

## REFERENCES

- (1) Parker, H. W. Tropical Agriculture 10: 8, 1933.  
 (2) Parker, H. W. Tropical Agriculture 11: 123, 1934.

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### Notes on Insect Pests

Two infestations occurred on fodder crops at Central Experimental Station, which may be the first of their kind recorded in Trinidad:

- (a) Kudzu (*Pueraria phaseoloides*) defoliated by the leaf-webbing moth *Lamprosema indica* F.  
 (b) Pangola Grass (*Digitaria decumbens*) attacked by the leaf hopper *Kolla mollicella* Fowl.

It has been shown recently that the role of *Rhyncophorus palmarum* is unimportant in the spread of the nematode, *Aphelenchoides cocophilus*, which causes red ring disease of coconuts, as the main path of infection is through the roots from the soil.

G. STELL.

### The King Vulture in Trinidad

The subject of this note is the King Vulture, *Sarcoramphus papa*. The only previous, first-hand record of this bird was by E. C. Taylor in 1864, who saw several feeding together on a dead python. Dr. A. Leotaud writing two years later in 1866 stated that the bird was common enough in certain parts of the island that he had not yet visited but that he personally had not had the privilege of seeing or examining one. Mr. Smooker heard of one in 1913 as occurring in the south of Trinidad but had never seen one, and Mr. R. Johnson told me that once in the company of the late Prof. Ulrich at Mayaro he saw what was unmistakably this bird.

A specimen was shot from the Quare Dam road in high forested country on April 18, 1942, by someone who may have mistaken it for a chicken hawk. A Mr. Froix of the Central Water Scheme passed the hunter with the wounded bird and persuaded him to hand it over. It was brought to the Imperial College the same afternoon and died within an hour. Those of us who saw it alive were indeed thrilled with the gorgeous colouring of its soft, head parts and its handsome plumage. The bird was preserved, but the coloured skin of its bare head faded soon after death and the colours had to be painted on to the mounted specimen which is now in the collection at the Royal Victoria Institute Museum. The colours are in no way exaggerated and if anything a little on the dull side, good as they are.

E. M. CHENERY.

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### The Density of the Population of Breeding Kiskadees in Port-of-Spain

Although widely distributed throughout Trinidad, the kiskadee, *Pitangus sulphuratus trinitatis* (Hellmayr), is predominantly a bird of the towns and villages. During the 1954 breeding season, an attempt was made to estimate the density of the breeding population in a small area of Port-of-Spain. The area selected was that bounded by Prada St., Tragarete Rd., Elizabeth

St., and Gray St. and its extension. Nests were counted, and an effort was made to find every nest during the season which lasted for seven months, from December 1953 to July 1954.

The kiskadee breeds at least two or three times a season, and seems, as a rule, to raise all its broods in one nest. However, I believe that of the birds in the area, two pairs each built two nests. This belief is based on the proximity of the nesting sites for each of these pairs of nests, and the fact that in each pair, one nest appeared only after the other had disappeared. Twenty-two nests were counted, built, it is thought, by twenty pairs of birds.

From a map of Port-of-Spain the area studied was calculated to be 0.0685 sq. miles, or nearly 44 acres. Thus, the density of the breeding population was 0.46 pairs per acre. Put another way, the average size of the territory was 2.2 acres. This compares with 1½ acres for the English robin, 3¾ to 14¾ acres for the song-thrush in Finland, and ½ to 1½ acres for the American song sparrow and the Californian wren-tit<sup>(1)</sup>.

The area of Port-of-Spain is 3.7 sq. miles<sup>(2)</sup>, fifty-four times greater than that studied. Thus, a rough estimate of the number of breeding pairs in Port-of-Spain is 1080. This figure is probably too high, since much of the city is unsuitable for nesting, whereas the selected area is particularly favourable.

V. C. QUESNEL.

#### REFERENCES

- (1) Lack, D. The Life of the Robin. Pelican Books, 1953. pp. 143-144.
- (2) Government of Trinidad & Tobago, Annual Statistical Digest No. 4, 1935-1952.

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#### A new lizard record for Trinidad

In 1949 Dr. E. McCallan, then of the Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture, kindly sent me a number of specimens of Trinidad lizards. Among them were two specimens of *Gymnophthalmus lineatus* (Linnaeus) from St. Augustine. Although this species is common in South America and its occurrence in Trinidad is not in the least surprising it is not listed in Parker's account of the lizards of Trinidad. I was therefore interested to find, during a recent visit, that it is common in Port-of-Spain. It probably occurs in nearly every yard in the city.

*Gymnophthalmus* belongs to the family *Tejidae* which is already known to be represented in Trinidad by six genera: the ground lizards *Ameiva*, *Cnemidophorus* and *Kentropyx*; the matte *Tupinambis*; the small burrowing *Scolecosaurus* and the interesting mountain form *Proctoporus*. It differs from all the other Trinidadian tejjids in that there are no mobile eyelids; the eye is covered by a fixed transparent spectacle. In this it resembles geckos (and snakes) with which it could not possibly be confused. The combination of spectacle over the eye and large smooth overlapping scales on the back suffices to distinguish *Gymnophthalmus* from all other Trinidadian lizards.

*Gymnophthalmus lineatus* is a small lizard reaching a total length of about 3½ inches of which the trunk measures about 1½ inches. The limbs are somewhat short in relation to the length of the trunk; there are only four toes on the fore-foot, the hind-foot has the usual five. There are three