

NEW OR VAGRANT BIRD SPECIES FROM GUADELOUPE (F. W. I.) IN AUTUMN 2003

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Abstract: In Guadeloupe, the period August to November 2003 produced many first and vagrant records of birds, nine of which are described in this note. Two species and one subspecies from the Palearctic provided first records for Guadeloupe: Curlew Sandpiper (*Calidris ferruginea*), Corn Crane (*Crex crex*), and “Eurasian” Whimbrel (*Numenius p. phaeopus*). The Corn Crane is the first for the West Indies. The Red-necked Phalarope (*Phalaropus lobatus*) also provided a new record for Guadeloupe.

Key words: *Calidris ferruginea*, *Crex crex*, distributional records, Guadeloupe, *Numenius p. phaeopus*, *Phalaropus lobatus*

Résumé : ESPÈCES NOUVELLES OU ACCIDENTELLES POUR LA GUADELOUPE EN AUTOMNE 2003. En Guadeloupe, la saison de migration post-nuptiale 2003 a permis plusieurs observations d'espèces d'oiseaux rares ou même encore jamais signalées. Neuf d'entre elles sont détaillées dans cette note. Parmi celles-ci, deux espèces, le Bécasseau cocorli (*Calidris ferruginea*) et le Râle des genêts (*Crex crex*), et une sous-espèce (le Courlis corlieu « européen » *Numenius p. phaeopus*) du paléarctique sont des premières pour la Guadeloupe. Le Râle des genêts fournit ainsi également la première donnée pour les Antilles. Le Phalarope à bec étroit *Phalaropus lobatus* procure également une première donnée pour la Guadeloupe.

Mots-clés : *Calidris ferruginea*, *Crex crex*, distribution des données, Guadeloupe, *Numenius p. phaeopus*, *Phalaropus lobatus*

Resumen: TRANSEÚNTES O NUEVAS ESPECIES DE AVES EN GUADALUPE (F. W. I.) EN EL OTOÑO DE 2003. En Guadalupe, durante el período de agosto-noviembre de 2003 se observaron individuos de especies transeúntes y se registraron por primera vez nuevas especies de aves, nueve de los cuales son descritos en esta nota. Dos especies y una subespecie del Paleártico constituyen nuevos registros para Guadalupe: *Calidris ferruginea*, *Crex crex*, y *Numenius p. phaeopus*. El registro de *Crex crex* constituye el primero para el Caribe Insular. También se observó el *Phalaropus lobatus*, nuevo registro para Guadalupe.

Palabras clave: *Calidris ferruginea*, *Crex crex*, Guadalupe, *Numenius p. phaeopus*, *Phalaropus lobatus*, registros distribucionales

FROM AUGUST TO NOVEMBER 2003, we conducted surveys throughout Guadeloupe and in particular at two important bird sites: Pointe des Châteaux (65 survey days) and the Petite-Terre Nature Reserve, hereafter PTNR (42 survey days). During these surveys, two strong hurricanes passed through the northern Lesser Antilles: *Fabian* on 2 September and *Isabel* on 13 September. Then, in November, 293 mm of rainfall was recorded (175 mm between the 6th and the 16th). The average rainfall in November during the last 30 years is 141 mm, less than half that in 2003 alone. These factors, perhaps, contributed to an influx of vagrant birds in Guadeloupe during autumn 2003.

The phenomenon of trans-Atlantic vagrancy of Palearctic species in the Caribbean was recently summarized by Ebels (2002). Here we report two species and one subspecies of Palearctic birds for the first time in Guadeloupe; one of these is also

new for the West Indies. Five other records are of Nearctic species considered vagrants in Guadeloupe; of these, one is a first for the island. The initials AL and ASA, respectively, are used to indicate our own records.

NEW SPECIES

Corn Crane (*Crex crex*).—One exhausted, probable juvenile (based on plumage characters; fide F. Noël) at PTNR during 28 September to 2 October 2003 (Thomas Kopp and AL; photo by AL deposited at VIREO, no. v06/50/003, and published on the cover of *North American Birds* 58 (1), 2004; Fig. 1). This is the first known occurrence of the species in Guadeloupe and the West Indies (Raffaele *et al.* 1998). This species, which migrates to Africa, is locally abundant in wet meadows in eastern Europe and western Siberia, but its West European population has declined markedly over the last 40 years.



Fig. 1. Juvenile Corn Crane (*Crex crex*) at Pointe des Châteaux, Guadeloupe, 28 September 2003. Photo by Anthony Levesque.



Fig. 2. Curlew Sandpiper (*Calidris ferruginea*) at Pointe des Châteaux, Guadeloupe, 2 September 2003. Photo by Anthony Levesque.

Thus, its occurrence in the Caribbean was unexpected, although there are seven records for Bermuda over the last 25 years, notably one found dead at Bermuda Airport on 5 Oct 2003, which may have arrived at the same time as the one in Guadeloupe (Norton *et al.* 2004:159). It has also occurred in Atlantic Canada three times recently: at St Pierre Island, Saint Pierre et Miquelon, on 22 Oct 1989; at Shelburne, Nova Scotia, Turing 28-30 Nov 1997; and at Cape Race, Newfoundland, on 2 Nov 2002. Thus, as Mactavish (2004:23) noted, it may be a more frequent vagrant than the few records of this always difficult-to-see rail might indicate.

Curlew Sandpiper (*Calidris ferruginea*).—One adult in nearly full breeding plumage at Pointe des Châteaux during 2-14 September 2003 (AL; photo deposited at VIREO, no. v06/50/007; Fig. 2). This is the first record of this Palearctic species for Guadeloupe. It is considered very rare but regular on Barbados and a vagrant elsewhere in the West Indies (Raffaele *et al.* 1998, Buckley *et al.* 2006).

Red-necked Phalarope (*Phalaropus lobatus*).—One adult at Pointe des Châteaux during 21-28 September 2003 (AL; photo deposited at VIREO, no. v06/50/006; Fig. 3). This species has not been recorded previously in Guadeloupe nor elsewhere in the Lesser Antilles and is considered only very rare to a vagrant in the Greater Antilles (Raffaele *et al.* 1998).

“Eurasian” Whimbrel (*Numenius p. phaeopus*).—One at PTNR on 15 November 2003 (AL, photos deposited at VIREO, no. v06/50/004 and v06/50/005; Fig. 4). This is the first record of this form in Guadeloupe; it is considered a vagrant in the West Indies (Raffaele *et al.* 1998, Buckley *et al.* 2006). The Nearctic and Palearctic populations of this species show marked plumage differences and

are considered separate species by the French Ornithological Committee (American Whimbrel is treated as *Numenius [phaeopus] hudsonicus* and Eurasian Whimbrel as *Numenius [phaeopus] phaeopus*), but the two forms are not recognized as separate species by the American Ornithologists’ Union (1998). Three subspecies are recognized within the Palearctic population (Hayman *et al.* 1986): *N. p. phaeopus* (Iceland and Northern Europe), *N. p. alboaxillaris* (southern Russia), and *N. p. variegatus* (parts of Siberia). *N. p. phaeopus*, which migrates in winter to coastal Africa, is the only form known to be a trans-Atlantic migrant.

VAGRANT SPECIES

Double-crested Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax auritus*).—One immature at Désirade Island during 1-3 November 2003 (ASA; photo by Béatrice Ibéné deposited at VIREO, no. v06/50/001). This bird was exhausted when discovered and died on 3 November. This is the second record of this species, which is a vagrant to the northern Lesser Antilles (Raffaele *et al.* 1998), for Guadeloupe (February 2000: Levesque and Jaffard 2000). There are at least three additional records of unidentified cormorants in Guadeloupe which are likely to have been this species: Grand Cul de Sac Marin in November 2001 (Laurent Malglaive, pers. comm.); Côte Sous le Vent, date unknown (François Hermann, pers. comm.); and Pointe des Châteaux, unknown observer and date.

Glossy Ibis (*Plegadis falcinellus*).—One immature at Saint François airport during 13-19 October 2003 (AL; photo deposited at VIREO, no. v06/50/002). This species has previously been recorded once in Guadeloupe: two were shot by hunters at Petit-Canal on 15 Nov 1984 (fide E. Bénito-



Fig. 3. Adult Red-necked Phalarope (*Phalaropus lobatus*) at Pointe des Châteaux, Guadeloupe, 21 September 2003. Photo by Anthony Levesque.



Fig. 4. "European" Whimbrel (*Numenius p. phaeopus*) at the Petite-Terre Nature Reserve, Guadeloupe, 15 November 2003. Photo by Anthony Levesque.

Espinal) but no specimens were preserved (Feldmann *et al.* 1999). It is considered a vagrant in the Lesser Antilles (Raffaele *et al.* 1998, Buckley *et al.* 2006).

Piping Plover (*Charadrius melodus*).—One adult at PTNR during 7 August to 30 November 2003 (AL and ASA; photo by AL deposited at VIREO, no. v06/50/010). This species has previously been seen twice in Guadeloupe: at Pointe des Châteaux in September 1999 (Levesque and Jaffard 2002), and one at PTNR from 30 November 2002 to 23 May 2003 (AL and ASA). The bird present during the winter of 2002-2003 was possibly the same one. This species is only a vagrant in the Lesser Antilles south to Barbados (Raffaele *et al.* 1998, Buckley *et al.* 2006).

Rose-breasted Grosbeak (*Pheucticus ludovicianus*).—A first year male at PTNR on 20 October 2003 (AL and ASA, photo by AL deposited at VIREO, no. v06/50/011). This is the fifth record for Guadeloupe of this species which is considered a vagrant in the Lesser Antilles (Raffaele *et al.* 1998, Buckley *et al.* 2006). Three of the previous Guadeloupe records were from PTNR (pers. obs. and Philippe Feldmann pers. comm.); the fourth, a second-year male, was at Trois-Rivières on 4 Feb 1996 (Feldmann *et al.* 1999).

Indigo Bunting (*Passerina cyanea*).—One unaged female at PTNR on 20-21 October 2003 (AL) is the third for Guadeloupe of this species, which is a vagrant in the Lesser Antilles (Raffaele *et al.* 1998, Buckley *et al.* 2006) except at St. Martin, where it appears to be a regular migrant (Brown and Collier 2004).

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We thank Pierre Yésou, Allan Keith, Adam Brown, and two anonymous reviewers who improved the manuscript and all the persons who were present when observations were made.

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