represents only the second documented nesting record for Trinidad.

**Variegated Flycatcher, *Empidonomus varius*.** Single birds were found at Asa Wright Nature Centre on 18 November, 2001 (RW; RR); Arena Forest on 16 January, 2003 (MR) and from Blanchisseuse Rd. on 8 June, 2003 (MK; NH). A very uncommon Neotropical migrant whose true status may be confused due to its physical similarity to the much more common Piratic Flycatcher. These represent the first documented records since 1995.

**Blue-backed Manakin, *Chiroxiphia pareola*.** A female recorded on nest along Gilpin Trace on 12 April, 2000 (R ff). This species is a locally common resident of Tobago. There are no documented records for Trinidad.

**Black-whiskered Vireo, *Vireo altiloquus*.** Single birds were found in Arena Forest on 19 February, 2001 (MK); at Teteron Bay on 28 April, 2001 (CR) and at the base of Morne Bleu on 12 March, 2003 (MK). This rare visitor may be overlooked due to its similar appearance to the much more common Red-eyed Vireo.

**Caribbean Martin, *Progne dominicensis*.** An adult male was seen flying amongst Grey-breasted Martins at Galera Pt. on 20 February, 2002 (MK). This common summer visitor to Tobago has, without doubt, been overlooked in Trinidad due to its close similarity in appearance to Gray-breasted Martins. Separating adult males is relatively straightforward, however, females are extremely difficult to specify.

**White-winged Swallow, *Tachycineta albiventer*.** At least two birds seen at Speyside between 5 - 11 September, 2000 constitute the first records for Tobago. (R ff; IB). There have been subsequent regular undocumented reports of several birds in the Plymouth area of the island.

**Cliff Swallow, *Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*.** Two birds were found at Caroni Rice Project from 22 - 29 April, 1998 (FEH *et al.*). Single immatures were at the same locality on 3 March, 2001 (MK) and 12 September, 2001 (MK); and an adult was seen amongst a mixed hirundine flock over Trincity ponds on 20 April, 2002 (MK *et al.*). This is a very uncommon passage migrant often found in association with large flocks of Barn Swallows.

**Golden-winged Warbler, *Vermivora chrysoptera*.** An adult at Kings Bay, Tobago on the extremely late date of 20 June, 2001 (JC) is only the fourth record for Trinidad and Tobago.

**Chestnut-sided Warbler, *Dendroica pensylvanica*.** On 30 December, 2000, a winter plumaged bird was found in Lopinot Valley (RN). On 17 December, 2001 an adult was seen along the Maracas coastal road (GW) and an adult, moulting into breeding plumage, was found close to the river at Montevideo, Grande Riviere on 28 February, 2002 (MK *et al.*). A rare passage migrant, possibly overwintering in Trinidad. There are to date no records from Tobago.

**Cape May Warbler, *Dendroica tigrina*.** On 25 December, 2000, an adult male was found in the grounds of the Coco Reef Hotel (NS). This is just the second record for Trinidad and Tobago in the last fifteen years. This is a very rare passage migrant, possibly overwintering.

**Blackburnian Warbler, *Dendroica fusca*.** A rare passage migrant, an adult male was found close to the Scatter Station on Morne Bleu, 26 March, 2001 (CR). The true status of this species in Trinidad and Tobago is unclear as we are aware of several undocumented reports.

**Bay-breasted Warbler, *Dendroica castanea*.** A male was found at Wallerfield on 20 January, 2002 (RES *et al.*). Whilst there are a number of historical records of this rare warbler, this is the only documented record in recent times.

**Blackpoll Warbler, *Dendroica striata*.** At least four immatures were observed at Galera Pt., 24 October, 2000 (MK) with two more at the same locality on 11 October, 2001 (MK; CR). On 28

December, 2002, a single immature was found at Lalaja (GW *et al.*). In view of its regular occurrence, especially during the period October - December, records are no longer assessed by TTRBC.

**Cerulean Warbler, *Dendroica cerulean*.** An adult male found beside a track north of Aripo Village on 22 November, 2000 (MB; CR) constitutes the first record for Trinidad and Tobago.

**Black and White Warbler, *Mniotilta varia*.** The only documented records for the period are of a female along Las Lapas Trace on 12 February, 2003 (MK; NH) and an immature by Gilpin Trace on 23 October, 2003 (NH). With less than one sighting per annum, this passage migrant warbler is still extremely uncommon in Trinidad and Tobago.

**Summer Tanager, *Piranga rubra*.** A first summer male seen on 28 January, and 13 February, 2002 at Las Lapas Trace (MK *et al.*). At the same location, an adult male was found on 12 February, 2003 (MK; NH). This species is a very uncommon winter visitor to Trinidad. True status is rather unclear as recent reports come from the Northern Range where its superficial similarity to Hepatic Tanager is a potential identification pitfall.

**Scarlet Tanager, *Piranga olivacea*.** All records during the period under review refer to single male birds as follows: on Morne Catherine, 28 April, 1998 (FEH); at Aripo Agriculture Stn., 18 April, 2000 (MK); in Arena Forest, 15 April, 2001 (CR); along Nariva Rd. 16 April, 2001 (CR) and at Asa Wright Nature Centre, 14 April, 2002 (SC). A rare spring migrant through Trinidad and Tobago with almost all records falling in the period 10 - 30 April.

**Yellow-bellied Seedeater, *Sporophila nigricollis*.** An adult male was seen briefly atop a ridge at Teteron Bay on 2 August, 2001 (MK). There is a regular late summer/autumn population on Chacachacare; elsewhere, species is rare indeed, due to the cage-bird trade.

**Lesson's Seedeater, *Sporophila bouvronides*.** An adult male was seen briefly close to the lighthouse on Chacachacare, 12 October 2003 (MK). Historically this species was a common resident in both islands. However, the cage-bird trade extirpated the resident population and it is now just a casual visitor from continental South America.

**Bobolink, *Dolichonyx oryzivorus*.** On 4 October, 1998, a single bird was seen and heard flying over Chacachacare (FEH *et al.*) and on 6 October, 2000, one flew over Galera Pt. (MK). All remaining Trinidad records come from the Caroni Rice Project as follows: up to 50 seen between 1 - 20 October, 2000 (FEH; MK); a single bird on 28 December, 2000 (MK); up to 25 between 29 October - 5 November, 2001 (MK); up to 50 between 10 and 30 October, 2002 (MK); a single bird on 9 October, 2003 (BM). From Tobago, a single bird was found at Blue Waters Inn on 19 October, 2002 (MW). In recent years, this species has been recorded almost annually in autumn and early winter. All birds are in either immature or female plumage.

In addition to the above, acceptable records were received for a further 19 sightings of the following species whose status has already been established: Masked Booby, *Sula dactylatra*; White faced Whistling-duck, *Dendrocygna viduata*; Masked Duck, *Nomo-*

*nyx dominicus*; Green-throated Mango, *Anthracothorax viridigula*; Short-tailed Pygmy-tyrant, *Myiornis ecaudatus*; Bank Swallow, *Riparia riparia*; Ruddy-breasted Seedeater, *Sporophila minuta*; Moriche Oriole, *Icterus chrysiocephalus*. Two records received, a Mallard, *Anas platyrhynchos* and a Collared Dove, *Streptopelia decao*, were considered to be of escaped or feral origin.

#### INCONCLUSIVE RECORDS

Records considered inconclusive were of Agami Heron, *Agamia agami*; Wood Stork, *Mycteria americana*; Caribbean Flamingo, *Phoenicopterus ruber*; Rufous Crab-hawk, *Buteogallus aequinoctialis*; Black Hawk-eagle, *Spizaetus tyrannus*; Herring Gull, *Larus argentatus*; Dark-billed Cuckoo, *Coccyzus melacoryphus*; Lesser Elaenia, *Elaenia chiriquensis*; Venezuelan Flycatcher, *Myiarchus venezuelensis*; Blackburnian Warbler, *Dendroica fusca*; Bay-breasted Warbler, *Dendroica castanea*; Slaty Finch, *Haplospiza rustica* and Gray Seedeater, *Sporophila intermedia* from Trinidad. From Tobago, Gray Hawk, *Asturina nitida*; Short-tailed Hawk, *Buteo brachyurus*; Black-headed Gull, *Larus ridibundus*; Common Nighthawk, *Chordeiles minor*; Blue and White Swallow, *Pygochelidon cyanoleuca* and Tropical Parula, *Parula pitiayumi*.

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