

THE AMERICAN KESTREL *FALCO SPARVERIUS* (AVES: FALCONIDAE) IN JAMAICA

ORLANDO H. GARRIDO¹, ARTURO KIRKCONNELL¹, AUDREY DOWNER²,
ANN HAYNES SUTTON³, AND ROBERT SUTTON³

¹Museo Nacional de Historia Natural, Calle Obispo No. 61 e/Oficios y Tejadillo, La Habana Viejo 10100, Cuba;

²P. O. Box 1002, Kingston 8, Jamaica; and ³Marshall's Pen, P. O. Box 58, Mandeville, Jamaica

WHEN JAMES BOND PUBLISHED HIS FIRST BOOK "Birds of the West Indies" (1936:76), he considered the American Kestrel (*Falco sparverius*) populations from Cuba, Isle of Pines (now Isle of Youth), Hispaniola, and some surrounding islands, as the race *F. s. dominicensis*. He did not mention Jamaica within the distributional range of this race, nor the other race, *F. s. caribaerum* from Puerto Rico, Vieques, Culebra and the Virgin Islands. Apparently, there were no records reported from Jamaica before 1936.

Eleven years later (1947:54) Bond reported the kestrel as occurring throughout the West Indies, with the exception of the islands of Jamaica and Isla Mona. Subsequently (1956:33) he included Jamaica in the range of the race *dominicensis*, mentioning several records, including 4 examined specimens, but he still considered this bird as rare in that island. In (1964:5), he reported the kestrel populations in Jamaica increasing, the species then being not uncommon. By 1970, he criticized Brown and Amadon (1968) for not including Jamaica and Mona within the range of *Falco dominicensis*. In 1978, Bond mentioned that this race of the kestrel made a remarkable expansion in range in the last 40 years, stating that the Hispaniolan race (*dominicensis*) had reached Jamaica and settled there. He also stated that "since the rufescent Cuban phase has been reported from Jamaica and Hispaniola, the latter race has evidently reached these islands, so the subspecies identity of the present population on that island should be investigated." Finally, Bond (1987:12) noted the population increases of kestrels, the successful invasion of Mona by *dominicensis*, the specimens collected in the decade of the 1940s in Jamaica and Morant Cays, and the recent dispersion of *sparveroides* throughout the Bahamas, stating that "recent sightings in Jamaica indicate the latter may now inhabit this island."

Buden (1979, 1987) also confirmed the presence of both races, *sparveroides* and *dominicensis*, in some of the Bahaman islands. The measurements taken of specimens examined by him agree with those taken by us. Buden concluded that *F. s. dominicensis* may not be a valid subspecies.

In 1990 we observed several kestrels of both morphs in Jamaica, although most of them were the white phase. In the field they were indistinguishable from Cuban birds (*sparveroides* race), so we measured all specimens deposited at the Institute of Jamaica and in Audrey Downer's collection. All of these specimens were the white morph and, therefore, the *sparveroides* race, according to coloration, plumage pattern, and measurements. We examined 47 adult specimens deposited in Cuban collections and obtained the following measurements: 27 males—wing 165-168 (x =

179.3) mm, tail 106-121 (117.3) mm; 20 females—wing 175-200 (287.9) mm, tail 108-127 (119.3) mm. Buden (1987) measured 32 females: wing 177-194 (185.5) mm. Specimens from Jamaica fell within Cuban measurements, and agree well with the race *sparveroides*.

Two specimens deposited at the Institute of Jamaica were labeled as *F. s. dominicensis*. They were collected many years ago and could well pertain to that taxon. Considering that they may be the first kestrels collected in Jamaica, these specimens could be representatives of an earlier Hispaniolan dispersion of *dominicensis*. Thereafter, Cuban *sparveroides* began to disperse north and probably south and, apparently, many individuals dispersed and settled in Jamaica, increasing the local populations of the island in a short span of time. If *dominicensis* was present in small numbers, as it seemed to have been (considering the two specimens in the Institute of Jamaica), probably that race was outnumbered by *sparveroides*, which absorbed the weak characters of the *dominicensis* race, resulting in individuals with the clear racial characters of *sparveroides*.

From our investigations and published information, we have reached the following conclusions:

1. The American Kestrel is a rather recent resident in Jamaica (i.e., not before the 1930s).
2. Probably the first arrivals came from Hispaniola and therefore belonged to the race *dominicensis*.
3. During the range expansion of Cuban *sparveroides*, simultaneous dispersions invaded the Bahama Islands and Jamaica. This race apparently arrived in large numbers, settled in Jamaica, and absorbed the characters of *dominicensis* into the present population.

If these conclusions are correct, then the kestrel populations from Jamaica should be considered *Falco sparverius sparveroides*.

We take the opportunity to thank Dr. Thomas Pharr for allowing us to examine the material deposited at the Institute of Jamaica.

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DOS CASOS DE ANIDAMIENTO DE LA CARTACUBA *TODUS MULTICOLOR* (AVES: TODIDAE) EN UNA CUEVA

CARLOS A. MANCINA¹ Y PATRICIA GARCÍA FERNÁNDEZ²

¹Instituto de Ecología y Sistemática, CITMA, La Habana, Cuba;

²Facultad de Biología, Universidad de la Habana, Cuba

LA CARTACUBA (*TODUS MULTICOLOR*) es una especie endémica común en áreas boscosas de Cuba y la Isla de la Juventud (Garrido y García Montaña 1975). Esta especie, junto con otras cuatro conforman la familia Todidae, endémica de las Antillas Mayores. Son de hábitos fundamentalmente insectívoros y construyen sus nidos en agujeros que escarban en la tierra, generalmente en barrancos (Bond 1985, García Montaña 1980).

Con el objetivo de estudiar algunos aspectos reproductivos de la Golondrina de Cuevas (*Hirundo fulva*), del 17 al 21 de junio de 1996 se realizó una expedición a la Reserva Natural de Cayo Caguanes ubicada al Norte de la provincia de Sancti Spiritus.

Para capturar individuos de golondrinas, se colocó en la Cueva de los Chivos una malla japonesa aproximadamente a unos 50 m de la entrada principal y en una zona donde existían abundantes nidos de esta especie. A poco tiempo de colocada la malla se capturaron dos ejemplares de Cartacuba, uno de los cuales se encontró del lado que daba hacia el interior de la cueva, lo que indicó que se encontraba dentro. Observaciones de la zona permitieron detectar a la pareja

anidando en una grieta de la pared rocosa de la cueva, a unos 80 cm del suelo. Por la forma descendente de esta no fue posible observar si contenía huevos o pichones.

En el techo de la misma cueva, a unos 5 m del suelo se observó otra pareja de *T. multicolor* anidando, junto a múltiples nidos de golondrinas. Ambos nidos se hallaron en zonas de penumbra de la cueva.

El aprovechamiento de este tipo de estructura—donde existan condiciones favorables de alimentación y refugio—como sitios de anidamiento por *T. multicolor*, podría representar una adaptación ecológica a este tipo de áreas con un alto grado de calcificación.

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