

# THE AVIFAUNA OF HUEVOS ISLAND

By R. P. French.

The ornithological team consisted of R. P. French, J. Griffin and A. Hanners. A mist-netting programme was carried out, an island checklist was compiled, and a general survey of the birds was made. The following particular observations are recorded.

1. Superficially the island's avifauna resembles that of Grand Fond Valley, Monos (see 1965 Journal). It differs mainly in its lack of the birds of (a) more open areas, and (b) shady forested valley. We did not see (a) Rufous-winged Ground-doves, any *Sporophila* finches, nor (b) Hairy Hermits or Black-and-white Manakins.

On the other hand, amid the greater preponderance of cactus and similar vegetation we found the Smooth Flycatcher.

2. The Black-faced Grassquit was found to inhabit the more open areas near the house. This small finch is known from Chacachacare, Tobago and the Lesser Antilles. It was not found on Monos, and it is unrecorded on the mainland of Trinidad, where it is probably replaced by its congener, the Sooty Grassquit. Hence the dividing line between the two species seems to occur between Huevos and the mainland.

3. The Rufous Nightjar and the Venezuelan Wood-rail, both found on Monos, also occur on Huevos. Only the latter was seen, but both were heard calling in the early mornings and dusk.

4. Four species were observed at nests, Bananaquit, Streaked Flycatcher, Yellow Oriole and White-fronted Dove. The dove was incubating two eggs in a stick nest, built at eight feet above ground in a small tree on the steep north-west slope. The flycatcher pair were attending to two nestlings. The nest was in a hole, 18 feet above ground in an almond tree on the beach.

5. Birds heard singing most of the time included House Wren, White-throated Spinetail, Bare-eyed Thrush, Blue Tanager, Grey-breasted and Streaked Saltator, Caribbean Vireo, Tropical Parula and Yellow Oriole. Also a pair of Grey Hawks called regularly throughout our stay.

6. The most unusual bird seen was a Zone-tailed Hawk, *Buteo albonotatus*, which was circling low over the summit on the morning of 6 June. This bird, rarely recorded in Trinidad, superficially resembles the Turkey Vulture in silhouette, but its white-banded tail, orange legs and yellowish bill distinguish it.

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## BIRD-NETTING PROGRAMME, HUEVOS, 1965

The team used six mist-nets, set in two groups of three. Nets 1 — 3 were set near the top of the ridge in light forest for less than an hour on the evening of 5 June, for the whole morning of 6 June, and for most of the morning of 7 June. Nets 4 — 6 were set in the open grassy clearing just above Mr. Boos' house. They covered the periods of 6 June afternoon and all day 7 June up to 1630 hours, when the party left the island. In addition, all six nets were left set for the night of 6 June, when they caught six bats but no birds.

Not counting the dark hours of 6 June, therefore, the three forest nets were set for  $34\frac{1}{2}$  net-hours the three clearing nets for  $44\frac{1}{2}$  net-hours. In the total of 79 net-hours 76 birds were trapped of 20 different species; five birds were trapped more than once.

The following observations may be made.

1. The most frequently trapped species was the Caribbean Vireo, seventeen birds of which three were retrapped, two twice. The weights average at 15.75 gm, less than the average of 16.1 gm for sixteen birds on Monos (see 1965 Journal).

One bird caught at 1445 weighed 1.5 gm less when retrapped at 1720, which seems an extraordinary variation. During most of the  $2\frac{1}{2}$  hours interval, however, it was raining, so probably the bird did not feed. When retrapped again at 0730 the following morning this same bird weighed another gram lighter.

2. Unfortunately the total of only two Bananaquits trapped does not afford an opportunity for statistical comparison with the Monos and Chacachacare Bananaquits (cp. 1965 Journal). Their weights, however, are not inconsistent with the likelihood that the Bananaquits of the Bocas islands are smaller than those on the mainland of Trinidad.

3. It is evident that Leotaud's Dusky Flycatcher, of which 13 specimens were trapped, is very common too on Huevos.

4. Although the breeding season on Huevos had evidently already started by early June, very few trapped birds were in moult, and none were moulting their primary feathers yet.

TABLE OF MEASUREMENTS ETC. — HUEVOS

Species	Date	Time	Net	Age/Sex	Wt.	Wing	Tail	Moult
Short-tailed Swift	7 June	1415	5	ad.	20	120	29	None
Black-crested Ant-shrike	"	0630	2	ad. f	29.5	75	59	Tail
Rusty-tailed Petchary	6 June	1615	6	ad.	36.5	97	94	None
" "	7 June	1030	3	ad.	29	90	86	None
Leotaud's Dusky Flycatcher	6 June	0630	1	ad. m	15.5	70	69	None
" "	"	1030	2	"	15	"	"	Retrap
" "	"	0845	1	ad. m	15	70	72	Tail
" "	"	0915	1	ad. m	15	71	69.5	None
" "	7 June	0615	4	ad. f	12	63	60	None
" "	"	0630	1	ad. m	13	70	67	None
" "	"	0630	1	ad.	12	64	62	None
" "	"	0630	1	ad. m	14	70	68	None
" "	"	0630	2	ad.	12	68	64	None
" "	"	0630	2	ad. f	16	64	60	Tail
" "	"	0630	3	ad.	12	68	65	None
" "	"	0630	3	ad. f	12.5	64	61	None
" "	"	0730	1	Ad. m	12	69	68	None
" "	"	1415	5	ad. f	13	65	60	None
Smooth Flycatcher	6 June	1030	2	ad.	12	70	63	None
" "	7 June	0630	3	ad.	12	66	64	None
" "	"	1100	2	ad.	13	71	62	None
Stripe-breasted Petchary	"	1030	3	ad.	9	59	51	None

Species	Date	Time	Net	Age/Sex	Wt.	Wing	Tail	Moult
Yellow-vented Flatbill	6 June	0745	2		—	61	51	None
Yellow-bellied Elaenia	7 June	0600	5	ad.	24.5	83	73	Some secondaries and tail.
House Wren	6 June	1400	4	ad.	17.5	57	39	None
" "	7 June	0545	4		16.5			Retrap
" "	6 June	1625	4.		15.5	55	—	None
" "	"	1830	6	imm.	15.5	56	41	None
" "	7 June	0545	4	imm.	14.5	57	41	None
" "	"	1030	1	—	14	56	38	None
" "	"	1100	2	ad.	15	58	43	None
" "	"	1100	3	ad.	13.5	54	37	None
" "	"	1615	4	—	15.5	57	39	None
Mocking bird	6 June	1700	6	ad.	54	108	112	None
Bare-eyed Thrush	"	0745	1	ad.	—	115	92	None
" "	"	1000	2	ad.	60	114	93	None
" "	7 June	0730	4	ad.	67	117	90	None
" "	"	1030	3	ad.	61	114	96	None
" "	"	1200	4.	ad.	68	114	91	None
Caribbean Vireo	6 June	0745	2	ad.	14	70	50	None
" "	7 June	1030	2		14			Retrap
" "	6 June	0745	3	ad.	15	74	51	None
" "	"	1050	3	ad.	15.5	76	57	None
" "	"	1050	3	ad.	16	74	51	—
" "	"	1445	4	ad.	16	71	46	Some secondaries and tail.

Species	Date	Time	Net	Age, Sex	Wt.	Wing	Tail	Moult
Caribbean Vireo	6 June	1445	4	ad.	18	75	50	None
	"	1720	6		16.5			Retrap
	7 June	0730	4		15.5			Retrap
	6 June	1700	6	ad.	14.5	72	52	None
	"	1700	6	ad.	17	77	52	None
	"	1815	6	ad.	16.5	73	53	None
	7 June	0730	4		15.5			Retrap
	"	1615	6		16			Retrap
	"	0605	6	ad.	18	75	53	None
	"	0730	4	ad.	16.5	67	46	None
	"	0730	4	ad.	15.5	72	53	None
	"	0730	4	ad.	15.5	77	57	None
	"	0730	4	ad.	15	73	52	None
	"	0930	5	ad.	15.5	79	57	None
	"	0930	5	ad.	14	71	52	None
"	1230	6	ad.	16.5	69	46	None	
Red-legged	6 June	1050	3	f. pl	14.5	66	39	None
Grampo								
"	7 June	0600	6	ad. m	14	65	37	None
"	"	1530	6	f. pl	15	65	37	None
"	"	1530	6	ad. m	14.5	66	37	None
Bananaquit	"	1030	1	ad.	9.5	59	37	Back
"	"	1415	4	ad.	10.5	56	34	Part of tail
Olivaceous	5 June	1730	2	ad.	11	62	55	None
Warbler								
Glossy Cowbird	7 June	1200	5	ad. m	39	101	73.5	None
Blue Tanager	6 June	1820	5	ad.	32.5	95	61	None
"	6 June	1820	5	ad. f	43.5	90	61	None
"	"	1820	5	ad.	36.5	88	62	None

Species	Date	Time	Net	Age/Sex	Wt.	Wing	Tail	Moult
Blue Tanager	7 June	0930	6	ad.	45	92	—	Part of tail
Parson	6 June	0745	2	f. pl	—	81	71	None
"	"	1545	5	ad. m	39	94	81	None
"	"	1620	--	ad. m	38	88	74	None
"	7 June	1200	6	ad. m	—	91	76	None
Streaked	6 June	0745	2	ad.	41.5	92	78	Tail
Saltator								
" "	"	1720	4	ad.	39	89	83	None
" "	"	1810	4	ad.	38.5	86	85	None
" "	7 June	0830	6	ad.	33	92	81	Part of tail
Black-faced	6 June	1700	4	ad. m	11	52	40	None
Grassquit								
" "	7 June	1000	6	f. pl	10	51	38.5	None

(Note. Under Age/Sex f. pl signifies that the bird was in female plumage, but it was not known whether it was a female or an immature male. Diagnosis of immature birds was made on the evidence of the presence of a noticeable orange-yellow "gape" colour at the sides of the closed bill. All weights are in grammes (taken on a calibrated spring-balance); wing and tail measurements are in millimetres. If the tail was in moult, the full-grown tail-feather nearest to the centre (if any) was measured. The common names are taken Herklots. Trapped birds were marked for future identification by clipping the tip of a tail-feather).