

Second Report of the Trinidad and Tobago Rare Bird Committee.

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INTRODUCTION

The Trinidad and Tobago Rare Bird Committee (TTRBC) was established in 1995 with the primary aims of ascertaining which records of rare birds in Trinidad and Tobago are acceptable beyond reasonable doubt, publishing periodic reports of TTRBC decisions, and maintaining an official list of birds for Trinidad and Tobago. An overview of the TTRBC's history, objectives and methodology is presented in the inaugural report of the committee (Hayes and White 2000). In addition to the authors, the current TTRBC members include Martyn Kenefick (Secretary), Richard ffrench, Davis Finch, Geoffrey Gomes, William Murphy and Courtenay Rooks. Further information about the TTRBC, including copies of the Species Review List and Rare Bird Report Form, are available on the Internet at <http://www.geocities.com/ttrbc>. This report provides the results for the records circulated by the TTRBC during 1999-2000.

METHODS

The TTRBC solicits details for all reports of species on its Species Review List. Observers are encouraged to submit written reports (accompanied by documentation, if possible, such as photographs, videotapes, tape recordings, etc.) to the TTRBC's secretary, who is responsible for assigning a number to and cataloging each report received, circulating the reports among TTRBC members, and compiling the decisions. Each TTRBC member evaluates whether the information provided in each report is sufficient to support the identification. A record is accepted when a minimum of six members vote for it. For species whose origin is questionable (e.g. escaped cagebird), each member judges whether the bird more likely arrived under its own power or with the aid of humans; a minimum of six votes is required to accept the record as a natural occurrence.

RESULTS

This report includes 97 records from 1996 to 2000,

based on reports submitted by 39 observers. Of these, 80 (82.5%) were accepted (including one previously rejected record), 14 (14.4%) were rejected, and three (3.1%) were placed in a supplemental list of species whose identification was accepted but natural occurrence was rejected. The records included 62 (63.9%) from Trinidad, 31 (32.0%) from Tobago and four (4.1%) from St. Giles and Little Tobago. Eight species are new for Trinidad and Tobago, although natural occurrence was rejected for two. An additional two species are new for Trinidad and two for Tobago.

The following species accounts are arranged in the taxonomic sequence of the American Ornithologists' Union (1998). Each accepted and supplemental record includes the locality, date(s), initial of observer(s) who submitted a report, and the TTRBC record number. An asterisk beside the initial of an observer indicates that a photograph was submitted. Details for records published elsewhere are cited. For accepted and supplemental records, the initials of those who found and/or identified the bird and submitted a report are listed first, followed by a semicolon; the initials of others who submitted reports are listed alphabetically by surname (see Acknowledgements). Island abbreviations include: LTO=Little Tobago; STG=St. Giles Islands; TOB=Tobago; TRI=Trinidad; T&T=Trinidad and Tobago.

RECORDS ACCEPTED

Cory's Shearwater *Calonectris diomedea*. Single birds were found dead on Manzanilla Beach, TRI, 29 Jan 1998 (ER*; 1999-39) and 2 Feb 2000 (GW; 2000-3). These represent the 5th and 6th records for TRI (ffrench 1991, 1993).

Manx Shearwater *Puffinus puffinus*. A dead bird was found by Peter Bacon on Manzanilla Beach, TRI, 14 Nov 1997 (FH; 1999-61). This represents the 5th and earliest record for TRI (ffrench 1991; Hayes and White 2000).

White-tailed Tropicbird *Phaethon lepturus*. Up to

two adults were seen on LTO, 1-30 Apr 1998 (FH, NT; JM; 1999-60), providing the 2nd record for T&T. Subsequent intermittent reports through 2000 may represent the same birds. The previous record was a single adult from the same location on 29 Dec 1983 (ffrench 1991).

Masked Booby *Sula dactylatra*. This species was seen regularly at STG, with up to 40 adults from 11 Jan to 1 Apr 1998 (CL*; Rff, FH, ER; 1999-19), 60 on 13 Jan 1999 (DF; 2000-17) and three adults on 20 May 2000 (Rff; 2001-34). Prior to two records in 1995 and 1996 from the same location (Hayes and White 2000), this species had not been recorded in TOB. Breeding was first recorded on 25 Apr 2000, when Stefan Bodnar observed an adult feeding a nestling.

Grey Heron *Ardea cinerea*. A first-winter immature was seen at Bon Accord, TOB, 15-17 Jan 1999 (DF; 2000-16), representing the 1st record for TOB and only the 2nd for T&T (Finch 2002).

Little Egret *Egretta garzetta*. Sightings from TRI include a basic-plumaged individual at Waterloo, 7 Dec 1997 (FH; 1999-62), and one at Trincity, 11 Jan 1999 (DF; 2000-18). TOB sightings include two basic-plumaged birds at Kendal and Argyle, initially found by DF, 16 Jan to 30 Mar 1998 (FH; 1999-54), an alternate adult at Buccoo, 6-8 Sep 1998 (Rff; 1999-17), one at Argyle, 12 Jan 1999 (DF; 2000-19), and one at Buccoo, 16-17 Jan 1999 (DF; 2000-20). A comprehensive review of this species' status in T&T was recently published by Hayes and White (2001).

Green Heron *Butorides virescens*. Three sightings from TRI include two sub-adults that had acquired adult neck colouration at Trincity, 31 Jan 1998 (FH; 1999-48), a presumed adult at Pointe-a-Pierre, TRI, 21 Mar 1998 (FH; 1999-53), and an adult at San Rafael, TRI, 10 Jan 1999 (DF; 2000-21). These dates suggest that they represent wintering Nearctic migrants of the nominate race (Hayes 2002). Apparently there is no specimen record of this species from TRI, where the Striated Heron *B. striatus* is resident and intermediates are rare (Hayes 2002, in prep.).

Striated Heron *Butorides striatus*. An adult, first found by DF, was seen at Buccoo, TOB, 17 Jan to 9 Feb 1998 (FH; 1999-52). This species is previously known from several specimen records in TOB, where it apparently hybridizes with the resident Green Heron *B. virescens* (Payne 1974; Hayes 2002, in prep.).

Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus*. Three adults moulting from basic to alternate plumage were present at

Caroni Rice Project, TRI, 9-26 May 1998 (GW; FH; 1999-35). Two were noted along the Diego Martin River, TRI, 30 Oct 1999 (MG; 2000-14).

Roseate Spoonbill *Ajaia ajaja*. An immature was at Caroni Rice Project, TRI, 8-20 Sep 1998 (GW; FH; 1999-3). An adult, possibly the same bird, was noted at the same locality during 8-27 Aug 1999 (AW; FH*, GW; 2000-2).

Jabiru *Jabiru mycteria*. Two (second seen only by RN) were present at Caroni Rice Project, TRI, 23-26 Jun 1999 (RM, SR; FH; 2000-1), providing the 2nd record for TRI and 3rd for T&T. The only previous TRI record was from Caroni Swamp on 12 May 1990 (ffrench 1993).

King Vulture *Sarcorampus papa*. An adult was seen at Mt. St. Benedict, TRI, 10 Mar 1999 (NR; 2000-9).

Fulvous Whistling Duck *Dendrocygna bicolor*. An adult, first found by WP and DM, associated with Blackbellied Whistling Ducks *D. autumnalis* at Buccoo, TOB, 2 Jan to 4 Apr 1998 (FH, Rff; 1999-24). The only previous record for TOB was from Bloody Bay on 5 May 1975 (ffrench 1991).

Comb Duck *Sarkidiornis melanotos*. An immature male, initially found by Geoffrey Gomes, was at Caroni Rice Project, TRI, 9 Sep 1997 (GW, RN*; 1999-37), providing only the 3rd record for T&T. The previous two records were from 1932 and 1971 (ffrench 1991).

Green-winged Teal *Anas crecca*. An adult male accompanied a flock of Blue-winged Teal *A. discors* at Buccoo, TOB, 23 Nov 1998 (GW; 1999-8), providing the 3rd record for T&T (ffrench 1991).

Ring-necked Duck *Aythya collaris*. A male and two females were at Lowlands, TOB, 23 Nov 1998 (GW; 1999-9). These may have been the same individuals present during the previous winter (Hayes and White 2000).

Lesser Scaup *Aythya affinis*. A female was at Caroni Rice Project, TRI, 4 Nov 1998 (GW; 1999-7).

Hook-billed Kite *Chondrohierax uncinatus*. An immature female at Buccoo, TOB, 4 Jan 1998 (FH; 1999-45), provided only the 2nd record; the previous was at Speyside, TOB, 13 Aug 1982 (ffrench 1993). A pair with immatures (maximum of four birds) were at Tableland, TRI, 21 May to 4 Dec 1998 (GW; 1999-5).

Snail Kite *Rostrhamus sociabilis*. A female or immature was at Nariva Swamp, TRI, 1 Apr 1998 (PD; 1999-26).

Swainson's Hawk *Buteo swainsoni*. A light-morph

adult was at Flagstaff Hill, TOB, 17 Mar 1998 (Rff; 1999-20), and possibly the same bird (another light-morph adult) was at LTO on the extraordinarily late date of 21 Jun 1998 (GE; 1999-21), providing the 3rd record for T&T (ffrench 1991).

Black-collared Hawk *Busarellus nigricollis*. An adult was at Kernahan Trace, Nariva Swamp, TRI, 11 Oct 1998 (GW; 1999-12).

Rufous Crab-Hawk *Buteogallus aequinoctialis*. A sub-adult photographed at Nariva Swamp, TRI, 10 Feb 1996 (BB, GB*, LB; 1996-17), was previously rejected (Hayes and White 2000) but subsequently reconsidered and accepted.

Black Hawk-Eagle *Spizaetus tyrannus*. An adult was at Wallerfield, TRI, 15 Sep 1998 to 7 Jan 1999 (Rff; DF; 1999-29), and a juvenile was at Happy Hill Cottage, along the Blanchisseuse Road, north slope of the Northern Range, TRI, 18 Sep 1999 (CR; 2000-7).

Aplomado Falcon *Falco femoralis*. An adult was at Oropouche Lagoon, TRI, 27 Sep 1998 (GW; 1999-13).

Rufous-necked Wood-Rail *Aramides axillaris*. An adult was at Caroni Swamp, TRI, 16 Sep 1998 (Rff; 1999-18), indicating that it still exists in mangroves along the west coast where it was suspected to be extirpated (ffrench 1991).

Caribbean Coot *Fulica caribaea*. An adult was at Buccoo, TOB, 16 Mar to 11 May 1998 (Rff; FH; 1999-25). Perhaps the same individual was at nearby Bon Accord, TOB, 15 Jan 1999 (DF; 2000-22).

Pied Lapwing *Hoploxypterus cayanus*. An adult at San Rafael, TRI, 12 Mar to 4 Apr 1998 (PG; FH*; 1999-30), represented the 1st record for T&T of this South American species.

American Oystercatcher *Haematopus palliatus*. Several were seen intermittently on coastal mudflats between Waterloo and Orange Valley, TRI, including a pair of adults from 24 Dec 1997 to 26 Jan 1998 (GW; FH; 1999-47), a probable adult on 14 Sep 1998 (Rff; 1999-23), and possibly the same individual from 16 Nov 1998 to 20 Mar 1999 (GW; FH; 1999-6). Up to five individuals were recorded from the same location in 1995 and 1996 (Hayes and White 2000).

Terek Sandpiper *Xenus cinereus*. An individual initially found by Peter Wild at Waterloo, TRI, 28 Jun 1999 (MT; 2000-5), provided the 1st record for T&T and only the 4th for South America of this Old World species (Taylor 2001).

Marbled Godwit *Limosa fedoa*. Up to three were

seen regularly at Waterloo, TRI, 12 Dec 1997 to 28 Mar 1998 (IS; FH; 1999-34), providing the 1st wintering record and latest spring date; there were no previous records between 19 Oct and 10 Mar (ffrench 1991; Hayes and White 2000).

Wilson's Phalarope *Phalaropus tricolor*. An immature initially found by Geoffrey Gomes was at the Caroni Rice Project, TRI, 28 Aug to 12 Sep 1998 (FH; IS; GW; 1999-2), providing the 1st record for TRI. The only previous record was from Buccoo, TOB, 28 Sep 1990 (Murphy et al. 1991).

Parasitic Jaeger *Stercorarius parasiticus*. Ten were noted about 5 km S of Westmoorings, TRI, 3 May 2000 (CR; 2000-8). This species is not on the Species Review List.

Franklin's Gull *Larus pipixcan*. Multiple sightings of at least three different birds along the west coast of TRI include a first-winter immature initially found by Douglas McNair at Port of Spain, 5 Jan 1999, at least two different first-winter immatures at Waterloo, 7 Feb to 26 Feb 1999, and an adult at Waterloo, 14-20 Mar 1999 (FH; GW; 1999-4). This is the 1st record of this long-distance Nearctic migrant for T&T (McNair et al. 2002).

Ring-billed Gull *Larus delawarensis*. A 1st-winter immature first found by GW was at Carli Bay, TRI, 14 Dec 1997 (FH*; 1999-63), and a 2nd-winter immature (but possibly the same individual in more advanced plumage; tail pattern undescribed) was at Waterloo, TRI, 1 Mar 1998 (FH; 1999-56).

Kelp Gull *Larus dominicanus*. An adult of the nominate race was seen intermittently at Waterloo, TRI, 8 Jul to 1 Oct 2000, and also 25 km to the south at San Fernando, TRI (where a second adult, first found by Howard Kilpatrick, was also seen, though not simultaneously), 18 Sep to 10 Feb 2001 (FH*; GW*; 2000-29). This was the 1st record for T&T of this Southern Hemisphere species, which has only recently colonised the Northern Hemisphere (Hayes et al. 2002).

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus*. An unprecedented six individuals wintered along the west coast of TRI during 1997-1998, including an adult at Cangrejos Bay, 21 Dec 1997 (FH; 1999-40), three 1st-winter immatures at Waterloo, 8 Dec 1997 to 11 Jan 1998 (IS; FH; 1999-41), a 3rd-winter immature at Waterloo and Orange Valley, 11 Jan to 1 Mar 1998 (FH; 1999-42), a 2nd-winter immature at Waterloo, 22 Feb to 1 Mar 1998 (FH; 1999-43), and an adult at Waterloo, 14 Mar 1999 (GW; 1999-11). Sightings from TOB in-

clude an adult at Buccoo Reef, TOB, 14 Jan 1988 (DF; 1999-66), and a first-winter bird at Turtle Beach, 19 Jan 1992 (DF; 1999-67).

Yellow-billed Cuckoo *Coccyzus americanus*. One was at the Marianne River, Blanchisseuse, TRI, 27 Sep 1998 (FZ, MZ, JG, WW; 1999-14). This species is not on the Species Review List.

Mangrove Cuckoo *Coccyzus minor*. One was at Bon Accord, TOB, 1 Feb 1999 (FH; 1999-50).

Dark-billed Cuckoo *Coccyzus melacoryphus*. One was at Todd's Road, TRI, 26 Aug 1998 (GW; 1999-1).

Scaled Antpitta *Grallaria guatamalensis*. A silent individual was seen regularly at the Asa Wright Nature Centre, TRI, 8 Apr to 9 Jun 1999 (Rff; FH; 2000-4), providing the 1st record since 1981 of this poorly known forest bird (ffrench 1991).

Slaty Elaenia *Elaenia strepera*. A female or immature male was at Brasso Seco-Paria, TRI, 21-22 Jul 1998 (CR, ER; 1999-31), providing the 1st record of this Neotropical migrant for T&T (Rooks and Rooks 2002).

Spotted Tody-Flycatcher *Todirostrum maculatum*. Two were at Oropouche Lagoon, TRI, 6 Mar 1999 (GW; 1999-10), providing a significant range expansion northward from the Icacos Peninsula (ffrench 1991).

White-eyed Vireo *Vireo griseus*. An immature was at Buccoo, TOB, 2 Jan to 9 Feb 1998 (WP, DM; FH; 1999-46), and an adult presumably representing the same individual was at the same locality on 28 Jan 1999 (RN). This record was the 1st for T&T of this Nearctic migrant (Petersen and McRae 2002).

Northern Parula *Parula americana*. A male was at Buccoo, TOB, 9 Feb 1998 (FH; 1999-51), providing the 4th record for TOB (including LTO; ffrench 1991). A male at Pointe-a-Pierre Wildfowl Trust, TRI, 22 Feb 1998 (FH; 1999-55), provided the 1st record for TRI.

Cape May Warbler *Dendroica tigrina*. An adult male was at Trincity, TRI, 31 Dec 1998 to 8 Apr 1999 (WP, DM; DF, FH, HL*, CR; 2000-23), providing the 2nd record for TRI (Petersen and McRae 2002).

Summer Tanager *Piranga rubra*. One was clearly heard, but not seen, at Grafton Estate, TOB, 15 Jan 1999 (DF; 2000-24), providing the 1st record for TOB.

Golden-rumped Euphonia *Euphonia cyanocephala*. An adult male was at Brigand Hill, TRI, 3 Mar 1999 (PH; 2000-10).

Ruddy-breasted Seedeater *Sporophila minuta*. Four or five females or immatures were at Bon Accord, TOB, 25 Mar to 4 Apr 1998 (Rff; 1999-28). A presumed

pair was at the Aripo Livestock Farm, TRI, 22 Mar to 22 May 1998 (FH; 1999-57).

Rose-breasted Grosbeak *Pheucticus ludovicianus*. Two birds, of which one was a 1st-winter male, were at Morne Bleu, TRI, 20-31 Jan 1998 (KM, CR; FH; 1999-49), providing only the 4th record for Trinidad (ffrench 1991; Hayes and White 2000).

Dickcissel *Spiza americana*. A male was at Speyside, TOB, 13 Jan 1998 (CA; 2000-6), representing the 1st record for TOB. Large numbers of this species have been recorded in TRI in recent years (White and Temple 2002).

BREEDING RECORDS

White-tailed Sabrewing *Campylopterus ensipennis*. Two nestlings were attended by a female in a nest at Gilpin Trace, TOB, 18 Mar to 1 Apr 1998 (Rff; FH*, NT*; 1999-15). A recently active nest nearby was pointed out by Dexter James on 30 Mar 1998 (FH; 1999-59). Retrieved and studied on 23 Jun 1998, these nests represented the 5th and 6th known breeding records for the species, whose breeding biology was described by Hayes et al. (2000).

Venezuelan Flycatcher *Myiarchus venezuelensis*. A pair was seen constructing a nest within a bamboo stump along Gilpin Trace, TOB, 18 Mar 1998 (Rff; 1999-27), providing the 1st breeding record for TOB (ffrench 1991).

Blue-backed Manakin *Chiroxiphia pareola*. A female was seen building a nest at Gilpin Trace, TOB, 23 and 29 Mar 1998 (Rff; 1999-22), providing only the 2nd record of nesting for this species (ffrench 1991) in Tobago.

SUPPLEMENTAL LIST

Chukar *Alectoris chukar*. An adult, obviously an escaped cagebird, was captured and photographed at Mt. Pelier, TOB, 11 May 1999 (AR; 2000-11), provided the 1st record for T&T of this Eastern Hemisphere species.

Yellow Grosbeak *Pheucticus chrysopheplus*. An adult male at the Asa Wright Nature Centre, TRI, 8 Nov 1999 (HB; 2000-15), represented the 1st record for T&T. Although it may have been a genuine vagrant from South America, a captive origin is feasible.

Yellow-bellied Seedeater *Sporophila nigricollis*. An adult male was at Charlotteville, TOB, 16 Aug 1999 (IS; 2000-13). Although it may have been a genuine vagrant from South America or Trinidad, especially during late summer, a captive origin seems more likely

given its popularity in the local cagebird industry.

RECORDS REJECTED

Northern Gannet *Sula bassanus*. One off Crown Point, TOB, 29 Mar 1998 (1999-58).

Purple Heron *Ardea purpurea*. One at Buccoo, TOB, 2 Sep 1999 (2000-12).

Lesser Scaup *Aythya affinis*. One at Trincity, TRI, 10 Dec 1997 (1999-33).

Swallow-tailed Kite *Elanoides forficatus*. One at Gilpin Trace, TOB, 30 Mar 1998 (1999-68).

American Kestrel *Falco sparverius*. One at Wallerfield, TRI, 28 Feb 1998 (1999-65).

Orange-breasted Falcon *Falco deiroleucus*. One at Petit Valley, TRI, 3 Feb 1999 (1999-38).

American Coot *Fulica americana*. One at Trincity, TRI, 24-28 Dec 1997 (1999-44).

Long-billed Curlew *Numenius americanus*. One at Buccoo, TOB, 22 Oct 1998 (2000-25).

Gull-billed Tern *Sterna nilotica*. 10-12 at Plymouth, TOB, 22 Oct 1998 (2000-26).

Caspian Tern *Sterna caspia*. Two at Pigeon Point, TOB, 21 Jan 1998 (1999-64).

Mangrove Swallow *Tachycineta albilinea*. Two at Waterloo, TRI, 23 Mar 1998 (1999-16).

Moriche Oriole *Icterus chryscephalus*. One at Cacandee, TRI, 7 Dec 1997 (1999-32).

Golden-winged Warbler *Vermivora chrysoptera*. One at Brasso Seco Junction, TRI, 8 Jan 1999 (2000-28).

Bobolink *Dolichonyx oryzivorus*. Six at Speyside, TOB, 6 Apr 1998 (2000-27).

ADDENDA AND CORRIGENDA

A photo of the **Greater Flamingo** *Phoenicopterus ruber* (1998-28; Hayes and White 2000) was submitted by RN, and an additional report extending the range of dates to 27 Feb 1998 was submitted by PC and AO. The TTRBC number (1998-13) of the **Lesser Scaup** *Aythya affinis* in TOB (Hayes and White 2000) was inadvertently omitted.

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