LA CANDELITA *SETOPHAGA RUTICILLA* [AVES: PARULIDAE] NIDIFICANDO EN CUBA

ARTURO KIRKCONNELL Y ORLANDO H. GARRIDO
Museo Nacional de Historia Natural, La Habana, Cuba

Dentro de las bijiritas migratorias que arriban a Cuba, la Candelita (*Setophaga ruticilla*) es una de las más comunes como residente invernal. El hecho de encontrarla nidificando en nuestro archipiélago adquíere gran relevancia, ya que no se conocía de un reporte similar para las Antilles y lo cual no era de sorprender, pues ya Garrido y García (*Catálogo de las Aves de Cuba*. Acad. Cienc. Cuba, La Habana. 1975) mencionan que la misma se observa todos los meses del año, por lo que no era de dudar que algunos individuos permanecieran durante el verano en la isla. Kirkconnell en compañía del Dr. Thomas Pharr, observó a esta especie en Blue Mountain, Jamaica en agosto de 1962.

Hasta el presente existen sólo tres reportes válidos al respecto en Cuba, el primero es el hallazgo de José Morales Leal, quien encontró un nido con dos huevos y una hembra incubándolo en un área boscosa llamada San Severino (Provincia de Camagüey). El segundo, en julio de 1989 fue donado al Museo Nacional de Historia Natural un nido con dos huevos, el cual fue hallado en el interior de un racimo de plátanos (*Musa paradisiaca*) comprado en un mercado, correspondiéndose a dicha especie. El tersero en abril 1990, cuando el autor senior observó dos juveniles en el Jardín Zoológico de la Habana emitiendo notas de reclamo de alimento a la madre que se encontraba a unos 4 metros de ellos. La madre voló hacia ellos y luego los tres juntos volaron hacia otra rama posándose juntos. Los jóvenes eran mucho más pálidos y tenían las rectrices aún no desarrolladas.

Ya con anterioridad, le había sido comentado a Garrido por el hijo de Rogelio García (guía de campo de observadores de aves en la Ciénaga de Zapata) el hallazgo de un nido de Candelita en los alrededores de Soplilar.

AN UNKNOWN PARAKEET ON HISPANIOLA

P. WILLIAM SMITH
P. O. Box 901341, Homestead, Fl 33090, USA

In early afternoon of 26 March 1996, Larry Manfredi and I were driving down from the higher elevations of the Sierra de Bahoruco in southwestern Dominican Republic. About 9 km east of El Aguacate border post on the road to Puerto Escondido, in a transition zone between mesic and xeric forest types at 500 m above sea level (a.s.l.), a passing hawk disturbed a large group of psittacines nearby. A flock of 10 parakeets (*Aratinga*) settled in a dead tree next to us. We soon realized that they were not Hispaniolan Parakeets (*A. chloroptera*), which now occur mostly at higher elevations in this region (Dod 1992; pers. obs.), but instead showed characters of the Olive-throated Parakeet (*A. nana*), a species found in Jamaica and Central America (Bond 1961, American Ornithologists' Union 1983). None of the birds showed red anywhere, and all had largely burnt–olive underparts of subtly different shading. Otherwise the birds were mostly rich green (including lower flanks and undertail coverts), with blue flight feathers and long tails which were green above, yellowish–olive below. The orbital region was white and the beak pale horn. We returned to the area the following day and found at least as many similar birds about 2 km farther east, 10 km west of Puerto Escondido. They were mostly in pairs, feeding on the ripe fruit of gumbo limbo trees (*Bursera simaruba*).

The Olive-throated Parakeet is considered by some authorities to consist of two species, the Jamaican Parakeet (*A. nana*; *sensu stricto*) and the Aztec Parakeet (*A. astec*) of Mexico and Central America (e.g., Howell and Webb 1995). The differences between these taxa, which even Bond (1940) once considered separate species, are subtle and primarily based on measurements and color tones. Our descriptive notes seem inadequate to assign the birds we saw definitely to one form or the other, if indeed they should be assigned to either.

The Jamaican Parakeet is a fairly common and widespread resident of Jamaica, which lies about 200 km west of the westernmost point in Hispaniola and about 500 km west of the location where we saw these birds. Psittacines generally show diagnosable differences among insular populations, and it is unlikely that they can achieve lengthy overwater dispersal or vagrancy facilely (Wiley 1993). Such an explanation probably is unlikely to account for *nana*-like birds on Hispaniola.

If these birds themselves were released on Hispaniola or are descendants of birds released there in recent years, it would seem more likely that they would be Aztec rather than Jamaican Parakeets. Far more cage bird traffic originates in Central America than in Jamaica, where the Wildlife Protection Act prohibits capture or exportation of native birds (C. Levy, pers. comm.). A release might have been unintentional, even from a passing ship, and thus be untraceable. It also might have occurred in nearby Haiti, perhaps as a result of civil unrest there.