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The Trinidad and Tobago Bird Status and Distribution Committee (previously known as the Trinidad and Tobago Rare Birds Committee) was established in 1995 to assess, document, and archive the occurrence of rare or unusual birds in Trinidad and Tobago and thus provide reliable long-term monitoring of our rarer species. The Secretary of the Committee represents Trinidad and Tobago on the South American Classification Committee (SACC) of the American Ornithologists' Union (AOU).

The Committee has now assessed all records submitted during 2013. In all, 90 records were adjudged, representing 54 different species. One additional species has been added to the Official Checklist of Birds of Trinidad and Tobago, bringing the running total to 473 species at the end of 2013. Of the submissions assessed, in only six cases did the Committee find the identification inconclusive. The records presented below follow the nomenclature and taxonomic order of the AOU's Classification of the Bird Species of South America, December 2013 (Remsen *et al.* 2013).

The Committee comprises the following members: Martyn Kenefick (Secretary), Geoffrey Gomes, Floyd Hayes, Bill Murphy, Kris Sookdeo and Graham White. Archived records, including photographic submissions, numbered 1,027 at the end of 2013, are held at 36 Newalloville Avenue, San Juan, Trinidad. Previous reports of this committee were prepared by Hayes and White (2000), White and Hayes (2002) and Kenefick (2005, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012 and 2013).

The list of species considered by the Committee, together with the Official Checklist of the Birds of Trinidad and Tobago and details of all records accepted by the Committee, can be accessed from our new website at <http://rbc.ttfnc.org>. We urge finders to document and report their sightings to us.

RECORDS ACCEPTED

A flock of six **White-faced Whistling-Ducks** (*Dendrocygna viduata*) was photographed flying over the Caroni Rice Project on 29 August, 2013 (FA, FO, MRo). All sightings of this species in Trinidad and Tobago in recent times have been between the end of May and mid-October.

An immature/female **American Wigeon** (*Anas amer-*

icana) was photographed at Lowlands, Tobago (NG, MK, GW). It was found initially on 16 November, 2013 and remained until 20 November, 2013 at least. There have been six documented sightings of this species in Trinidad and Tobago in the last 18 years, all from Tobago.

Two immature/female **Green-winged Teal** (*Anas crecca*), in the company of Blue-winged Teal (*A. discors*), were seen and photographed on 16 November, 2013 at Lowlands, Tobago (see plate). They were present until 20 November at least (NG, MK, GW). Whilst still extremely rare in Tobago, this is the third record of this migrant from continental North America. The species has not been recorded from Trinidad.

An immature/female **Ring-necked Duck** (*Aythya collaris*) was found at Lowlands, Tobago, on 10 December, 2013 (MKe). Additionally, there were undocumented reports of a flock of 10 at the same location on 16 November, 2013 (NG, pers. comm.).

A flock of 28 **American Flamingos** (*Phoenicopterus ruber*) were photographed on 1 May, 2013 feeding on the tidal mudflats at Orange Valley (NL). This is the fourth highest group total ever found in Trinidad, the largest being 137 in August 2003.

Up to three **Jabirus** (*Jabiru myzateria*) were found and photographed on 27 July, 2013 in the agricultural fields and freshwater marsh surrounding Kernaham Settlement, Nariva Swamp (FA *et al.*) (see plate). Two birds were still being reported into early November. It was also reported that a third bird was shot soon after arrival.

Single adult **Gray Herons** (*Ardea cinerea*) were seen and photographed feeding on the tidal mudflats at Orange Valley on 28 January, 2012 (NL) and between 26 December, 2012 and 5 January, 2013 (many obs). Further sightings were made on 2 December, 2013 (NL) which remained until 22 December, 2013 at least (MK). It is not possible to categorically state how many birds were involved. This is a well-watched site, and there were no reports of the species during the intervening 11 months of each year. The recent increase in documented records of this species may have more to do with awareness of identification criteria by local birdwatchers than it does with a change in species status.

An adult **Cocoi Heron** (*Ardea cocoi*) was photographed beside the Richmond River in Tobago on 24

March, 2013 (MKe). This is the fourth record for Tobago in this century, all found in February or March.

An adult **Whistling Heron** (*Syrigma sibilatrix*) was photographed in cattle fields beside Turure Farm Road on 15 October, 2013 (KM) (see plate). Despite searching on subsequent days, the bird was never relocated. Native to the llanos and Orinoco Basin of Venezuela, this is the first record for Trinidad and Tobago.

An adult **Scarlet Ibis** (*Eudocimus ruber*) was photographed at the freshwater lakes at Lowlands, Tobago, on 4 April, 2013 (AR). This is the first documented record for Tobago in at least 18 years.

A flock of seven **Glossy Ibis** (*Plegadis falcinellus*) was seen flying over the Caroni Rice Project on 27 October, 2013 (FM, AS, SR). In Tobago, a particularly confident individual fed beside a roadside ditch at Bon Accord on 16 November, 2013 and was still present at the end of November at least (NG, MK, GW) (see plate). There are unconfirmed reports that it was subsequently shot. This is the first record for Trinidad's sister isle in many years. Whilst documented in seven of the last 13 years, the origin of these individuals remains uncertain. They are abundant in Venezuela, and our birds may well be engaging in post-breeding dispersal. They also migrate south in autumn from their North American breeding sites and could conceivably reach Trinidad from there. Moreover, the Committee has one documented photograph of a bird banded in southwestern Spain (Kenefick 2009).

A **Black Vulture** (*Coragyps atratus*) was observed soaring over Speyside, Tobago, on 28 September, 2012 (MB). With only two such documented sightings in Tobago in the last 18 years, these were probably birds that had wandered over from Trinidad.

An adult **Black-collared Hawk** (*Busarellus nigricollis*) was photographed over Rousillac on 1 January, 2013 and again on 30 November, 2013 (KS). The lack of birdwatcher coverage in this swamp, as well as a previous sighting by the same observer in the same area in November 2011 (Kenefick 2012), suggests that this bird may be resident. There has been only one other documented record of this species from Trinidad and Tobago in the last 18 years.

An immature **Snail Kite** (*Rostrhamus sociabilis*) was photographed on 1 May, 2013 on the Caroni Rice Project; it may well have been the same individual seen on 20 July (CS, FO, NL). Despite an abundance of suitable habitat, this rare wanderer from the South American mainland has been documented in Trinidad and Tobago on only nine occasions since 1995.

The only documented report of **Crane Hawk** (*Geranospiza caerulescens*) during the review period was of an adult flying over scrubland north of Piarco Interna-

tional Airport on 25 June, 2013 (FA).

An adult **White-tailed Hawk** (*Geranoaetus albicaudatus*) was observed in the Kernaham area of Nariva Swamp on 31 March, 2013 (GW) and photographed on 9 July, 2013 (KM). An individual has been documented from this area in three of the last six years. It is a well-watched site, so it is unlikely that a single bird could have remained undetected throughout the intervening period. The species is resident in both Venezuela and Guyana. This is the sixth documented occurrence of the species in Trinidad and Tobago in this century.

An **American Coot** (*Fulica americana*) was photographed on one of the lagoons at Lowlands, Tobago, on 15 March, 2013 (MKe). This is the fifth documented sighting in Trinidad and Tobago in the last 18 years, all from southwestern Tobago.

A **Double-striped Thick-knee** (*Burhinus bistriatus*) was photographed at Kernaham Settlement, Nariva Swamp, on 27 July, 2013 (FA) (see plate). Additionally, and for the second consecutive year, at least two birds were seen at Millenium Lakes Golf Course from 2 August to early October 2013 at least (LJ). There have been eight documented records of this species in Trinidad and Tobago in the last 18 years, of which six have been found during the period of late July-early September.

Adult basic-plumaged **Black-headed Gulls** (*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*) were found at Store Bay, Tobago, on 15 March, 2013 (MKe) and amongst the high tide gull roost at Orange Valley, Trinidad, on 23 November, 2013 (NL). Individuals have now been found in seven of the last 13 years, unsurprisingly all but one sighting being from the main gull roosting site on each island. All records have occurred between late November and mid-March.

A first-summer-plumaged **Franklin's Gull** (*Leuco-phaeus pipixcan*) was found at Orange Valley on 10 January, 2013 (JC, AJ), and at the same location, a bird in first-winter plumage was photographed on 29 November, 2013 (NL). Found almost annually in Trinidad and Tobago in recent times, there have now been 13 documented records of this species in the last 18 years.

An adult **Kelp Gull** (*Larus dominicanus*) was found amongst the high tide roost at Orange Valley on 13 December, 2013; it remained until 18 December (NL) (see plate). This is the third sighting of this austral gull in Trinidad, all unsurprisingly from the West Coast.

A first-winter-plumaged **Lesser Black-backed Gull** (*Larus fuscus graellsii*) was photographed at Store Bay, Tobago, on 27 February, 2013 (MKe). Whilst recorded year-round in Trinidad, this is the first documented record for Tobago in the last 10 years.

For the second year running, a **Striped Owl** (*Pseu-*

doscoops clamator) was photographed on the roadside between Parlatouvier and Bloody Bay, Tobago, this time on 15 June, 2013 (FM) (see plate). There is anecdotal speculation that the individual reported in 2012 was shot. This species remains by far the most localised and difficult to see of the Tobago speciality species.

Two **Fork-tailed Palm-Swifts** (*Tachornis squamata*) were found hawking insects over the golf course at Lowlands, Tobago, on 15 March, 2013 (MKe). Whilst very common in Trinidad, recent reports from this site in Tobago in successive years may herald a true range expansion for the species.

An adult female **Ringed Kingfisher** (*Megaceryle torquata*) was photographed beside the Bon Accord sewage lagoons on 15 March, 2013 (MKe). There have been only three documented sightings in Tobago of this common Trinidad resident, all at this location, the most recent having been a male in December 2008.

Single juvenile **Aplomado Falcons** (*Falco femoralis*) were photographed in the vicinity of Kernaham Settlement, Nariva Swamp, on 14 August, 2013 (CC) and 10 November, 2013 (MK, GW). These records support the established pattern of sightings being made during the latter months of each year that coincides with the passage of their migrant shorebird prey.

Two **Brown-throated Parakeets** (*Aratinga pertinax*) were found feeding on 3 January, 2013 in the Aripo Livestock Station (CM). Whilst a number were reported towards the end of the 1990s, this is the first documented sighting in this century. This species is widely found in coastal Venezuela; however, there has to be a question mark over the provenance of these birds, which are often kept in captivity.

A belated sighting of **Small-billed Elaenia** (*Elaenia parvirostris*) at Orange Valley on 11 May, 2012 (NL) brings that year's total to an unprecedented 12 individuals. By contrast, only one was found during 2013 at the Aripo Livestock Station on 20 May (NL).

A **Slaty Elaenia** (*Elaenia strepera*) was photographed feeding in a fruiting *Trema* tree along Blanchisseuse Road on 13 February, 2013 (FM, AS). This is only the second record for Trinidad and Tobago. The previous sighting was from Brasso Seco in July 1998. This species breeds in Bolivia and northwestern Argentina, with a post-breeding dispersal northwards.

The true status of **Variiegated Flycatcher** (*Empidonax varius*) in Trinidad is under review. It was previously considered to be a rare austral migrant; however, during 2013, seven individuals were found as follows: Talparo on 2 February (FM, AS); Aripo Livestock Station on 23 May (FM, AS); Mexico Road on 31 May

(FO); Asa Wright on 29 June (FM, AS); Cat's Hill on 25 August (FM, AS); Brasso Seco on 27 October (FO); and Talparo on 12 November (MK).

Adult male **Summer Tanagers** (*Piranga rubra*) were photographed at Gran Couva on 14 February, 2013 and 23 December, 2013 (both NL). This winter visitor from continental North America is now found almost annually.

Since their arrival in 2004, the resident population of **Grassland Yellow-Finch** (*Sicalis luteola*) had been restricted to the Aripo Livestock Station, east of Arima. On 15 June, 2013, three birds were found in cattle fields along Turure Farm Road, Valencia, some 7 km away (KM), with at least 10 showing up there on 16 October, 2013 (MK). There are also undocumented reports of several birds seen in fields adjacent to Piarco International Airport.

For the sixth consecutive year, several adult male **Lesson's Seedeaters** (*Sporophila bouvronides*) were singing on territory at a suspected breeding site in southern Trinidad in August 2013 (KS). Sadly, on at least one occasion bird catchers replete with cage and decoy birds were seen in the area.

It is suspected that **Yellow-bellied Seedeaters** (*Sporophila nigricollis*) are now breeding at several locations on the southern slopes of the Northern Range. Farther west, a small flock comprising at least three males and several females was found on Chacachacare Island on 11 August, 2013 (KS).

Single **Bay-breasted Warblers** (*Setophaga castanea*) were photographed on 19 February, 2013 at Gran Couva (NL), 3 March, 2013 at Wallerfield (FM, AS), and 6 March, 2013 (MKe, FO). Prior to 2013, there were only eight documented records in Trinidad and Tobago of this North American migrant.

An adult male **Blackburnian Warbler** (*Setophaga fusca*) was photographed at Fond Pois Doux Road, Paramin, on 8 December, 2013 (KM, FO). Whilst a common winter visitor to neighbouring Venezuela, this is only the third documented sighting for Trinidad and Tobago in the last 18 years.

An adult male **Cape May Warbler** (*Setophaga tigrina*) in full breeding plumage was found and photographed in a private garden at Lambeau, Tobago, on 7 April, 2013 (IE, BE) (see plate). This is the fourth documented occurrence in Trinidad and Tobago since 1995 of this North American migrant.

An adult male **Lesser Goldfinch** (*Astragalinus psaltria*) was photographed on the slopes of Mount St. Benedict on 10 June, 2013 (LJ). First recorded for Trinidad and Tobago in February 2005, all sightings of the species have been from this one site.

ADDITIONAL RECORDS

Acceptable records were received for a further 22 sightings of the following species whose status has already been established: **Hook-billed Kite** (*Chondrohierax uncinatus*), **Great Black Hawk** (*Buteogallus urubitinga*), **Rufous Crab Hawk** (*Buteogallus aequinoctialis*), **Black Hawk-Eagle** (*Spizaetus tyrannus*), **Crested Caracara** (*Caracara cheriway*), **Scaly-naped Pigeon** (*Patagioenas squamosa*), **Mottled Owl** (*Ciccaba virgata*), and **Black-whiskered Vireo** (*Vireo altiloquus*).

INTRODUCED SPECIES

ESCAPED CAGE AND AVIARY SPECIES

During the review period, reports were received of **Red-and-Green Macaws** (*Ara chloropterus*) at the Pitch Lake, a **Red-shouldered Macaw** (*Diopsittaca nobilis*) from Chaguaramas, a **Black-headed Parrot** (*Pionites melanocephalus*) from Gran Couva, a **White-eyed Conure** (*Psittacara leucophthalmus*) from Carli Bay, at least two **Village Weavers** (*Ploceus cucullatus*) from the Caroni Rice Project, and an adult **White Hawk** (*Pseudastur albicollis*) from the forest above Englishman's Bay, Tobago.

INCONCLUSIVE RECORDS

Submissions of documentation for the following species were deemed inconclusive: **Purple Heron** (*Ardea purpurea*), **Zone-tailed Hawk** (*Buteo albonotatus*), **Ornate Hawk-Eagle** (*Spizaetus ornatus*), **Common Greenshank** (*Tringa nebularia*), **Lesser Elaenia** (*Elaenia chiriquensis*), and **Short-crested Flycatcher** (*Myiarchus ferox*).

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Legends to Plate

1. 201388a Kelp Gull – Nigel Lallsingh – December 2013
2. 201353c Jabiru – Fayard Mohammed – August 2013

3. 201377a Glossy Ibis – Graham White – November 2013
4. 201358a Double-striped Thick-Knee – Lawrence James – August 2013
5. 201378a Green-winged Teal – Graham White – November 2013
6. 201337b Cape May Warbler – Ian Ellis – April 2013
7. 201360a Whistling Heron – Kamal Mahabir – October 2013
8. 201345a Striped Owl – Fayard Mohammed – June 2013

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