

FURTHER NOTES ON THE AVIFAUNA OF CHACACHACARE ISLAND

by R. P. French

During the Club's excursion to Chacachacare during the weekend of 30 August—1 September, 1968, I again made a checklist of the birdlife in the La Tinta area and trapped birds, mainly for comparison with the May excursion in 1966 (see 1967 Journal, pp. 25-27, 45-52). The following additional points may be of interest.

1. Additions to the known checklist were as follows:—

Semipalmated Plover	<i>Charadrius semipalmatus</i>	Uncommon
Semipalmated Sandpiper	<i>Calidris pusilla</i>	Fairly common
Seven-coloured Parakeet	<i>Touit batavica</i>	Fairly common
Tropical Screech-Owl	<i>Otus choliba</i>	Uncommon
Carib Emerald	<i>Chlorostilbon mellisugus</i>	Fairly common
Fork-tailed Flycatcher	<i>Muscivora tyrannus</i>	Fairly common
American Redstart	<i>Setophaga ruticilla</i>	Uncommon

One of the most interesting of these records is that of the Carib Emerald hummingbird, which had previously been recorded for Chacachacare but was not found on the 1966 excursion. Several individuals were seen this time.

Of special interest too was the occurrence of a flock of about 20 Seven-coloured Parakeets, which flew high overhead in an easterly direction at 11 a.m. on 1 September. Their height and direction left little doubt that this was a flock en route from the Paria Peninsula, Venezuela to Trinidad. It constitutes one more piece of evidence of local landbird movement between Trinidad and the mainland of South America. More observations, however, are needed to determine how far true migration is involved or merely a local foraging movement.

2 There were no other significant changes in the 1968 checklist. We did not hear the Venezuelan Wood-rail nor the Rufous Nightjar, both of which had been apparent in May. A similar situation was noticed in Monos (see 1965 Journal, p. 41).

3 The only occupied nests found were of the Yellow Oriole and the Bananaquit. But recently fledged young of several species were seen being fed by adults. These included the Allied Antwren, Stripe-breasted Petchary, Tropical Parula Warbler, and Streaked Saltator. Half of the trapped adult birds were in the process of moulting their primaries, indicating the end of the main breeding season.

4 Nets were set in the same locations as in 1966. In 44 net-hours 68 birds were trapped with no retraps; the rate of 1.54 birds per net-hour is considerably less than the May figure of 2.62. This may be attributed to an expected decrease in activity after the breeding season.

5 Among the trapped birds 14 species were represented, as listed below:—

White-fronted Dove	1	Bananaquit	20
Cayenne Nightjar	1	Parson	15
Common Emerald Hummingbird	2	Streaked Saltator	5
Allied Antwren	5	Black-faced Grassquit	4
Rusty-tailed Petchary	3		
Leotaud's Dusky Flycatcher	1		
Smooth Flycatcher	3		
Mouse-coloured Flycatcher	4		
Mockingbird	2		
Caribbean Vireo	2		

6 The measurements of the 68 trapped birds will not be listed in full here. Of particular interest were the following :—

(a) An immature Mouse-coloured Flycatcher was caught at 0800 weighing 7.5 gm. 13 adults trapped on Chacachacare (10 in May) have weighed from 9–12 gm, averaging 10.4 gm.

(b) An immature Caribbean Vireo was caught at 0815 weighing 11 gm. Another adult bird weighed 14 gm at 1030. But 24 adults taken in the May excursion averaged 15.4 gm, ranging from 14–17 gm.

(c) 14 adult Bananaquits, trapped between 0700 and 1030, weighed an average of 9.25 gm. The 18 birds trapped in 1966 and 1968 together averaged 9.17 gm. These figures agree strikingly with the average of 9.27 gm for 55 Bananaquits taken by the Snows in October (see 1965 and 1967 Journals). Corroboration is thus given to the hypothesis that Bananaquits are progressively smaller the further west one travels in the Bocas.

(Note. Nomenclature follows Herklots, as in the 1965 and 1967 Journals.)

St. Peter's School, Texaco Trinidad Inc., Pointe-a-Pierre, Trinidad.