

THREE NEW MIGRATORY BIRD SPECIES REPORTED FROM HISPANIOLA

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Abstract: We report the occurrence of three species of migratory birds new to the island of Hispaniola, including Swainson's Thrush (*Catharus ustulatus*), Scarlet Tanager (*Piranga olivacea*), and Eastern Wood-Pewee (*Contopus virens*). All were seen and photographed during the fall migration period in southwestern Dominican Republic. Other vagrants seen during the same time period are also mentioned.

Key words: *Catharus ustulatus*, *Contopus virens*, Dominican Republic, Eastern Wood-Pewee, Hispaniola, *Piranga olivacea*, Scarlet Tanager, Swainson's Thrush

Resumen: TRES ESPECIES DE AVES MIGRATORIAS REGISTRADAS EN LA HISPANIOLA. Divulgamos sobre la ocurrencia de tres especies de aves migratorias nuevas a la isla de la Hispaniola, incluyendo *Catharus ustulatus*, *Piranga olivacea*, y *Contopus virens*. Todas fueron vistas y fotografiadas durante el período de la migración de otoño en el sudoeste de la República Dominicana. Mencionamos otras especies raras también que vimos durante el mismo período.

Palabras clave: *Catharus ustulatus*, *Contopus virens*, Hispaniola, *Piranga olivacea*, República Dominicana

Résumé : OBSERVATION DE TROIS NOUVELLES ESPÈCES D'OISEAUX MIGRATEURS À HISPANIOLA. Nous rapportons la présence de 3 nouvelles espèces d'oiseaux migrants pour l'île d'Hispaniola : la Grive à dos olive (*Catharus ustulatus*), le Tangara écarlate (*Piranga olivacea*) et le Pioui de l'Est (*Contopus virens*). Elles ont toutes été observées et photographiées pendant la migration d'automne au sud-ouest de la République Dominicaine. D'autres espèces accidentelles observées à la même époque sont mentionnées.

Mots-clés : *Catharus ustulatus*, *Contopus virens*, Grive à dos olive, Pioui de l'Est, Hispaniola, *Piranga olivacea*, République Dominicaine, Tangara écarlate

HISPANIOLA OCCUPIES a central location among landmasses in the West Indies and is thus a major crossroads of migration (Keith *et al.* 2003). Numerous migratory birds pass through the island or overwinter in the Dominican Republic and Haiti (Raffaele *et al.* 1998, Latta *et al.* 2006). Nonetheless, a number of migratory species have been recorded on Cuba, Jamaica, and other Caribbean islands that are perhaps more intensively explored by birdwatchers, so new records are still to be expected from Hispaniola. Here we report details for three new species for Hispaniola and several other vagrants, all in the Dominican Republic.

NEW SPECIES

SWAINSON'S THRUSH (*CATHARUS USTULATUS*)

At about 11:00 hr on 16 October 2005, Landestoy observed a thrush fly into mesquite scrub at Las Calderas Naval Base near Las Salinas de Bani, Peravia Province, Dominican Republic. At this coastal site, habitat patches include salt lagoons, commercial salt ponds, open mangroves, dry scrub with cactus and mesquite, and residential gardens. It

was identified as a Swainson's Thrush by its uniformly olive brown upperparts, white underparts with sides of face, throat and breast washed pale buffy, and dark spotting on the sides of the throat and breast (Fig. 1). A distinct buffy eye-ring and lores were unmistakable. Most thrushes on Hispaniola are vagrants or occur at higher elevations (Keith *et al.* 2003). For example, the superficially similar Bicknell's Thrush (*Catharus bicknelli*) is an uncommon to rare winter resident found primarily in montane broadleaf forest (but see Arendt *et al.* 2004), but the eye-ring and lores are grayer. The only common thrush on Hispaniola, the Red-legged Thrush (*Turdus plumbeus*), has slaty gray upperparts, reddish legs, bill, and eye-ring, and conspicuous white tail tips (Latta *et al.* 2006). Swainson's Thrush was reported once previously in the Dominican Republic based on a "light eye ring" (Bond 1980), but few other details were provided and this species was subsequently treated as hypothetical (Keith *et al.* 2003). This species has also been reported from Cuba, Jamaica, the Cayman Islands, and the Bahamas (Raffaele *et al.* 1998), so its occurrence on Hispaniola is not entirely unexpected.



Fig. 1. Swainson's Thrush (*Catharus ustulatus*) near Las Salinas de Baní, Peravia Province, Dominican Republic, on 16 October 2005. Photo by Miguel A. Landestoy

SCARLET TANAGER (*PIRANGA OLIVACEA*)

On 11 November 2005, a first-year male Scarlet Tanager was photographed by Miguel Landestoy at Rabo de Gato on the north side of Sierra de Bahoruco National Park, Dominican Republic. This constitutes the first verified record of this species on Hispaniola. The tanager was recognized by the stout, pointed, horn-colored bill, yellowish-olive uppers, yellow underparts, and dark wings with distinctive black lesser, median, and greater coverts (Fig. 2). The bird was first seen perched in a golden shower tree (*Cassia* sp.), and later it perched in a "guayacan" tree (*Guaiacum* sp.) with many Palmchats (*Dulus dominicus*). Although this tree bore many fruit, the tanager was not seen eating these fruit, but it did sally from the tree to catch an insect. The Scarlet Tanager has been recorded elsewhere on many of the Caribbean islands (Raffaele *et al.* 1998).

EASTERN WOOD-PEWEE (*CONTOPUS VIRENS*)

Also on 16 October 2005 at the Bahía de las Calderas, Landestoy noticed a small flycatcher perched on a stump near the Natural Monument office. This bird appeared to be a *Contopus* pewee and similar to the endemic Hispaniolan Pewee (*Contopus hispaniolensis*), but the latter species occurs most commonly in pine forests in the mountains and foothills (Keith *et al.* 2003). The bird at Las Salinas appeared olive-gray above and pale below, with a light dusky



Fig. 2. First-year male Scarlet Tanager (*Piranga olivacea*) at Rabo de Gato on the north side of Sierra de Bahoruco National Park, Dominican Republic, on 11 November 2005. Photo by Miguel A. Landestoy.

wash on the breast and sides, two broad whitish wing-bars, and a partial light-colored eye-ring. The bill was dark above, but the lower mandible was extensively yellowish at its base. This bird was readily discernible from the Hispaniolan Pewee which has darker underparts that are gray with an olive-yellow or brown wash, usually lacks or has very inconspicuous buffy wing bars, and the bill is usually darker and pinkish at the base of the lower mandible (Latta *et al.* 2006). A series of excellent photographs was taken by Rodríguez (Fig. 3). Although the Eastern Wood-Pewee and the very similar Western Wood-Pewee (*C. sordidulus*) are most reliably separated by voice (McCarty 1996, Bemis and Rising 1999), and the individual seen at Bahía de las Calderas was unfortunately silent, we identified this bird as a hatching year Eastern Wood-Pewee. Consistent with *C. virens*, this bird had a relatively pale chest with the dusky color of the chest band not extending down the flanks, the back appeared gray tinged with green and contrasted with the more brownish-olive head, and the edgings to the wings were bright and the wingbars equally distinct, characteristics that are all much more consistent with *C. virens* than *C. sordidulus*. The distance between the tips of the uppertail coverts and the tip of the tail also appeared longer than is found in most Westerns, which also is a good characteristic (P. Pyle pers. comm.). The extent of black on the tip of the lower mandible indicated a hatching year bird, as younger birds have more black here than do adults, species by species. In addition, while *C. sordidulus* has been recorded as a vagrant on Cuba and Jamaica (Raffaele *et al.* 1998), the normal migratory route of *C. virens* would make this species's occurrence in the Dominican Republic far more likely than that of *C. sordidulus*, and it has been previously reported



Fig. 3. Eastern Wood-Pewee (*Contopus virens*) near Las Salinas de Baní, Peravia Province, Dominican Republic, on 16 October 2005. Photo by Pedro G. Rodríguez.

from many islands of the West Indies (Raffaele *et al.* 1998). A similar individual was seen later that same day near the parking lot of the Natural Monument in mixed vegetation of mesquite, mangrove, and sea grape (*Coccoloba uvifera*), and may have been a second individual.

OTHER BIRD VAGRANTS

Other birds considered vagrant on Hispaniola by Keith *et al.* (2003) were also recorded at Salinas de Baní on 16 October 2005. These included a Red-eyed Vireo (*Vireo olivaceus*), previously reported five times on migration; Chestnut-sided Warbler (*Dendroica pensylvanica*), reported four times previously during migration; Blackburnian Warbler (*Dendroica fusca*), reported only four times in the past; and Hudsonian Godwit (*Limosa haemastica*), only the second record since three birds were collected in 1930. More than a week later, on 24 October, Landestoy found single individuals of a *Contopus* sp. and Swainson's Thrush at this same site, but it is unknown if these were the same individuals remaining through an extended stopover, or newly-

arrived migrants. Also unusual at Rabo de Gato on 11 November were two Baltimore Orioles (*Icterus galbula*), a rare non-breeding visitor with a dozen previous records from Hispaniola (Keith *et al.* 2003).

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