

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

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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.).

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**ABSTRACTS OF CURRENT RESEARCH IN
CUBA**

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

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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*).

la). Data were collected during 1988–1989 in the locality of “Los Indios,” Isla de la Juventud, which is characterized by sandy savannas with palms (*Colpothrinax wrightii*). Parrots used holes created by woodpeckers in the palms as nests. A total of 242 nests were analyzed, some of which were in planted palms. Eight variables were measured at each cavity in natural or planted palms. Five variables were examined in the surrounding vegetation. In 1988, 38.2% of the planted palms were occupied by parrots versus 12.5% of the natural nest trees. Similarly, in 1989 these values were 30.9% and 25%, respectively. Parrots preferred planted palms for nesting because those trees had cavities of greater depth, shorter distance from the entrance to the ground, and the lower density of other palms around the nest.

REPRODUCTIVE ECOLOGY OF THE CUBAN PARROT (*AMAZONA LEUCOCEPHALA*) IN LOS INDIOS, ISLA DE LA JUVENTUD. II.—POPULATION DYNAMICS

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The reproductive success of Cuban Parrots (*Amazona leucocephala*) was studied in Isla de la Juventud, Cuba. The number of chicks fledged per nest was compared with the limiting factor of nest cavity quality in planted palms (*Colpothrinax wrightii*) and natural sites. Six variables of nest structure and two of the surrounding vegetation were measured for each nest cavity in natural and planted trees. We monitored 48 nests through fledging. A relationship was established between nest number and the structural and vegetative factors mentioned before, using a principal component analysis (PCA). Examining the reproductive outcome of all parrot pairs from 1982 to 1989 allowed us to analyze the population dynamics of the species and to calculate the intrinsic rate of natural increase. The structural component of the nest with the greatest influence on the number of chicks fledged was cavity depth. However, this relationship was significant only in nests in planted palms, which generally showed a better reproductive success than pairs using cavities in natural trees. Population increase during a year was linear and was estimated as 0.195. Abundance of the nest sites was examined, as well as the reproductive chronology in our study area.

BOOK REVIEW

A Guide to the Birds of Trinidad & Tobago, 2nd edition.—Richard ffrench. 1991. Ithaca, New York, Comstock Publishing Associates, a division of Cornell University Press. xvii + 426 pp., plates and drawings by John P. O'Neill, portraits by Don R. Eckelberry.—This publication completely updates the first edition of this unique and indispensable work, which was published in 1976 and last revised in the early 1980s. Although that edition is still

usable, the new edition contains many improvements and a plethora of new information.

Illustrations are the heart of a field guide. The original paintings were very good, but I feel that an opportunity has been lost to eliminate confusion due to crowding. All of the color plates have been reprinted intact at the same size as in the first edition, even though the new edition features a larger page size. A better use of the larger page size would have been to reposition male–female pairs and to provide more space among species, especially on the plates of the hummingbirds, manakins, and tanagers. Many plates now depict rather small images of birds tightly clumped on pages with wide, unused margins.

John O'Neill painted one new color plate for this edition, illustrating such gorgeous, but unrelated, species as Channel-billed Toucan (*Ramphastos vitellinus*) and Scarlet Ibis (*Eudocimus ruber*). The exceptional whiteness of the paper on which the plates are printed adds to the brilliance of the colors.

All of the portraits from the first edition have been consolidated at the center of the book, following the plates, which makes finding them much easier than before. The portraits would have been even more accessible had they been inserted in phylogenetic order among the plates rather than being lumped after them. The present arrangement, however, still is better than that in the first edition. As in the first edition, 24 species are illustrated as line drawings. A dozen of these drawings have been recast in far better detail than in the first edition.

As expected in a new edition, the information presented here has been updated and expanded from that in the first edition. The original introduction was so thorough that little could be added here except for a few timely updates, such as the recovery of certain species in Tobago. Several tables have been revised to reflect new information on the occurrence of migratory species in Trinidad and Tobago.

The body of the book consists of detailed accounts of more than 400 species of birds. Suffice it to say that ffrench has done another masterful job of pulling together the old and the new, and has added descriptions of several species new to Trinidad and Tobago. Birders familiar with the first edition will appreciate the large amount of new information that ffrench has added to the existing species descriptions, drawing on firsthand reports from competent birders, as well as the literature base. When one considers the length of time required to produce a book of this nature, it is amazing to find that it includes records as current as February 1991, only 6 months before publication.

Among the other improvements, ffrench has incorporated the latest American Ornithologists' Union names, substituting whistling-duck for tree duck, Common Piping-Guan for Trinidad Piping-Guan, Olivaceous Cormorant for Neotropic Cormorant, etc. Such consistency should ease the synonym problem for users comparing species descriptions among field guides. The titles of some of the plates have been changed to more accurately reflect their content; e.g., “Large Raptors” instead of “Hawks and Vulture,” “Medium-sized and Small Raptors” instead of “Kites and Falcons,” and “Hermits and Larger Hummingbirds” and “Smaller Hummingbirds” instead