
A New Snake for Trinidad

By Hans Boos, Emperor Valley Zoo Port of Spain, Trinidad, W.I.

ON September 18, 1981 Richard Joseph, a keeper at the Emperor Valley Zoo, found dead on the road near Chatham on the South West Peninsula of Trinidad a snake that was unlike any other he had ever seen. This snake was preserved and taken to the British Museum (Nat. Hist.) where it was lodged as specimen No. 1980/1167.

The head of the Herpetology Department, Andrew Stimson, identified the snake as *Thamnodynastes strigatus* (Gunther). It is a new record for Trinidad. There is a distinct possibility that it is a recent colomist or stray from the Venezuelan coast to the south, but the interesting aspect of this find is that this species has not so far been reported from nearby Venezuela but only in Sao Paulo State, Brazil and south into Paraguay and Argentina.

First Record of The Double - Striped Thick-Knee in Trinidad W.I.

By David Rooks, 7 Eccle Ave, Maraval

ON 24th June, 1983, I saw a Double-Striped Thick-Knee (*Burhinus bistriatus*) in the Queen's Park Savannah at 5.30 p.m. This is a first record for Trinidad; the bird is a Venezuelan species and is commonly found in savannas or open fields. It was standing in the area near the race track opposite Casuals Club.

Being on the lookout for the annual arrival of migrants in the Savannah I saw this bird and its unusual appearance excited my curiosity. From the distance of the roadway, it had the appearance of a piece of wood stuck in the ground and with that

Further investigations are being carried out by Andrew Stimson. The description given by him of the specimen follows:

Male: snout-vent length 403mm; tail (incomplete) 105mm; dorsals smooth, with single apical pits, in 19 rows at midbody reducing to 17 posteriorly; ventrals 149; anal divided; subcaudals 50+ (an estimated 20 — 25 missing); 8 supralabials, 4th — 5th entering the eye; single preocular; two postoculars; temporals 2+2; 9 infralabials, first 4 in contact with the anterior chinshields.

The pale brown of the back separated from the darker brown of the sides by a pair of light longitudinal narrow stripes; dorsum and upper sides with irregular black spotting mostly confined to the scale edges; venter whitish with a pair of lateral, longitudinal, light-centred dark stripes; a second, central pair of light-centred longitudinal stripes is less distinct, almost grey; these two stripes merge posteriorly on the tail and anteriorly on the throat to form a single midventral stripe; head darker and more heavily black-spotted than the trunk; a black postocular streak runs from the eye to the angle of the jaw; supralabials barred with black; a black stripe runs from the eye to the nostril.

general colouration. I stopped the car and walked towards it. As I got near, it gave a trembling sort of song, trotted away for a few feet with the most amusing gait, then stopped and straightened up, pulling its tail in towards its heels. It looked so funny, I almost burst out laughing. No matter how I approached it, it would not fly but each time repeated its trembling call and continued its strange gait for only a few feet.

I thought to myself that I must get a picture but, as it was already late in the afternoon and the bird seemed so comfortable and established in the Savannah, I was sure it would be there in the morning when I would be able to get a good picture so I went home without disturbing it and returned next morning at dawn. It was nowhere to be found. I have kept a look-out but have not seen it again. Fortunately, I had made careful detailed notes of its appearance.

At first, I could find no reference to similar birds anywhere, but on discussing it with Richard French he told me to look it up in the Birds of Venezuela which I did and there it was.