

LIVING WORLD

Journal of the Trinidad and Tobago
Field Naturalists' Club

admin@tffnc.org

ISSN 1029-3299



Display of the White-tailed Sabrewing on Tobago

Ishmael Samad

Samad, I. 2003. Display of the White-tailed Sabrewing on Tobago. *Living World, Journal of The Trinidad and Tobago Field Naturalists' Club*, 2003, 13-13.

NATURE NOTES

Predation of a Lizard by a Mockingbird in Trinidad and Tobago

On 7 June, 2003, I saw a Mockingbird (*Mimus gilvus*) “hovering” in front of a stone wall. It then landed in the middle of the road and dropped a small lizard, which managed to run about 50 cm before it was caught again. The mockingbird flew with the lizard into a neighbouring garden where it was no longer in view. The lizard could not be identified (it was about 10 m away), but was the size of a species of *Gonatodes vittatus*. These are common in the neighbourhood. In his book, A Guide to the Birds of Trinidad

and Tobago, French (1980) notes that mockingbirds have been reported to take lizards in the Dutch Leeward Islands. If you have made observations on the predation of vertebrates by Mockingbirds, please send them to The Editor, so that they can be published as a Nature Note in a later edition of The Living World.

REFERENCE

French, R. 1980. A Guide to the Birds of Trinidad and Tobago. Newtown Square, Pennsylvania: Harrowood Books. 470 p.

Nigel Gains

E-mail: gains@tstt.net.tt

Display of the White-tailed Sabrewing on Tobago

This display must be one of the most spectacular sights in Trinidad and Tobago, if not the whole neotropical area, and it should be a challenge for any wildlife photographer to capture on film this amazing performance.

This hummingbird, *Campylopterus curvipennis*, like many others is largely green, but the outer three pairs of tail feathers are pure white. When the male bird is performing his display at his familiar perch, he constantly calls a repeated double note “chee-chink.....chee-chink”. Often, while doing this, he fans out

his tail feathers, sometimes raising the tail at the same time, so that the white feathers stand out brilliantly against the generally green background of the forest environment. It has reminded me of a miniature peacock. Occasionally the bird also raises its wings, as if about to fly.

I have found this bird displaying at Gilpin Trace on Tobago’s Main Ridge, not far from the Bloody Bay Look-out, so it is not too difficult to locate. Every birder should try to share this experience, described to me by a friend as “a cosmic mind-blower”.

Ishmael Samad

c/o Pax Guest House,
Mount St. Benedict, Tunapuna.