

**OBSERVATIONS OF THE RED-NECKED
PHALAROPE (*PHALAROPUS LOBATUS*) AND
BAIRD'S SANDPIPER (*CALIDRIS BAIRDII*) IN
PUERTO RICO**

Alfredo J. Begazo

*Archbold Biological Station, P.O. Box 2057, Lake Placid, Florida
33852, U.S.A.*

On 23 October 1990, 5 members of the Field Biology Training Program of Manomet Bird Observatory observed an adult Red-necked Phalarope (*Phalaropus lobatus*) in non-breeding plumage at the southeastern lagoon at Cabo Rojo Salt Flats, Puerto Rico. The salt flats are composed of several ponds and shallow lagoons connected to the ocean by a culvert system. Initially, the phalarope was seen foraging with Stilt Sandpipers (*Calidris himantopus*). Its small size and persistent swimming easily identified it as a phalarope.

Like the Red Phalarope (*Phalaropus fulicarius*) in winter plumage, the bird had black through and behind the eyes, but was easily distinguished from that species by its longer and thinner bill, smaller size, and proportionally shorter wings (Harrison 1983). The phalarope at Cabo Rojo also had white lines along the outer edges of the mantle and scapulars, which are absent in the Red Phalarope and Wilson's Phalarope (*Phalaropus tricolor*) (Hayman et al. 1986).

The Red-necked Phalarope is normally a pelagic species, except when breeding or storm-driven (Hayman et al. 1986). New world populations breed in extreme northern America and winter in the Pacific, with no major wintering areas known for the Atlantic (American Ornithologists' Union 1983, Hayman et al. 1986). Few records exist of migrating individuals in the West Indies, and its appearance there is considered accidental. Bond (1985) reported the species from New Providence (11 October), Cuba (20 May, 10 December), and Jamaica (21 January; years not given). Raffaele (1989) reported two earlier records (30 December 1977, 24 April 1980) of Red-necked Phalaropes in Puerto Rico.

In October 1990, several storms hit Puerto Rico. Following one of the most severe of these storms (16 October), several uncommon species were observed in good numbers, including Hudsonian Godwits (*Limosa haemastica*), Lesser Golden-Plovers (*Pluvialis dominica*), and Sanderlings (*Calidris alba*). These migrating birds remained in the area for only one day, perhaps recovering from the effects of the storm. I suggest that the Red-necked Phalarope seen at Cabo Rojo had been storm-driven to the region.

On 12 November 1991, I observed a juvenile Baird's Sandpiper (*Calidris bairdii*) among a flock of Semipalmated Sandpipers (*Calidris pusilla*) and Western Sandpipers (*C. mauri*) at one of the central ponds at the Cabo Rojo Salt Flats. The Baird's Sandpiper vocalized constantly, giving a *Krrrrt Krrrrt*, which was somewhat sharper than calls given by adults of this species and different from those of the White-rumped Sandpiper (*C. fuscicollis*), a species common in the area. The juvenile Baird's Sandpiper consistently flew separately and landed 3-5 m apart from the flock. It maintained its distance from the other birds on the ground.

In migration to and from North America, Baird's Sandpiper overflies Central America and follows the Andean ridge. In the

Red-necked Phalarope and Baird's Sandpiper in Puerto Rico (continued)

Caribbean, Baird's Sandpiper has been recorded from Trinidad (2 September 1976; French 1977), Barbados (specimen, 26 August, year not given; Bond 1962), St. Croix (27 August; Furniss 1983), and Puerto Rico (Pérez-Rivera 1987).

The Cabo Rojo Salt Flats represent one of the most important stop-overs and wintering areas for shorebirds that migrate to and from South America through the West Indies. During my observations, Semipalmated Sandpipers, Western Sandpipers, and Black-necked Stilts (*Himantopus mexicanus*) were present in high numbers. This area is a breeding ground for Wilson's Plover (*Charadrius wilsonia*) and also has the largest breeding population of the Caribbean race of the Snowy Plover (*C. alexandrinus nivosus*) in Puerto Rico (Gloria Lee, pers. comm.).

Literature Cited

- American Ornithologists' Union. 1983. Check-list of North American birds, 6th ed. Allen Press, Lawrence, Kansas.
Bond, J. 1962. Seventh Supplement to the Checklist of the Birds of the West Indies (1956). Acad. Nat. Sci., Philadelphia.
Bond, J. 1985. Birds of the West Indies. 5th ed., reprinted. Collins, London.
French, R.P. 1977. Some interesting bird records from Trinidad and Tobago. Living World (J. Trinidad Tobago Field Nat. Club) 1977:5-11.
Harrison, P. 1983. Seabirds; an identification guide. Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston.
Hayman, P., J. Marchant, and T. Prater. 1986. Shorebirds: an identification guide to the waders of the world. Houghton Mifflin Co., New York.
Norton, R.L. 1983. Continental survey "The Autumn Migration." Am. Birds 37:228-229.
Pérez-Rivera, R.A. 1987. Additional records and notes on migratory water birds in Puerto Rico, West Indies. Carib. J. Sci. 23:368-372.
Raffaele, H.A. 1989. A guide to the birds of Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. Second ed. Princeton Univ. Press, Princeton, New Jersey.

ABSTRACTS OF CURRENT RESEARCH IN CUBA

REPRODUCTIVE ECOLOGY OF THE CUBAN PARROT (*AMAZONA LEUCOCEPHALA*) IN LOS INDIOS, ISLA DE LA JUVENTUD. I.—NEST SELECTION

Alejandro Llanes Sosa, Rosendo Martínez Montero, and
Vincente Berovides Álvarez
La Habana, Cuba

Among the birds which use cavities for nesting, nest selection appears to be a critical factor. The current investigation was carried out to determine the structural components of the cavity and vegetative environment that influence nest selection within a natural population of Cuban Parrots (*Amazona leucocephala*).