

I'm the only person in the world who has ever had Elfin Woods Warbler fat under my fingernails!"

Fortunately the skinning went well, and the gap in the back of the specimen is concealed by the folded wings. But the pellet had also completely smashed the bird's pelvic area, and I was unable to find any trace of the gonads. Cam was sure it was a male, because before he shot it he had seen it singing from a series of song perches. I thought it undesirable for the type specimen of a new species to be a bird whose sex had not been verified anatomically. Cam, who had not previously been involved in taxonomic descriptions, was under the impression that the first specimen actually collected was automatically the type specimen. I reassured him on this point, and suggested that we hike up to the elfin woods and collect another specimen, this time with more appropriate ammunition for a tiny bird. This we did, luckily getting both an adult and a young bird in the greenish "immature" (= first basic) plumage.

Back at the Keplers' house, I wrote a detailed description of the adult, which I could verify as a male, noting some minor differences from the first specimen. I had to do this before preparing the study skin, as some of the complex pattern of *Dendroica angelae* is concealed or somewhat distorted in a museum specimen. Next I turned to the young bird. We had had to arise at something like 3 AM to be able to get to the elfin woods habitat by dawn, and I was exhausted. I found myself preparing the skin of the young bird almost in my sleep, having had enough experience in this technique to do it almost as a series of reflexes. When finished, I realized to my horror that thanks to my fatigue, I had completely overlooked the necessity of writing the plumage description before skinning the bird. I apologized to Cam, and told him we would have to go back and get another young bird. He is, fortunately, a patient and tolerant individual, and we repeated our trip up the mountain and did indeed collect another of the green-plumaged birds. Our respective talents combined well during this adventure, as Cam is a better shot than I am, but wasn't happy about his skinning abilities. Thus, the first four specimens of *Dendroica angelae* were all collected by Cameron Kepler and prepared by me.

The second young bird, which proved to be a male, was duly written up, and a good specimen made of it while I was reasonably awake. It and the second adult, which became the type specimen, were deposited in the United States National Museum, and Carnegie Museum of Natural History houses the 18 May male and the first immature bird, a female. The conformation of the study skin of that young bird is a constant reminder of my having prepared it in my sleep!

The late Oliver L. Austin, Jr., was the Editor of *The Auk* at that time. He was excited by our

paper, and was able to get the consent of the author scheduled to have the lead article in the next available issue (January 1972) postponed to make room for the *Dendroica angelae* bombshell. I telephoned my friend Don Eckelberry, who had previously done a painting for me for a frontispiece to accompany a journal paper, and asked him whether he would like to do a painting of a new species. Don was not enthusiastic, as he knew that I was heavily involved with studies on Philippine birds (as I am still), and he thought I meant a new Philippine species. When I explained that this was a bird from Puerto Rico, he perked up immediately. I knew already that Don didn't like to paint any bird that he had not seen alive himself (or at least seen a closely related species). I urged him to try to get down to Puerto Rico and see the Elfin Woods Warbler himself. He was able to arrange to take a few days in his busy schedule and join Cam and Kay Kepler in the field. He made sketches of the warbler and of the plants in its habitat, and painted the fine portrait that appeared as the frontispiece in the January 1972 *Auk*. Some years later Don generously presented the original painting to the Keplers.

Unfortunately, in the haste necessary to get the journal issue out promptly, there was not adequate time to allow the artist to see the color proofs. In the reproduction of the frontispiece the contrast was set too high, so that the pattern of the lower figure, the immature bird, stands out too boldly, whereas the actual markings of this plumage are relatively subtle. We also found three typographical errors, and after checking up, Cam found that the blame for these could be allotted evenly: he, I, and the Editor were each responsible for one error.

It is difficult to believe that almost twenty years have elapsed since the discovery of the Elfin Woods Warbler. I treasure the memory of this adventure that the Keplers allowed me to share. I will probably never again experience the eerie feeling of standing under a tree watching a family group of birds that, as far as the world of ornithology was concerned, did not exist!

**SECOND RECORD OF BAIRD'S  
SANDPIPER (*CALIDRIS BAIRDII*) FOR  
TRINIDAD, WITH NOTES ON ITS  
OCCURRENCE IN THE CARIBBEAN  
BASIN**

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A Baird's Sandpiper (*Calidris bairdii*) in juvenal plumage was observed on 17 November 1989 at the Port-of-Spain, Trinidad, wastewater treatment ponds (10°23'N, 61°09'W), inland approximately 1.6 km from the Gulf of Paria, by six members of a

Peregrine Enterprises, Inc., birding group. This sighting is the second record for Trinidad. Identifying characters included a typical horizontal posture, wingtips extending well beyond the tip of the tail, overall brownish coloration, pointed black bill with a slight droop at the tip, black legs, very dark tertials with whitish edgings (giving a typical scaly appearance), dark rump and upper tail coverts, white chin and throat, a buffy wash across the finely streaked breast, and clear white flanks. Two adult White-rumped Sandpipers (*C. fuscicollis*) were nearby for comparison; in North America, Baird's Sandpiper often associates with White-rumped Sandpipers (pers. observ.). Other *Calidris* species present included a Red Knot (*C. canutus*), Western Sandpiper (*C. mauri*), and an undetermined number of Western and Semipalmated (*C. pusilla*) sandpipers.

Baird's Sandpiper is virtually unreported from the northeastern part of South America (Jehl 1979), to which the avifauna of Trinidad has strong affinity. Hilty and Brown (1986) have no records from Colombia east of the Andes, although de Schauensee and Phelps (1978) listed one inland record in Venezuela (Ocumare, Aragua; 725 km west of Trinidad) in October and Wetmore (1939) listed several sight records from the lowlands of Venezuela, again in late October. Baird's Sandpiper also is very uncommon in Central America. Stiles and Skutch (1989) described its status in Costa Rica as a very uncommon, but probably regular, fall migrant (September to early November), chiefly in the highlands but also sparingly along the Pacific coast.

Baird's Sandpiper has been recorded only four times previously from the Caribbean. ffrench (1977) published the only other record from Trinidad (2 September 1976, at Waller Field), and he remarked (ffrench 1988) that similarity to other sandpipers may have precluded its identification in Trinidad on other occasions. Bond (1962, 1985) included in his list of vagrants to the West Indies a specimen from Barbados (present 26 August - 5 November, year not given), shot from a flock of five birds. Most recently, Pérez-Rivera (1987) reported a Baird's Sandpiper from Puerto Rico (1 September 1980) and Fred Sladen observed this species on St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands (27 August 1982; Norton 1983).

Hayman et al. (1986) wrote that Baird's Sandpiper migrates south through the North American prairies, overflying Central America, and following the Andes, with the first juveniles reaching Argentina by late August. Vagrants have been reported from northern and southeastern Australia, Tasmania, New Zealand, Japan, Hawaii, the Galapagos Islands, the Falkland Islands, South Africa, Senegal, the Azores, and northwestern Europe east to Sweden and Poland. Although vagrants have exceptionally win-

tered in Europe, there are no documented records for North America after December (Hayman et al. 1986).

Juvenile Baird's Sandpipers migrate later than adults (Jehl 1979). Their migration is much more protracted than that of the adults, which can take as little as five weeks. The slower, broader movements of juveniles in part account for the fact that among fall-taken specimens, juveniles are more than five times more common than adults (Jehl 1979).

The west coast of Trinidad along the Gulf of Paria is a haven for migrant shorebirds (pers. observ.). Morrison et al. (1989) reported that of 13,600 Nearctic shorebirds found in Trinidad in February 1982, all but 39 were found on the west coast. They noted that more shorebirds were found there than on the Venezuelan coastline of the Gulf of Paria, with Trinidad sectors accounting for 60.3% of 22,600 shorebirds found.

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