Sociedad de la Ornitología Caribeña

EL PITIRRE

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News, comments or requests should be mailed to the editor for inclusion in the newsletter.

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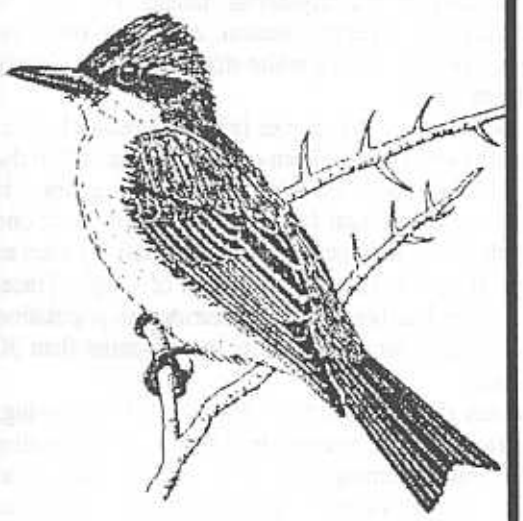
Tyrannus dominicensis



Pitirre, Gray Kingbird, Petigre, Petchary

The Society of Caribbean Ornithology is a non-profit organization whose goals are to promote the scientific study and conservation of Caribbean birds and their habitats, to provide a link among island ornithologists and those elsewhere, to provide a written forum for researchers in the region (refereed journal--Ornitología Caribeña, published in conjunction with the Puerto Rico Ornithological Society) and to provide data or technical aid to conservation groups in the Caribbean.

La Sociedad de la Ornitología Caribeña es una organización sin fines de lucro cuyas metas son promover el estudio científico y la conservación de la avifauna caribeña, auspiciar un simposio anual sobre la ornitología caribeña, publicar una revista profesional llamada Ornitología Caribeña (publicada en conjunto con la Sociedad Ornitológica de Puerto Rico), ser una fuente de comunicación entre ornitólogos caribeños y en otras áreas y proveer ayuda técnica o datos a grupos de conservación en el caribe.

CONTENTS

TOBAGO HUMMINGBIRDS: STATUS OF THE WHITE-TAILED SABREWING (*CAMPYLOPTERUS ENSIPENNIS*) AND FIRST RECORD OF BROWN VIOLET-EAR (*COLIBRI DELPHINAE*). 2

TERCER REGISTRO DE *DUMETELLA CAROLINENSIS* EN PUERTO RICO. *Raúl A. Pérez-Rivera y Manuel Soto Singala* 3

A COMPARISON OF DNA FINGERPRINTS FROM HISPANIOLAN AND PUERTO RICAN PARROTS. *M. Kelly Brock* 3

SOCIETY'S 1991 ANNUAL MEETING HELD IN ST. LUCIA 4

ABSTRACTS OF PAPERS PRESENTED AT THE 1991 MEETING OF THE SOCIETY OF CARIBBEAN ORNITHOLOGY, ST. LUCIA. 4

SUMMARY OF THE 1991 PSITTACINE WORKING GROUP MEETING, ST. LUCIA. 10

NOTICES 11

OPPORTUNITIES 11

MEETINGS OF INTEREST 11

INFORMATION ON WILD BIRD BILLS BEING CONSIDERED IN THE UNITED STATES 13

TOBAGO HUMMINGBIRDS: STATUS OF THE WHITE-TAILED SABREWING (*CAMPYLOPTERUS ENSIPENNIS*) AND FIRST RECORD OF BROWN VIOLET-EAR (*COLIBRI DELPHINAE*)

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The White-tailed Sabrewing (*Campylopterus ensipennis*) is found only on the island of Tobago and in the Venezuelan mountains west of Trinidad (Sucre, northeastern Anzoategui, and Monagas) (de Schauensee and Phelps 1978). On Tobago, it is now an extremely rare resident, but historically the species was more numerous. For example, on 24 June 1934, Belcher saw about 6 "Blue-throated Sabrewings" (an old name for the White-tailed Sabrewing) at various points of the forest track on the main ridge between Parlatuvier and Roxburgh [now Roxborough] (Belcher and Smooker 1936). The species became very rare in Tobago after Hurricane Flora in September 1963 (ffrench 1980, Murphy 1987). Regarding the widespread devastation of the rainforest by the hurricane, ffrench (1981) wondered whether the species had been able to withstand the effects of the desiccating blast of the wind, which would have removed for a time all the blossoms and other sources of nectar in the area. He noted that not until 1974 were sabrewings seen again, in very small numbers, at one locality on the Main Ridge.

Seven years later, ffrench (1988) noted, "After the 1963 hurricane it was feared that this beautiful hummingbird had been extirpated on Tobago, and certainly no records came in for more than a decade. But in the last 14 years small groups have been increasingly located in isolated pockets on the Main Ridge [ffrench 1981], where however the species remains extremely rare."

Junge and Mees (1958) declared that White-tailed Sabrewings on Tobago bred in February. Thus, in February 1988, Benton Basham, Olga Clarke, Adolphus James, and I searched for the species in the area mentioned by Belcher and Smooker (1936). The "forest track on the main ridge between Parlatuvier and Roxburgh" has been widened and paved, and is now called the Roxborough–Bloody Bay Road. No suitable habitat for the hummingbird remains anywhere near the road. Nevertheless, access to the proper habitat can be gained via a muddy trail called Gilpin Trace (trace: an unpaved 4th-class road, such as a horse trail). This trail forks off the Roxborough–Bloody Bay Road almost at the crest of the Main Ridge and follows a fast flowing stream for several kilometers through a virgin montane rainforest. It traverses a deep, steep-sided ravine cut through a relatively high elevation section of the Main Ridge. Apparently, the depth and narrowness of the ravine sheltered the closed-canopy rainforest from the full force of Hurricane Flora. Large mature trees remain, whereas other nearby and more exposed areas support only second growth forest. We confined our search to the area through which Gilpin Trace runs.

On our visit, we located two White-tailed Sabrewings at one spot along Gilpin Trace, which indicated that the habitat in the immediate area remains attractive to the species. We observed the first bird about 2 km from the Roxborough–side trailhead. The hummingbird approached us closely, hovered at eye level about 2 m from us, then landed nearby on a bamboo twig and studied us with apparent agitation. We noted all of its characteristic field marks, especially its iridescent blue throat and conspicuous white-edged tail, which it frequently fanned. It flew farther away to a low perch and preened until another sabrewing flew into the area. The first bird pursued the second bird, following a short distance behind while continuously fanning its white tail. It then perched while the other bird, in a series of brief vertical climbs, arose to a nest about 5 m above us in a bamboo overhanging the trail. The hummingbird briefly perched on the rim of the nest and manipulated the contents with its bill, then settled in and remained there until we left about 10 min later. The next afternoon, one of the White-tailed Sabrewings remained on the nest as we observed it for about 10 min.

Although White-tailed Sabrewings on the island must have reproduced since 1963, this is the first confirmed nesting of the species there in at least 30 years (ffrench 1980). We later learned from David Rooks, a Tobago naturalist, that the sabrewings had begun building the nest in late January. Only one complete nest had been recorded hitherto from Tobago (Junge and Mees 1958).

By examining the nest through a Questar telescope at 65x, we were able to determine that it was composed of bits of green moss with hair-sized rootlets and bamboo leaves woven into the rim and matrix. The nest was woven across a fork near the end of a bamboo twig, far enough out on the branch to make it inaccessible to most predators. The nest was oblong in shape and large in relation to the size of the hummingbird, with a diameter of ca. 8 cm and a depth of ca. 10 cm. Despite being constructed of green moss, the nest was conspicuous among the bamboo twigs because of its large size and its location near the end of a branch. We were able to locate it easily on subsequent visits.

Since 1988, Adolphus James and David Rooks have taken many nature groups along Gilpin Trace to view the White-tailed Sabrewings. The species often perches quietly for extended periods of time, prefers to feed and perch low, and is often silent. It thus is inconspicuous unless the nest is approached during the breeding season, at which time the adults become aggressive, flaring white-tipped tails and closely approaching the intruder.

Away from Gilpin Trace the species is still exceedingly rare, being recorded at long intervals from other locations, all in the heights of the Main Ridge, especially where the canopy is closed. My personal high count for the species is 6seen in one day (early March 1990), and local guides report having seen as many as 10, all along the same 2-km stretch of Gilpin Trace. Although no attempt has been made to census the population elsewhere on Tobago, I would speculate that no more than 30 individuals remain.

On the same day that we found the White-tailed Sabrewing, we observed a flurry of bird activity in the crown of a fruiting *Ficus* tree. Several hummingbirds were among the avian crowd, mostly Copper-rumped Hummingbirds (*Amazilia tobaci*). Examination of the tree through the telescope yielded

views of an adult Brown Violet-ear (*Colibri delphinae*) with a fledgling. We watched for several minutes as the adult hummingbird fed at nearby flowers and attended the young violet-ear. The fledgling retained protruding tufts of down, especially on the head and neck. Efforts by other observers to relocate the birds on subsequent days were unsuccessful, and I know of no further sightings of this species from Tobago.

This discovery marks the first sighting, as well as the first probable nesting, of the Brown Violet-ear on Tobago. Elsewhere the species ranges from Guatemala to western Ecuador, northern and eastern Bolivia, northeastern and eastern Brazil, the Guianas, and Trinidad (rarely) in tropical and subtropical zones (de Schauensee and Phelps 1978, Stiles and Skutch 1989).

Any additional information on sightings of either of these hummingbird species on Tobago would be appreciated. Especially welcome would be a photograph of a White-tailed Sabrewing, of which none seem to exist.

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TERCER REGISTRO DE *DUMETELLA CAROLINENSIS* EN PUERTO RICO

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En marzo 17 de 1985, mientras me encontraba en el Bosque de Carite (Cayey), en compañía de mis estudiantes del curso de ornitología, observé un ave posada sobre una hoja de palma real (*Roystonea borinquena*) que con la ayuda de una guía de campo identifiqué como un Zorzal Gato (*Dumetella carolinensis*). Varias semanas después le comenté la observación al colega José Colón, y este me indicó que

semanas antes, habían atrapado en una red a una de estas aves en el bosque de Guánica, el cual se encuentra a 85 km de Carite. Aparentemente, esta es la misma ave, que indica Raffaele (1989) que se capturó el 25 de febrero de 1985.

El 11 de abril de 1991, mi colega Manuel Soto, me indicó que había observado en su propiedad, que esta localizada en el Bo. Las Lomas, sector Tres Caminos de Barranquitas, un pájaro gris obscuro, de cabeza negra, aproximadamente del tamaño de un Pitirre (*Tyrannus dominicensis*) que no había podido identificar. Le mencioné una serie de especies, como la presunta ave, con las cuales Soto no quedó conforme. Al asunto no le dimos mayor importancia y lo olvidamos. El 3 de mayo de 1991, mientras observaba las actividades de un nido de Jilguero (*Euphonia musica*), cerca de la localidad antes mencionada, comencé a oír el sonido de un ave, que no pude identificar. Mientras trataba de buscar el origen del sonido, el ave voló al árbol en donde estaban anidando los Jilgueros. Pude observarla cuidadosamente, mientras se movía de una rama a otra, parando la cola entre saltos. Esta vez por la coloración gris obscuro, la corona negra y el patrón de conducta, pude identificarla sin ningún problema como un Zorzal Gato. Cuando mi compañero de trabajo regresó a buscarme, le indiqué de mi avistamiento y le enseñe un dibujo del ave en la guía de campo de Peterson (1980). Soto inmediatamente me indicó que era el ave que el había observado en su finca el 11 de abril. Estos avistamientos resultan ser el tercer informe del Zorzal Gato en Puerto Rico, y los más tardes para la especie en la Isla.

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Research Report

A COMPARISON OF DNA FINGERPRINTS FROM HISPANIOLAN AND PUERTO RICAN PARROTS

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The Puerto Rican Parrot (*Amazona vittata*) is one of the world's most critically endangered species of birds. Currently, less than 30 wild birds and approximately 65 captive birds survive. The captive breeding program was established to prevent extinction of the species and to bolster the wild population through releases of captive-produced parrots. In addition to the Puerto Rican Parrots, a captive breeding program for the less threatened and taxonomically related Hispaniolan Parrot (*A. ventralis*) was established. These Hispaniolan Parrots serve as surrogate incubators for Puerto Rican Parrot eggs, surrogate parents for Puerto Rican Parrot chicks, and a models for testing new or different avicultural

practices.

Each captive flock of parrots was essentially founded by four individuals. However, differences between the two species in reproductive success (e.g., the average annual productivity rate from 1980 to 1990 was 12.2 for the Hispaniolan Parrot flock and 5.8 for the Puerto Rican Parrots) suggested that inbreeding may be a limiting factor in Puerto Rican Parrot productivity. Anecdotal evidence of inbreeding in the wild population of Puerto Rican Parrots further suggested that productivity differences in captivity may not have been just species differences. Therefore, DNA fingerprints were used to estimate the degree of relatedness among the parrots. Two minisatellite probes, human 33.6 and the mouse periodicity gene, *Per*, were used to generate DNA fingerprints from *Alu*I digested genomic DNA extracted from whole blood. Standard techniques were used for restriction enzyme digests, gel electrophoresis, southern blotting, and autoradiography.

Segregation analyses of bands in the DNA fingerprints were conducted between parents and offspring in the largest pedigree of each species. Bands that were shared by both parents were excluded from the analysis. All other bands in the 2 to 21 kilobase size range of each parent were given a unique designation, and the presence or absence of each band was noted in each offspring. Bands that always co-migrated were considered linked, and bands that never co-migrated were considered allelic.

In a Hispaniolan Parrot family of 2 parents and 13 offspring, the *Per* probe identified a minimum of 13 maternal loci, and a minimum of 14 paternal loci. One "odd" band (a new length variant) was identified in one of the offspring, suggesting a mutation rate in these loci similar to other species. In the same family, the 33.6 probe identified a minimum of 17 maternal loci, and a minimum of 7 paternal loci.

In a Puerto Rican Parrot family of two parents and nine offspring, the *Per* probe identified a minimum of seven maternal loci and a minimum of eight paternal loci. In the same family, the 33.6 probe identified a minimum of 10 maternal loci and a minimum of 7 paternal loci.

Band-sharing coefficients (BSC), defined as twice the number of bands shared between a pair of individuals divided by the total number of bands scored in the 2 to 21 kilobase size range for both individuals, were estimated for Hispaniolan Parrots with confirmed pedigrees. Because *Per* gave faster and clearer autoradiographic signals, it was selected for the following analysis.

The average BSC for unrelated Puerto Rican Parrots, 0.41 (CV = 29%), was greater than the BSC for unrelated Hispaniolan Parrots, 0.19 (CV = 37%; $P > 0.05$). From 1979 to 1990, 38% of mated Puerto Rican Parrot pairs (5/13) successfully fledged offspring. Of mated pairs with BSC from 0.21–0.30, 2 of 3 were successful; 2 of 2 pairs with BSC from 0.31–0.40 were successful; 1 of 4 pairs with BSC from 0.41–0.50 was successful; and none of 4 pairs with BSC from 0.51–0.60 were successful. Of 10 mated pairs of Hispaniolan Parrots, 9 successfully produced fledglings. The majority of the successful pairs (6/9) had BSC lower than 0.30, and 3 of 9 mated pairs had BSC from 0.31–0.40. One pair that failed to breed had a BSC between 0.31 and 0.41. Therefore, the probability of successful breeding increased as the BSC of a

Parrot DNA Fingerprints (continued)

mated pair ranged from approximately 0.21 to approximately 0.40, but there was little chance of successful breeding when the BSC of a mated pair was greater than 0.41. Unfortunately, 8 of the 13 mated pairs of Puerto Rican Parrots had BSC greater than 0.41, and only one of the pairs was successful.

The results of this study indicate that "unrelated" Puerto Rican Parrots may be as genetically similar to each other as second degree relatives. Consequently, poor reproductive success of the captive parrots may be due to inbreeding. To increase the probability of success in the captive breeding program, pairs of Puerto Rican Parrots should have BSC (*Alu*I/*Per*) lower than 0.41. Where behavioral problems or physical handicaps of the birds interfere with breeding performance, techniques such as artificial insemination may be used to breed genetically desirable pairs.

SOCIETY'S 1991 ANNUAL MEETING HELD IN ST. LUCIA

The Society of Caribbean Ornithology met at the St. Lucian Hotel in St. Lucia, 4-7 August 1991. Participating in the meetings, field trips, and festivities were 45 persons representing 17 countries, including St. Lucia, Martinique, Guadeloupe, Dominica, Montserrat, St. Vincent, Barbados, Saba, U.S. Virgin Islands, Bahama Islands, Puerto Rico, Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Turks and Caicos Islands, Cayman Islands, United States, and United Kingdom. New officers were elected, including Ms. Catherine Levy, who succeeds the founding President Jorge Moreno, and Ms. Particia F. Bradley, who takes the Secretary position formerly held by Dr. Alexander Cruz. Dr. Joseph Wunderle, Jr., was elected to the newly created office of Vice President. Allan Keith will remain as Treasurer through the end of 1991.

The next meeting of the Society will be in Puerto Rico in August 1992.

ABSTRACTS OF PAPERS PRESENTED AT THE 1991 MEETING OF THE SOCIETY OF CARIBBEAN ORNITHOLOGY, ST. LUCIA

Determination of Hematology and Serum Chemistry Values for Captive Puerto Rican Plain Pigeons (*Columba inornata wetmorei*)

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Data generated from hematology and serum chemistry analysis are often used in conjunction with clinical signs and history to access the diagnostic. In addition, these two parameters can be used to evaluate the physical condition of normal birds. Serum samples were randomly collected from 30 captive Puerto Rican

Plain Pigeons [PRPP] and evaluated for the following: glucose, creatinine, calcium, glutamic oxaloacetic transaminase (SGOT), uric acid, alkaline phosphatase, total protein, cholesterol, and lactate dehydrogenase (LDH). Differential white blood cell (WBC) counts, red blood cell (RBC) counts, WBC and hemoglobin estimates and packed cell volume (PCV) were also determined. The present study intends to establish reference values that are not available for wild and captive PRPP. Hemogram and blood chemistry profiles of other avian species are discussed.

Immediate Post-fledging Dispersal of White-crowned Pigeons from Florida Bay

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We radio-tagged 58 White-crowned Pigeon (*Columba leucocephala*) nestlings on Bottle and Middle Butternut Keys in Florida Bay from 1988-1990. Twenty-seven birds survived to leave the nesting key, 12 died before leaving the key, and the fate of the remaining 19 could not be determined. Mean age at dispersal was 34.1 days (range = 28-40 days). Young appeared to disperse an an earlier age in 1988 (x = 28.5 days) when an abundant fruit crop was available compared to 1989 (x = 33 days) and 1990 (x = 35.5 days) when fruit crops were poor. Of the 27 birds that survived to disperse, 17 flew to the mainline keys, 5 flew to other keys in Florida Bay, and 5 dispersed to the Florida mainland. We followed birds from initial dispersal until transmitter batteries failed to operate or we could no longer locate the birds in south Florida (< 58 days following initial dispersal). Mean distance from the nesting key on the first day of dispersal was 6.6 km. Four days following initial dispersal, birds averaged 21.7 km from the nesting key and by 12 days following initial dispersal, average distance from the nesting key stabilized at approximately 30 km. Immature White-crowned Pigeons dispersing to the mainline keys selected hammock fragments > 5 ha and birds dispersing to the mainland and Florida Bay used natural habitats nearly exclusively. Protection of forest fragments larger than 5 ha along the mainline keys will be critical for successful reproduction by White-crowned Pigeons.

BLM Strategy for Neotropical Migratory Birds

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In 1987, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) embarked on a new era of habitat management with a strategic plan entitled "FISH AND WILDLIFE 2000: A PLAN FOR THE FUTURE." This Plan recognized the need for improved management of fish and wildlife on the more than 270 million acres of BLM-managed land. It calls for the development and execution of national strategy plans that identify specific goals

and objectives to assist in ensuring natural abundance and diversity of wildlife by improving management of wildlife; fisheries; riparian-wetland areas; threatened, endangered, and candidate species; and certain habitats of special concern. The Nongame (Neotropical Migratory) Bird Habitat Conservation Strategy Plan is a national strategy plan prepared in response to a growing concern about the precipitous declines of many nongame bird populations. This Plan will focus on a large subgroup of nongame species commonly known as "neotropical migratory birds." This Plan is an integral element of BLM strategies for avifauna and completes the FISH AND WILDLIFE 2000 strategy package. Additionally, this Plan assists in achieving national objectives for bird protection identified in two historic conservation acts. The first is the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 that responded to severe over-shooting of several bird species. The second act embraced is the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act of 1980, whereby Congress asserted that the improved management of non-game wildlife will assure "...a productive and more aesthetically pleasing environment for all citizens." Through the implementation of this Plan, the BLM and its partners in nongame bird habitat conservation will increase public and resource manager awareness of the socio-economic importance of these birds to the recreative public. The overall intent is to reverse the decline of some bird populations and to implement this proactive program for other species.

Breeding Biology and Ecology of the Lesser Antillean Bullfinch

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The Lesser Antillean Bullfinch (*Loxigilla noctis*) is widely distributed in the West Indian region, occurring from St. John and St. Croix through the Lesser Antilles, with the exception of the Grenadines. Despite its wide distribution, little is known about the life history of the species. During the summers of 1984 and 1985, we undertook a study on the ecology and breeding biology of this species in dry coastal lowlands and coastal hills in southern St. Lucia. The bullfinch was among the most common species, with an estimated density of 85.6 birds per km^2. In its feeding habits, it is a generalist, with insects and fruits predominating in the diet. Mean clutch size was 2.75 eggs and mean number of nestlings per nest was 1.41. Young were produced from 21.2% of the eggs laid.

U.S.D.A. Forest Service Role in the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Program

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The Forest Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, has been instrumental in helping to establish a new initiative to conserve neotropical migratory landbirds, affectionately known as "Partners in Flight — Aves de las Americas." About 30 research scientists, distributed among 8 Forest Service Experiment Stations, are addressing this conservation program through ongoing and planned studies on cause and effect relationships, migrant habitat use, monitoring methodology, sensitive species, avian productivity and survival, bird responses to land use practices, avian productivity, and landscape ecology. Studies of migrant populations on the wintering grounds are underway at the Forest Service's Institute of Tropical Forestry in Puerto Rico. Several technical assistance and training projects targeting neotropical migrants, tropical deforestation, and biological diversity problems were sponsored in 1991 through International Forestry's Tropical Forestry Program. In the management arena, action plans stressing habitat evaluation and improvements, bird population monitoring, training for resource professionals, and public awareness were developed by the nine Regions of the National Forest System. The Forest Service is aggressively supporting the Partners in Flight through internal activities, as well as through new partnerships with non-traditional cooperators like the International Council for Bird Preservation and World Wildlife Fund and through cooperative agreements with university researchers.

Diet, Foraging Behavior, and Nutrition of the Bahama Parrot (*Amazona leucocephala bahamensis*) on Abaco Island, Bahama Islands

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The endangered Bahama Parrot (*Amazona leucocephala bahamensis*) is restricted to only two islands in its formerly extensive range — Abaco and Great Inagua. As part of a larger study into its breeding biology on Abaco Island, we collected data on the parrot's feeding behavior during the breeding season (May-September). From 1985 to 1988, we recorded 686 feeding observations in the nest area. The nest area was in Caribbean pine (*Pinus caribaea*) forest, characterized by a shrub understory of 31 species and herbacious growth dominated by Bahamian holly (*Xylosma buxifolium*) and common ernodea (*Ernodea littoralis*). Bahama Parrots fed on 18 plant species in the nest area. Caribbean pine, wild guava (*Tetrazygia bicolor*), and poisonwood (*Metopium toxiferum*) accounted for 76% of all feeding records. The nutrient composition was determined for 16 food items, which accounted for 97% of the feeding records. Seeds provided major dietary protein and lipids, whereas flowers and fruits provided primarily carbohydrates. Caribbean pine seeds were a major staple and provided 91% of the proteins and lipids in the total diet.

Desarrollo Morfologico y Conductual en la Paloma Coronita (*Columba leucocephala*) en Cautiverio

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En esto estudio se presentan datos sobre el desarrollo morfológico y conductual en polluelos de Paloma Coronita (*Columba leucocephala*) en cautiverio, durante las cuatro primeras semanas de vida. Los datos corresponden a observaciones sobre el aumento de peso, aparición y desarrollo de las plumas primarias y caudales, apertura de los ojos y los oídos, cambios en la coloración de la piel y el iris y aparición de la conducta de miedo. Se describen, además, algunas experiencias en condiciones de semicautiverio.

The History of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker in Cuba

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The Ivory-billed Woodpecker (*Campephilus principalis*) is endemic to the southeastern United States and Cuba and in both areas it has been known as a bird of extensive mature pine or hardwood forests. A separate subspecies (*C. p. bairdii*) is recognized from Cuba, but geographic variation in the species is slight and predictable under well-known eco-geographic rules. The ivory-bill almost certainly arrived in Cuba during a peak in Pleistocene glaciation, when sea levels were lower and distance between Florida and Cuba was minimal. Both mainland and Cuban populations were drastically fragmented and brought to the brink of extinction as a result of habitat destruction and hunting. The mainland population survived into the twentieth century in bottomland hardwood forests, the pines being more accessible and heavily exploited. In Cuba, however, montane pine forests in the east provided the last refuge for the species.

Exotics in Jamaica – Past and Present

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In the last two years, three species of introduced granivorous birds have been discovered living in the wild in Jamaica. Since the release and establishment in the wild of the Green-rumped Parrotlet (*Forpus passerinus*) over 80 years ago, these are the first exotics known to survive outside of captivity. An examination of records from the seventeenth century to the present indicates that many exotic birds have been introduced into Jamaica for various reasons through the ages. Some have been released, some have escaped, but up to recently the

number of successful survivals in the wild has been limited. As yet unconfirmed reports indicate the possibility of another three species at large. A new trend seems to be emerging, and this reflects developments due to a dramatic increase in the cage bird trade in the 1980s, to the onslaught of Hurricane Gilbert (the first hurricane to hit Jamaica directly in over 30 years), and a certain shift to apartment or townhouse dwelling.

Patterns of Morphological Variation in Introduced and Native Populations of *Lonchura cuculatta*

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The Bronze Mannikin (*Lonchura cuculatta*), an African estrildid introduced to Puerto Rico at least 200 years ago, is morphologically distinct both within Puerto Rico and between Puerto Rico and Africa. Here, I describe observed patterns of variation and suggest possible causal mechanisms.

The Taxonomic Position of the Greater Antillean Pewee (*Contopus caribaeus*)

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Museo Nacional de Historia Natural, Capitolio Nacional, La Habana, Cuba, and

Robert L. Sutton
Marshall's Pen, P.O. Box 58, Mandeville, Jamaica

Bond gives the distribution of the Greater Antillean Pewee (*Contopus caribaeus*) as Jamaica, Hispaniola, Gonave Island, Cuba and adjacent islands, and the Bahama Islands. *Contopus*, as well as many other genera in the Tyrannidae, have *Species-Specific Dawn Songs*! These are stereotyped, repetitive, and given in a predictable pattern at a fast rate. Parts, or all, of the song may be given during other, daylight hours, but then at a much slower pace. Our tape recordings revealed three distinctly different Dawn Songs, from Jamaica, Hispaniola, and the third from Cuba and the Bahamas. Tape recordings will be presented, and also spectograms, of the three performances, plus several secondary calls. The last also varied from island to island. Recent close-up photographs will be shown, showing similarities and differences among populations. One outstanding difference is a large, whitish quarter moon-shaped spot at the back of the eye in birds from Cuba and the Bahamas. This character had been shown in two books, both entitled "Birds of the Bahamas," by Patterson (1972), and by Brudenell-Bruce (1975), and more recently by Kaufman (1984, Birding, June) from a trip to Grand Cayman. We reviewed and will comment on measurements from published accounts, from over 337 specimens, plus some of our own unpublished information. We conclude that we are dealing with three species (as a superspecies with three allospecies). The suggested classification is, 1st, Jamaican Pewee (*C. pallidus*), 2nd, Hispaniolan Pewee (*C. hispaniolensis*), and, 3rd, *C. caribaeus*, for which we coin a range-descriptive new name, the Cubahaman Pewee.

Standardized Call and Sight Counts of Columbids in Puerto Rico: A Comparison of Density and Relative Abundance Estimates

Frank F. Rivera-Milan
Department of Natural Resources, Scientific Research Area, P.O. Box 5887, Puerta de Tierra, Puerto Rico 00906

From July 1986 to September 1988, standardized call and sight counts were conducted to seasonally estimate the density and relative abundance of 10 native species of pigeons and doves in 3 major life zones of Puerto Rico. Relative abundance estimates based on aural and visual detections are commonly assumed to be valid indicators of population density changes at multiple spatial and temporal scales of sampling. However, seasonal estimates of relative abundance need to be adjusted for effective area of detection, especially when comparisons of different species in heterogeneous habitats are of interest. Density estimates were derived from circular plots (CPs) and fixed-radius point counts (FRPCs) with a radius of 60 m, and were compared on a seasonal basis with call and sight counts unadjusted for area of detection. CPs and FRPCs ranked the species in the expected order of abundance. Overall, density and relative abundance estimates derived from CPs and unadjusted counts were satisfactorily correlated (mean $r = 0.733$, $P = 0.020$, $n = 6$) at calling peaks (March-June) in the life zones. However, CPs and FRPCs were not satisfactorily correlated with total detections (call + sight) (mean $r = 0.550$, $P = 0.296$, and mean $r = 0.240$, $P = 0.562$, $n = 6$, respectively). Density estimates derived from CPs can be used as auxiliary variables to calibrate call counts via double sampling. The use of CPs facilitated comparisons of species abundances at different spatial (habitats, routes, life zones) and temporal (months, seasons, years) scales of resolution. Moreover, at calling peaks the variance of CPs compared favorably with the variance of unadjusted call counts.

"Partners in Flight – Aves de Las Americas," the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Program

Peter W. Stangel
National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, 18th and C Street, NW, Room 2556, Washington, D.C. 20240, U.S.A.

Results from long-term monitoring programs indicate that some populations of neotropical migratory birds declined during the period 1978-1987. Conservation programs for these species are complex, given that over 150 species breeding in, migrating through, or wintering in more than a dozen

countries are involved. The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation has catalyzed the formation of a comprehensive and coordinated program for conservation of neotropical migrants. The program builds on the strengths of federal and state agencies, non-government conservation organizations, and private sectors in both North and Latin America. Federal agencies in North America have responded with development of strategic plans for conservation of neotropical migrants, and increased funding to implement current and new programs. State agencies in North America have instituted new monitoring programs to document population changes on the local level and to identify areas of high species richness. The non-government conservation community has stimulated formation of new partnerships with federal and state agencies that benefit both groups. A strategic plan for conservation of neotropical migrants on the wintering grounds is being developed. This talk will include a discussion of the problem background, development of the "Partners in Flight" program, and specific information about agency and non-government programs.

Puerto Rican Plain Pigeon (*Columba inornata wetmorei*): is it Monomorphic?

Carlos R. Ruiz Lebrón
Department of Natural Resources, P.O. Box 5887, San Juan, Puerto Rico 00908

Literature on the Puerto Rican avifauna states that the sexes of the Plain Pigeon (*Columba inornata wetmorei*) differ in color and size. According to Biaggi (1983), males are brighter and larger than females. However, all available information is based on field observations. The first goal of the captive program for the Plain Pigeon was to determine the morphological differences between the sexes. Initially, the captive pigeons were observed for any external differences, but none were found. After that, morphological measurements were taken, including wing chord, bill length from feathers and nares, bill height and width, size of head from bill, tarsus, length of primary feather number nine and retrices, and body mass. A Student's *t* test was performed to compare both sex measurements on known male and female captives. Body mass and wing chord showed a significant difference between sexes. For body mass, I found a t_{calc} (0.745), which was less than the t_{crit} (2.021) at the 0.05 alpha level (d.f. = 40). For that reason, I accept my null hypothesis ($H_o: x_1 = x_2$). Wing chord also was significantly different between the sexes. For this measurement, the t_{crit} (2.021) was greater than the t_{calc} (1.059) at the 0.05 alpha level (d.f. = 40). Those two measurements could be used to sex this species in captivity and particularly the wild population of the Plain Pigeon. No significant difference was found between the sexes in the other measurements tested. Another sexing method that is accurate is karyotyping, using blood samples or feather pulp of wild individuals.

Aspects of the Breeding Biology of Roseate Terns in Puerto Rico

Jorge E. Saliva
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, P.O. Box 491, Boquerón, Puerto Rico 00622, and

David A. Shealer
Department of Biology, Rutgers University, Piscataway, New Jersey 08855, U.S.A.

We studied two colonies of Roseate Terns (*Sterna dougallii*) breeding in Puerto Rico to explain the year to year variability in reproductive success and colony site tenacity. In the Culebra archipelago, Roseate Terns exhibit unpredictable nesting behavior, shifting colony sites up to four times within a breeding season, and low reproductive success. In the keys off La Parguera, Roseate Terns exhibit a more predictable nesting behavior, with little shifting once a breeding colony has been established, and higher reproductive success. We discuss how differences in the number and type of predators at each colony may affect the breeding behavior and survival of eggs, young, and adult terns. We suggest that intercolony movement may be occurring among colonies in Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands.

Some Aspects of the Breeding Biology and Growth Patterns of the Puerto Rican Flycatcher (*Myiarchus antillarum*) at Cabo Rojo, Puerto Rico

Pablo Torres Báez
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Caribbean Field Office, P.O. Box 491, Boquerón, Puerto Rico 00622

The breeding biology and growth patterns of the Puerto Rican Flycatcher (*Myiarchus antillarum*) were studied at the Cabo Rojo National Wildlife Refuge from 1987 to 1991. Throughout the study, a total of 50 nests built in wooden nest structures were monitored. The breeding season extended from February through June. Mean clutch size was 4.38. Average number of young per successful nest was 3.3, with 79% of monitored nests fledging at least one young. Mean morphometric dimensions for fledglings were 9.2 mm for culmen, 22.9 mm for tarsus, and 58.7 mm for wing length. The mean weight of fledglings was 22.3 g, which was significantly lower than the weight of adults. Wing length and weight were used to generate a regression equation to estimate age of nestlings. Nestling growth pattern was logistic, with rapid growth occurring between 5-13 days post-hatch. Growth rates of young originating from broods of three to five were not significantly different. Preliminary data suggest that nest location could be an important factor allowing for similar growth rates amongdiffering brood sizes. However, other factors that might yield similar results and questions regarding adult activity budgets will be discussed. Censuses were conducted in 1991 to determine population numbers.

The Yellow-shouldered Blackbird (*Agelaius xanthomus*) Recovery Project

Eduardo A. Ventosa Febles
Department of Natural Resources, Scientific Research Area, P.O. Box 5887, Puerta de Tierra, Puerto Rico 00906

A recovery effort for the Yellow-shouldered Blackbird has been conducted in southwestern Puerto Rico since 1982. A history of the project, including results and host–parasite interactions with the Shiny Cowbird (*Molothrus bonariensis*), are presented. The current status of this population, as well as short– and long–term projections of the recovery effort, are also discussed.

Post-hurricane Management and Conservation Strategies for the Wild Puerto Rican Parrot Population: An Overview

Francisco J. Vilella
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Caribbean Field Office, P.O. Box 488, Palmer, Puerto Rico 00721

The Puerto Rican Parrot (*Amazona vittata vittata*) is the last endemic psittacine found in the islands of the Puerto Rican Bank. Once abundant and widely distributed, the species declined largely due to deforestation and habitat destruction. Conservation efforts began in 1968, when a relict population of approximately 24 wild parrots was found restricted to the rainforest area of the Luquillo Mountains within the Caribbean National Forest (CNF). Captive breeding efforts were initiated in 1972. Progress in the project was slow, yet consistent, over the years. By August 1989, there were 5 active nesting areas and an estimated total wild parrot population of 45–47 individuals. On 18 September 1989, Hurricane Hugo hit CNF with sustained winds in excess of 150 miles per hour. Damage to the tabonuco (*Dacryodes excelsa*) and palo colorado (*Cyrilla racemiflora*) forest types, the main parrot habitat at CNF, was severe over large sections of the forest. Conservation and management efforts since the passage of Hugo include newly designed observation blinds, the re-implementation of a discarded parrot census method, modified canopy level platforms, and the use of colored metal leg bands for marking parrot chicks.

Impact of Shiny Cowbird Parasitism on the Reproductive Success of the Puerto Rican Vireo in Gúanica Forest, Puerto Rico

B.L. Woodworth
Department of Ecology, Evolution, and Behavior, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455, U.S.A.

The Puerto Rican Vireo (*Vireo latimeri*) is a single island endemic which may decline in numbers because of brood parasitism by the Shiny Cowbird (*Molothrus bonariensis*). In 1990, I began an ongoing project to document the chronology, extent, and effects of cowbird parasitism on this species in the

Gúanica Commonwealth Forest Reserve, a mature subtropical dry forest in southwestern Puerto Rico. This research has shown that the Puerto Rican Vireo is a frequent cowbird host in the study area, and that parasitized nests are not successful in fledging vireo young. The decrease in reproductive success of parasitized nests is due to two factors. First, cowbirds frequently remove host eggs from the nest (partial or entire clutch). Second, hatching success of vireo eggs decreases because of the larger size of cowbird eggs. The implications of these data for the population status of the Puerto Rican Vireo will be discussed. Research is currently underway to investigate the distribution and abundance of Shiny Cowbirds in Gúanica Forest, and the effects of forest openings on parasitism rates there.

The Effect of Hurricane Hugo on Bird Populations in a Puerto Rican Rain Forest: The First Year and a Half

Joseph M. Wunderle
Institute of Tropical Forestry, P.O. Box B, Palmer, Puerto Rico 00721

Bird populations in the El Verde rain forest were sampled at 2–3 week intervals by mist nets, starting 2 weeks after the passage of Hurricane Hugo and continuing for 1-1/2 years. The results were compared with a baseline netting study completed before the hurricane. Bird captures were initially higher after than before the hurricane, but then declined to a low level 50 days after the storm. Bird captures reached their highest levels at 100 days after the storm, corresponding with fruit production in old treefall gaps. By 200 days after the storm, bird captures had returned to pre-hurricane baseline levels. However, the pattern of population change differed among species. For example, a major decline was observed in one species (Ruddy Quail-Dove *Geotrygon montana*); four species increased (Pearly-eyed Thrasher *Margarops fuscatus*, Black-faced Grassquit *Tiaris bicolor*, Puerto Rican Bullfinch *Loxigilla portoricensis*, Red-legged Thrush *Turdus plumbeus*); five species showed an initial increase, followed by a decline to previous population levels (Puerto Rican Tanager *Nesospingus speculiferus*, Puerto Rican Tody *Todus mexicanus*, Black-whiskered Vireo *Vireo altiloquus*, Northern Parula *Parula americana*, Black-throated Blue Warbler *Dendroica caerulescens*); and the remaining species showed no consistent pattern. Thus, most hurricane-induced wandering or nomadism occurred within 200 days following the storm, after which birds appeared to respond to successional changes in the plant community.

Additional papers presented at the meeting, for which no abstracts were received, included:

Monitoring Trends in Annual Abundance of Migratory Birds Humted in Barbados

Debbie Riven-Ramsey, *Barbados*

New Conservation Initiatives in the Cayman Islands

Dace Ground and James Wiley
National Trust for the Cayman Islands

Local Captive Breeding Programme of the St. Vincent Amazon

Lennox Quammie
St. Vincent

The Montserrat Oriole: Its Present Status

Gerard Grey
Montserrat

Brief Notes on Dominica's Ornithological Efforts

Adolphus Christian
Forestry Department, Ministry of Agriculture, Rosseau, Dominica

Update on the West Indies Field Guide

Herbert Raffaele
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Washington, D.C.

Amazona versicolor – The Environmental Education Aspect

Lyndon John
Forestry Department, Ministry of Agriculture, St. Lucia

The following abstracts were submitted, although the authors were unable to attend the meeting:

Resultados Preliminares del Proyecto Nacional para la Conservacion de la Cotorra Cubana (*Amazona leucocephala*)

Xiomara Gálvez Aguilera, Vicente Berovides Alvarez, Alejandro Llánes Sosa, and Rosendo Martínez Montero
La Habana, Cuba

En el presente trabajo se exponen los primeros resultados del proyecto nacional para la conservación de la cotorra cubana (*Amazona l. leucocephala*) que comenzó a desarrollarse en 1988 y que abarca el estudio en 11 localidades del país, manejo y cría en cautiverio de la misma. Se presentan en detalle los resultados del trabajo efectuado entre 1988 y 1990 en la localidad de Los Indios, Isla de la Juventud que es un área formada por sabanas arenosas con palmas barrigonas (*Colpothrinax wrighti*) único sustrato que utiliza la cotorra para anidar. A éstos, junto con palmas sembradas para aumentar los sitios de nidificación, se le midieron ocho variables del propio nido y cinco de la vegetación circundante. Las cotorras prefieren los nidos sembrados para anidar por la mayor profundidad de la cavidad, menor altura de la entrada y menor densidad de otras palmas barrigonas. Con este método de siembra, la población se incrementó a una tasa 1.21/indiv./año. La profundidad del nido fue el componente estructural que más influyó en el número de pichones que volaron. Se exponen además los datos preliminares relativos a abundancia y datos reproductivos en las localidades de Mil Cumbres, Cayo Potrero, Hato Milián y Loma de Cunagua. Por último se presentan datos relativos a la cría en cautiverio de 15 pichones y el diseño elaborado para el establecimiento de criaderos artificiales.

Nesting Habits of the Village Weaver (*Ploceus cucullatus*) in Haiti

J.O. Keith
USDA, Box 25266, Denver, Colorado, U.S.A., and

M. Rimpel
Ministry of Agriculture, Damien, Haiti

Features of Village Weaver (*Ploceus cucullatus*) nesting biology in Haiti were studied from 1981 to 1984. In 1981 and 1983, location, size, and status of colonies were noted for those found between Cap Hatien in the north and Les Cayes and Jacmel in the south (>600 km of road). Of 100 colonies found in the 2 years, most were active in May and June, some in August and September, and a few during both periods. In 62 colonies where nests were counted, numbers varied from 8 to 200 and averaged 75. In 1983 and 1984, observations were made weekly from May to September at 10 nesting colonies near Damien. Numbers of new nests, total nests, adult males, adult females, and fledglings were counted during each visit. We recorded activities, such as chasing, fighting, male displays, nest building, foraging, and loafing. In 1983, the greatest number of nests occurred in June (7 early colonies) and September (3 late colonies), and averaged 195 nests per colony (range 37-468). The greatest number of males seen in colonies averaged 35, indicating that each male built about 5.6 nests. In 1984, birds nested at only 5 of the 10 colonies. The reproductive effort was also much lower in other ways; the greatest number of males and nests in the 5 colonies averaged only 19 and 81, respectively. The aging and disappearance of old nests was monitored during the winter of 1983-84. The Village Weaver was introduced into Haiti over 200 years ago. Possible adaptations to Haitian environments were considered by comparing our findings with those of recent African nesting studies.

SUMMARY OF THE 1991 PSITTACINE WORKING GROUP MEETING, ST. LUCIA

A meeting of the Society's Psittacine Working Group was held on 6 August, during the 1991 annual meeting in St. Lucia. Present were Rosemarie Gnam, Martha Walsh, Sara Cross, Martin Kelsey, Michael Marsden, Dace Ground, Francisco Vilella, Wylie Barrow, and Jim Wiley. Because the Group had not met since the 1989 Society meeting and none of the objectives agreed on then had been attained, the Group decided on the following, rather than developing additional objectives:

1. Francisco J. Vilella was named Chairperson of the Group.

2. The Group agreed to produce a document on West Indian psittacids, to be published through the Society of Caribbean Ornithology. This publication will be organized by sections for each island having parrot populations, with each section prepared by resident Group members. It will be compiled and edited by the Chairperson, with assistance from other Group members. For each island, three topics will be covered: present status of the native psittacines (*Amazona* and *Aratinga*), major recent (last 4–5 years) accomplishments, and present conservation and research needs. This document will serve not only as a source of information for persons interested in Caribbean psittacines, but will also help to identify needs that can be presented to government and non-government organizations for funding. The document will be published in early 1992.

3. A three-day workshop will be held next year following the annual meeting of the Society of Caribbean Ornithology, which will be held in Puerto Rico. The workshop will be conducted in the Caribbean National Forest and will be sponsored by the Society of Caribbean Ornithology, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the U.S. Forest Service. The workshop will cover the following:

   a. Psittacine census methodology
   b. Habitat management techniques
   c. Psittacine veterinary medicine
   d. Public education

More detailed information on the workshop will be provided at a later date.

NOTICE

Dr. Joe Wunderle has assumed the duties of the Editor of the Society's journal, **Ornitología Caribeña**. Jorge Moreno and Joe are now putting together an edition of the journal. If not contacted by Joe, all authors who have submitted manuscripts to **Ornitología Caribeña** should contact him at:

Dr. Joseph Wunderle, Jr.
Institute of Tropical Forestry
P.O. Box B
Palmer, Puerto Rico 00721
[telephone: 809-887-2875]

NOTICE

At the 1989 annual meeting of the Society of Caribbean Ornithology, several members pre-paid for copies of Herb Raffaele's "A guide to the birds of Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands" at a special rate. Unfortunately, the list of those who purchased the books has been lost. If you paid for the Guide at the Santo Domingo meeting, please advise Ms. Catherine Levy at:

Society of Caribbean Ornithology
2 Starlight Ave.
Kingston 6, Jamaica

OPPORTUNITIES

Field Assistants (1-2) needed from March 1-July 15, 1992, at the El Verde Field Station in Puerto Rico. Successful candidates will participate in long-term banding studies in mature forest and second growth and will also assist in a study of the reproductive biology of the Puerto Rican Tody (*Todus mexicanus*). Salary is $500/month plus free housing. Applicants should demonstrate previous field experience, including the use of mist nets. To apply, send a letter of interest detailing experience and the names and telephone numbers of three references to Robert B. Waide, GPO Box 363682, San Juan, Puerto Rico 00936.

MEETINGS OF INTEREST

4-18 January 1992 – **American Birding Association Conference**, McAllen Airport Hilton Inn, McAllen, Texas. Attendance limited to ABA members and accompanying spouses. (American Birding Association Lower Rio Grande Conference, P.O. Box 6599, Colorado Springs, Colorado 80934-6599, U.S.A.).

2-5 March 1992 – **Fifteenth Vertebrate Pest Conference**, Newport Inn, Newport Beach, California. (Terrell Salmon, Business Manager, c/o DANR-North Region, Research Park Facility, University of California, Davis, California 95616, U.S.A.. Telephone: 916-757-8623; fax: 916-757-8866).

27 March - 1 April 1992 - **57th North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference**, Charolette, North Carolina, U.S.A.

27-29 March 1992 – **Eastern Bird Banding Association**, annual meeting, Keller Conference Center, Pennsylvania State University, State College, Pennsylvania, U.S.A. (Janet Shaffer: 814-356-3553).

9-12 April 1992 - **The Wilson Ornithological Society** will meet with **The Florida Ornithological Society** at the Hilton Inn Gateway West, Kissimmee, Florida, U.S.A. (Roberta Geanangel and Herbert W. Kale will co-chair the Local Committee. Keith L. Bildstein, Department of Biology, Winthrop Collecge, Rock Hill, South Carolina 29733, U.S.A., will chair the Scientific Program Committee).

20-26 April 1992 – **American Birding Association Convention**, Mobile, Alabama. (ABA Convention '92, P.O. Box 6599, Colorado Springs, Colorado 80934-6599, U.S.A.; telephone: 800-835-2473).

10-15 May 1992 - **International Symposium on the Preservation and Conservation of Natural History Collections**, Madrid, Spain. (Information available from: Cesar Romero-Serra, Department of Anatomy, Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario K7L 3N6, Canada; or Julio Gisbert & Fernando Palacios, Museo Nacional de Ciencias Naturales, Jos Gutierrez Abascal 2, 28006 Madrid, Spain).

10-17 May 1992 – **4th World Conference on Birds of Prey and Owls**, Berlin, Germany. (World Working Group on Birds of Prey, 15b Bolton Gardens, London SW5 OAL, United Kingdom; or Wangenheimstr. 32, 1000 Berlin 33, Germany).

1-6 June 1992 – **Society for the Preservation of Natural History Collections**, 7th annual meeting, Nebraska State Museum. Conservation workshop on pest management. (Charlie Messenger, Local Committee Chair, Nebraska State Museum, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, Nebraska 68588, U.S.A.; telephone: 402-472-8366).

13-18 June 1992 - **The Animal Behavior Society**, Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, Canada. (L. Ratcliffe or K. Wynne-Edwards, Department of Biology, Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario K7L 3N6 Canada).

22-25 June 1992 - **Society of Avian Paleontology and Evolution** (SAPE) will hold its third symposium at the Forschungsinstitut Senckenberg in Frankfurt am Main, Germany. Those who wish to participate and to receive the next circular of information should notify D.S. Peters, Senckenberg Museum, Senckenberg-Anlage 25, D-6000 Frankfurt/M. Germany.

22-26 June 1992 – **Cooper Ornithological Society**, 62nd annual meeting, University of Washington, Seattle, Washington. (David A. Manuwal [Local Arangements Chair], Wildlife Science Group, College of Forest Resources, University of Washington, Seattle, Washington 98195, U.S.A.; Dennis Martin [Scientific Program Committee], Biology Department, Pacific Lutheran College, Tacoma, Washington 98447, U.S.A.).

24-27 June 1992 - **The American Ornithologists' Union** annual meeting, Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa, U.S.A. (Erwin E. Klaas, Iowa Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit, Science Hall 2, Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa 50011, U.S.A.).

17-22 August 1992 – **Fourth International Behavioral Ecology Congress**, Princeton University, Princeton, New Jersey. (ISBE Committee, Daniel Rubenstein, Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, Princeton University, Princeton, New Jersey 08544-1003).

22-25 September 1992 – **Neotropical Migratory Bird Symposium and Workshop**, Estes Park, Colorado. (Tom Martin, Arkansas Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit, Department of Biological Sciences, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, Arkansas 72701, U.S.A.).

12-19 November 1992 – **Waterfowl and Wetlands Conservation in the 1990s—a Global Perspective**. Tradewinds Hotel, St. Petersburg, Florida. (Simon Nash, IWRB, Slimbridge, Gloucester, GL2 7BX, United Kingdom).

Meetings (continued)

21-27 August 1994 – **XXI International Ornithological Congress**, Vienna, Austria. (Interconvention, A-1450 Vienna, Austria).

INFORMATION ON WILD BIRD BILLS BEING CONSIDERED IN THE UNITED STATES

The Environmental Investigation Agency (1506 Nineteenth Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20036) has prepared the following information on two pending wild bird bills in the United States.

Wild Bird Protection Act Senate 1219/House of Representatives 2540	Exotic Bird Conservation Act Senate 1218/House of Representatives 2541
Importation Ban on Wild-caught Birds Requires an immediate ban on the importation of wild-caught birds for sale as pets. •Though required by CITES, wild populations are not being monitored to ensure that they can sustain the great numbers of birds being legally captured for the trade. The result— many species of birds are becoming rare and even endangered because of their popularity as pets. •The presence of a legal trade facilitates smuggling of an estimated 150,000 birds into the United States each year. •Limiting the market to domestically bred birds will promote the efforts of American aviculturalists, who at the present time have a difficult time competing with cheap imports on the market.	*Importation Ban on Wild-caught Birds* Requires a five year "phase-out" of the importation of wild-caught birds for the pet trade. •Importation of wild birds in the first year of the "phase-out" could actually increase from present levels, further threatening wild populations. •The importation of wild-caught birds during a "phase-out" period will discourage captive breeding because the cost of domestically bred birds cannot compete with the low prices of imports. •The necessary biological data to establish accurate import quotas during a "phase-out" do not exist. •By petition, the Secretary of the Interior may choose to allow importation of avian species previously not exploited for the pet trade.
Exempt Species Exempts from the import ban and marking requirements: common canaries, cockatiels, and budgerigars. Exempts other species commonly bred in captivity after a finding is made by the Secretary of the Interior.	*Exempt Species* Exempts from the "phase-out": the importation ban and marking requirements, species commonly bred in captivity after a finding is made by the Secretary of the Interior.
Pet Bird Imports Allows the importation of personal pet birds.	*Pet Bird Imports* Allows the importation of personal pet birds.
Importation of Wild Birds for Captive Breeding Allows for the importation of wild-caught birds for captive breeding purposes, if the importer can demonstrate that the importation will have no detrimental effect on wild populations and that the species being imported is not reasonably available in the United States. •The "no detrimental effect" requirement restates criteria already in place for all avian species on CITES Appendix II—criteria which are rarely enforced. •To guard against excessive importation of avian species which have already been brought into the United States in large numbers, imports must be limited to those species not already reasonably available.	*Importation of Wild Birds for Captive Breeding* The importation of any number or species of wild-caught birds is permitted upon submittal of a name, address, and photo of facilities. •Will allow the importation of excessive numbers of wild birds to the detriment of wild populations.
Importation of Wild Birds for Zoos and Scientific Research Allows for the importation of wild-caught birds only if the importer has demonstrated the importation will benefit the conservation of the species.	*Importation of Wild Birds for Zoos and Scientific Research* No limitations.
Importation of Foreign Captive-Bred Birds Allows the importation of captive-bred birds from facilities in foreign countries. Requires the Secretary to determine that the facility has the ability of producing the birds to be exported and is being operated in a humane manner.	*Importation of Foreign Captive-bred Birds* Allows the importation of captive-bred birds from facilities in foreign countries. Requires the Secretary to make a finding that the facility has the capability of producing the birds to be exported and is operated in a humane manner. The determination, however, need only be made on "the best information available," which relieves the Secretary from acquiring the information necessary to ensure that the facility is indeed breeding the birds.

Wild Bird Protection Act Senate 1219/House of Representatives 2540	Exotic Bird Conservation Act Senate 1218/House of Representatives 2541
Importation of Ranched Birds Not permitted •There is no existing ranching of birds to model a system on. •The biological data and controls to ensure populations are not damaged and that the birds are treated humanely does not exist. •"Ranching" is potentially an easy method of laundering wild-caught birds.	*Importation of Ranched Birds* Allows the importation of ranched birds if the Secretary determines that the operation is beneficial to the species and to the local community, and that the operation is carried out in a humane manner. Yet, the determination need only be made on "the best information available". •"The best information available" may be very little information indeed; certainly little or no information exists at present.
Marking Requirements Requires comprehensive marking and record keeping for all birds in trade, except common canaries, budgerigars, cockatiels, and any other species commonly bred in captivity exempt by the Secretary. •Comprehensive marking requirements will enable American consumers and enforcement officials to distinguish captive bred from wild-caught birds. •Will promote means of marking birds already being practiced: banding of wild-caught birds by the federal government and marking of captive-bred birds by private means.	*Marking Requirements* Only requires marking of imported wild-caught birds five years after enactment. •Lack of comprehensive marking of birds will facilitate the laundering of smuggled birds. •Enforcement officials and consumers will have no means of positively identifying captive-bred from illegally obtained birds.
Reporting Requirements Requires any individual importing birds or transferring wild birds imported after enactment to submit annual reports to the Secretary. Such individuals must keep records regarding transfer of all birds except those exempt as species commonly bred in captivity.	*Reporting Requirements* Requires any individual importing birds or holding wild birds imported after enactment to submit annual reports to the Secretary. Such individuals must keep records regarding transfer of all birds except those exempt as species commonly bred in captivity, pre-Act birds, and those bred in captivity.
Licensing Requirements Requires a license for any individual importing birds into the United States or any person transferring a wild bird. Regulations governing licensing will include standards of husbandry and humane care. Allows the Fish and Wildlife Service to confirm the accuracy of numbers of wild-caught birds within the United States by comparing information in annual reports against information on licensed individuals.	*Licensing Requirements* Requires a license for any individual importing birds into the United States which are not for their personal use. Regulations governing licensing will include standards of husbandry and humane care, experience, and inspection by an accredited veterinarian; license valid for a period of two years. Requires registration with the Secretary of the Interior for any individual importing any bird one year after enactment for their personal use or transferring a wild bird five years after enactment. Registration automatic when an individual submits a name, address, and a photograph of facilities for registration. Registration valid for a period of two years.
Citizen Suit Stronger citizen suit provision	*Citizen Suit* Citizen suit provision.
State Preemption Does not pre-empt stronger state laws.	*State Preemption* Pre-empts stronger state laws, such as the New York State Wild Bird Act enacted in 1984. This removes the right of states to take stronger measures to protect birds. The wild bird trade will reopen, disrupting the captive-bred bird industry.

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