

ROSE-RINGED PARAKEET (*PSITTACULA KRAMERI*) RECORDED IN THE WEST INDIES

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Abstract.—Two Rose-ringed Parakeets (*Psittacula krameri*) were observed in the grounds of the Hotel Kohly, Playa, La Habana, Cuba on 2 and 16 April 2000. This is the first record of the parakeet in the West Indies.

Resumen.—*PSITTACULA KRAMERI* REGISTRÓ EN LAS ANTILLAS. El 2 y el 16 de abril del 2000 se observó una pareja de Periquitos Rosados *Psittacula krameri* en el Norte de La Habana. Este primer récord, sin embargo, no permite determinar si ambas aves escaparon de jaulas en Cuba, o si se trató de transeuntes procedentes de la Florida, USA.

Key words: Cuba, *Psittacula krameri*, record, Rose-ringed Parakeet, status

NO WEST INDIAN RECORDS EXIST for the Rose-ringed Parakeet *Psittacula krameri* (Raffaele *et al.* 1998), an Old World species occurring naturally in tropical Africa north of the moist forest zone and much of southern Asia. The parakeet has been widely introduced into Europe (Juniper and Parr 1998), and has become established in parts of Florida (since the 1960s) and Virginia (since 1973), USA (American Ornithologists' Union 1998). In addition, since 1996 a population has become established in the eastern part of Caracas, Venezuela (Nebot 1999), the first report from the Neotropical region.

On 2 and 16 April 2000, I observed a pair of this distinctive species in the grounds of the Hotel Kohly, Playa, La Habana, Cuba. They were easily identified by a combination of their attenuated shape, very long slender tail with bluer projecting central feathers, relatively large head, and overall pale grass green plumage (paler than the Cuba's native psittacids, *Aratinga euops* and *Amazona leucocephala*), with a relatively weak red bill, rose-colored narrow collar (in the male) and red orbital ring. Because of the relative brevity of both observations, I was unable to note the small black throat patch or bluish nape of the male. I am familiar with *Psittacula krameri* from observations of introduced and feral populations in the United Kingdom, Turkey, and Egypt, and native birds in the Indian subcontinent, as well as with

Aratinga euops and *Amazona leucocephala* from many visits to Cuba.

The origin of the pair in La Habana is debatable, but they were presumably deliberately released in Cuba, vagrants from Florida, or escapees from nearby. For now, this matter can only be one for speculation, and only time will demonstrate whether the species can be considered part of the West Indian avifauna.

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