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Notes on the Birds of Bequia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, West Indies.

The Trinidad and Tobago Field Naturalists' Club visited Bequia, in St. Vincent and the Grenadines for six days in August of 1999. I took the opportunity to note the birds that were seen in Bequia and the Tobago Cays. While the observations were limited to the four-day visit, it is nevertheless useful to document the sightings as relatively little is known about the bird-life of the Grenadines as compared to the larger islands.

On Bequia, observations were made around Friendship Bay, and along the roads leading to Old Heg Turtle Sanctuary, Moon Hole and Petit Nevis. At the Tobago Cays, birds were recorded for a two-hour period at midday. Observations were also made at sea from the ferry operating between St. Vincent and Bequia and that from Bequia to Tobago Cays. Species names are presented in the order of American Ornithologists' Union as in Raffaele *et al.* (1998).

Overall 37 species were seen. Seabirds comprised the largest group with eleven species. Seven species of shorebirds were seen, most of them in water-filled pot-holes on the road to Moon Hole. Among the herons the tricoloured heron is considered very rare or vagrant in St. Vincent and the Grenadines (Raffaele *et al.* 1998). Three american

oystercatchers were seen, one on Bequia between Friendship Bay and the fishing depot opposite Petit Nevis, and two on the north-east side of Petit Nevis. Bond (1985) describes the oystercatchers as "perhaps" in the Grenadines and it is not listed for St. Vincent and the Grenadines by Raffaele *et al.* (1998), however recent sightings have been made at Bequia and Mayreau (Hayes *et al.* in preparation).

Several scaly-naped pigeons were sighted well out to sea and were proficient at moving between islands. At the Cays I observed one yellow warbler which was singing. There are resident populations of yellow warblers in the West Indies but they are not known to breed in St. Vincent or the Grenadines. The resident population may be a distinct species from North, Central and South American birds (Raffaele *et al.* 1998). It seems unlikely that an island as small as Tobago Cays could

Table 1. Birds observed on and around Bequia 5-9 August 1999.

Species Observed	Bequia	Tobago Cays	From boat
Masked booby			+
Brown booby	+		+
Red-footed booby			+
Brown pelican			+
Magnificent frigatebird	+	+	+
Little blue heron	+		+
Tricoloured heron			+
Cattle egret	+		
Green heron	+		
Yellow-crowned night-heron	+		
Semipalmated plover	+		
American oystercatcher	+		
Solitary sandpiper	+		
Spotted sandpiper	+		
Semipalmated sandpiper	+		
Least sandpiper	+		
Short-billed dowitcher	+		
Laughing gull	+	+	+
Royal tern	+		+
Sandwich tern	+		
Common tern	+		
Bridled/Sooty tern	+		+
Brown noddy	+	+	+
Scaly-naped pigeon	+	+	+
Zenaida dove	+	+	
Common grounddove	+		
Antillian crested hummingbird	+	+	
Yellow-bellied elaenia	+		
Grey kingbird	+	+	
Caribbean martin	+	+	
Bare-eyed thrush	+		
Tropical mockingbird	+	+	
Yellow warbler		+	
Bananaquit	+	+	
Black-faced grassquit	+		
Carib grackle	+	+	
Shiny cowbird	+		

sustain a resident population of yellow warblers, but nor would I expect a migrant North American yellow warbler to be singing. I have never heard one singing in Trinidad. The only pelican seen was off Canouan.

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Status of the American oystercatcher (*Haematopus palliatus*) in the Grenadines.

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An Unusual Feeding Habitat of the Savannah Frog *Scinax rubra* (Laurenti).

At the Caroni Rice Project at 7:00 o'clock one morning, I noticed strange movements of panicles of guinea grass (*Panicum maximum*) along the border of a rice field. My attention thus attracted, I saw that several panicles hosted one or more frogs *Scinax rubra*

(Laurenti) (= *Oloolygon rubra*), engaged in a gymnastic routine. One panicle had four such participants. Looking closer, I noticed a cloud of small flies which seemed attracted to the flowers. It was these that the frogs were after. The frog would manoeuvre itself within striking distance of the flower and at intervals lunge upward, and outward, at a passing fly. A panicle is an insecure base for launching such an attack, and it jerked backwards in response. Landing was also a problem. Upon capturing, or missing its prey, the frog spread out its legs in an apparently desperate bid to catch onto a lower branch of the panicle as it fell. Surprisingly, it was quite adept at this. By 7:15 most of the frogs had climbed down the panicles, possibly in response to the sun which was getting quite hot, or perhaps the flies had left.

This species is described as a savannah frog (Murphy 1997) and thus the rice fields are their normal habitat, presumably with some of their normal predators. Since they were so conspicuous, I wonder how these frogs avoided being discovered by their own predators.

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