

SOME BIRDS FROM THE PALENQUE REGION OF
NORTHEASTERN CHIAPAS, MEXICO

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THIS report is based on a small collection of birds obtained by the author between July 5 and August 7, 1949, in the vicinity of the Maya ruins of Palenque, Chiapas, Mexico. These ruins, about six kilometers southwest of the town of Palenque, are situated in the northern foothills of the Sierra de Palenque at an altitude of 210 meters. The terrain is hilly, well-drained by numerous streams, and covered with heavy rainforest. The vegetation surrounding the main ruins has been cleared to the extent of approximately 60 acres. Brodkorb (Misc. Publ. Mus. Zool. Univ. Mich., No. 55, 1943) includes the Palenque region in the Tabascan faunal district which he defines as that Gulf lowland area occupied by the state of Tabasco, the southwestern corner of Campeche, and extreme northern Chiapas. Smith (Ann. Assoc. Amer. Geog., 39: 219-238, 1949) considers the ruins to be in the biotic region designated by him as the Palenque Province.

Seventy-seven forms were collected or observed. To the 95 species reported by Brodkorb (*op. cit.*) from the Palenque region, 36 have been added, of which eight had not previously been recorded from the Tabascan district as defined above. The majority of the specimens that were taken are now in the Chicago Natural History Museum.

Previously, birds have been collected at Palenque by E. W. Nelson and E. A. Goldman from May 10 to 21, 1900, and by Eizi Matuda from July 10 to 15, 1939. Palenque records based on the collection of Robert T. Moore are listed by Friedmann, Griscom, and Moore (Pacific Coast Avif., No. 29, 1950).

This work was supported in part with funds made available by the Purdue Research Foundation. The writer is grateful to Dr. and Mrs. Clarence J. Goodnight of Purdue University for making arrangements which facilitated work in the area of study. He is also indebted to Mr. Merle L. Kuns of Purdue University for valuable assistance in the field, to Mr. Emmet R. Blake of the Chicago Natural History Museum for services extended while comparing specimens, and to Dr. Pierce Brodkorb of the University of Florida for having answered numerous queries during the course of this study.

In the following list, the length of the larger testis is given in those birds whose gonads were conspicuously enlarged. Although nearly 40 per cent of the specimens examined were in various stages of molt, only those in a pronounced molting condition are indicated.

Tinamus major (Gmelin), GREATER TINAMOU.—Sex?, July 9; male, July 22, testis 20 mm.; and immature, sex?, July 22, 334 gm. No skins were prepared. Those collected on July 22 were taken from a group of three. The race here is most likely *robustus* as *percautus* probably does not get very far inland where the rainfall is heavy. Frequently heard calling.

Nyctanassa violacea violacea (Linnaeus), EASTERN YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT HERON.—Immature female, August 5, in juvenal plumage. This was the only one seen. Not previously recorded from the Tabascan district.

Cochlearius cochlearius zeledoni (Ridgway), ZELEDON'S BOAT-BILLED HERON.—Male, July 26, iris dark brown, tarsi and feet light yellowish green. Collected at night from a low branch over a stream. This specimen was one of two seen together; its companion remained in the area for several days. The stomach contained a fish, *Priapella compressa*, and two shrimp, *Macrobrachium* sp. These were the only Boat-billed Herons observed.

Sarcoramphus papa (Linnaeus), KING VULTURE.—Seen on three occasions perched in forest trees.

Coragyps atratus (Bechstein), BLACK VULTURE.—Fairly common.

Cathartes aura (Linnaeus), TURKEY VULTURE.—Not nearly as common as the Black Vulture

Buteo magnirostris griseocauda Ridgway, MIRADOR INSECT HAWK.—Female, July 6, molting (rectrices), tail worn, iris yellow; and immature, sex?, July 18, 293.5 gm., iris brownish yellow. One of the stomachs contained a lepidopterous larva and the remains of a small mammal. The wing of the female measures 235 mm. Commonly seen perched in trees bordering cornfields (*milpas*).

Leucopternis albicollis (Latham), WHITE HAWK.—Pairs were noted soaring over the area on several occasions.

Crax rubra rubra Linnaeus, CENTRAL AMERICAN CURASSOW.—Female, July 10, molting (primaries, head), iris reddish brown. Taken on the ground in deep forest. Seen only on this one occasion.

Columba nigrirostris Sclater, SHORT-BILLED PIGEON.—Male, July 27, 167 gm., testis 12 mm.; and female, July 27, 188 gm., ova enlarged, iris pink, one egg in oviduct. These birds constituted a pair and were secured from the marginal forest bordering a small clearing at a height of about 10 meters. The crops were distended with numerous small berries. The specimens measure: male—wing, 169; tail, 126 mm.; and female—wing, 166; tail, 125 mm. This is a second Chiapas record; Friedmann, Griscom, and Moore (Pacific Coast Avif., No. 29, 1950) recorded it from Palenque.

Columbigallina talpacoti rufipennis (Bonaparte), RUDDY GROUND DOVE.—Male, August 4, 40.5 gm., iris pale grayish pink. Common in clearing near the ruins and occasionally noted with *Claravis pretiosa*.

Claravis pretiosa (Ferrari-Perez), BLUE GROUND DOVE.—Female, July 17, 71 gm., iris yellow. The wing measures 110 mm. and the tail 77 mm. Often seen in clearing near the ruins in flocks of six to eight. Not as abundant as *Columbigallina talpacoti*. This is the first record of this dove from the Tabascan district.

Pionus senilis senilis (Spix), WHITE-CROWNED PARROT.—Male, July 8, 220 gm., testis 5 mm. Common. The local inhabitants habitually shot these parrots when they invaded their cornfields.

Piaya cayana thermophila Sclater, CENTRAL AMERICAN SQUIRREL CUCKOO.—Female, August 4, 92.3 gm., ova somewhat enlarged, molting (primaries, rectrices, head). It had eaten miscellaneous insects, some of which were homoptera and hemiptera. Species not often observed.

Crotophaga sulcirostris Swainson, GROOVE-BILLED ANI.—A few in clearing.

Ciccaba nigrolineata Sclater, BLACK AND WHITE WOOD OWL.—Female, July 12, 443 gm., molting (primaries); and female, August 5, 468 gm., ova somewhat enlarged. Iris light brown; bill and feet yellow. Both owls were collected at night near the forest border. The bulk of their food consisted of large insects including beetles, tettigoniids, and cicadids. One stomach contained the remains of a bat, *Pteronotus davyi*. This owl has not previously been recorded from the Tabascan district. These females measure: wing, 276 and 282; tail, 172 and 173 mm.

Phaethornis superciliosus veraecrucis Ridgway, VERA CRUZ HERMIT.—Sex?, July 7, 6 gm.; and sex?, July 31, 7 gm., molting (primaries). The tails were not fully grown in either specimen. One of the stomachs contained numerous onopiid spiders. Common, especially in the lower forest where they continually chirp when disturbed.

Campylopterus hemileucurus hemileucurus (Lichtenstein), DE LATRE'S SABREWING.—Male, July 15, 12.5 gm. Rather common in forest and along forest edge.

Amazilia tzacatl tzacatl (De la Llave), RIEFFER'S HUMMINGBIRD.—Male, July 7, 5 gm. Common. A fledgling was observed on July 30.

Trogon melanocephalus Gould, BLACK-HEADED TROGON.—One noted on July 25 in the marginal forest.

Trogon massena massena Gould, MASSENA TROGON.—Male, August 2, 162 gm., molting (rectrices, head); iris light golden brown, skin around eyes pinkish orange, legs gray (scutes along lower tarsi and feet yellow), tail very worn. It had been eating insects and fruit.

Chloroceryle americana septentrionalis (Sharpe), TEXAN GREEN KINGFISHER.—Female, July 8, 37 gm. The stomach contents included the remains of a crab, *Pseudothelphusa* sp. Of regular occurrence along forest water-courses.

Momotus momota goldmani Nelson, GOLDMAN'S MOTMOT.—Immature, sex?, July 6, 93 gm., molting (primaries, rectrices, head); and male, July 9, 90 gm. The tail of the immature bird is not fully grown, and that of the adult is not completely racketted. The stomachs contained large insects and fruit. A dead fledgling was found on July 17 in the courtyard of one of the ruins. Frequently observed and heard.

Notharcus macrorhynchos hyperrhynchus Sclater, WHITE-FRONTED PUFFBIRD.—Male, July 21, 90.5 gm. Its food consisted of beetles and caterpillars. This puffbird has not previously been recorded from the Tabascan district. Wing, 113; tail, 91 mm. Uncommon.

Malacoptila panamensis inornata (Du Bus), WHITE-WHISKERED SOFT-WING.—Male, July 5, 33 gm.; female, July 27, 41 gm., ova enlarged; and male, August 6, 36 gm. Two stomachs contained parts of beetles and grasshoppers. Encountered often in the forest understory and occasionally along the forest border.

Galbula melanogenia Sclater, BLACK-CHINNED JACAMAR.—One seen on July 17.

Ramphastos sulfuratus Lesson, KEEL-BILLED TOUCAN.—Often seen passing through the area in flocks of eight to ten.

Pteroglossus torquatus torquatus (Gmelin), COLLARED ARACARI.—Male, July 8, testis 7 mm., molting (primaries, rectrices, head); and immature female, July 29, 184 gm. The upper mandible of the immature bird was dark greenish brown along the culmen becoming light grayish green laterally and dull orange baso-laterally; the lower mandible was horn brown becoming dark brown terminally and along the tomia. Measurements of five males of *P. t. torquatus* from eastern Tabasco and northern Chiapas (Brodkorb, Misc. Publ. Mus. Zool. Univ. Mich., No. 55, 1943) show an intermediacy to *P. t. erythrozonus*. The adult male here collected, however, is typical *torquatus* in size, measuring: wing, 148; tail, 156; culmen, 110 mm. Large

insects and fruit, including citrus pulp and seeds, were present in the stomachs. Apparently not as common as *Ramphastos sulfuratus*.

Melanerpes pucherani perileucus (Todd), WHITE-BARRED WOODPECKER.—Female, July 26, 61 gm., molting (primaries, head), ova enlarged; and female, August 4, 51 gm. The greater portion of the stomach contents of each bird was made up of vegetable matter but some insect larvae were present. Common along the forest edge where they were often observed feeding on the fruit of the trumpet tree, *Cecropia* sp.

Celeus castaneus (Wagler), CHESTNUT-COLORED WOODPECKER.—Male, August 3, 80.5 gm. The stomach contained numerous ants and some seeds.

Phloeocastus guatemalensis guatemalensis (Hartlaub), GUATEMALAN IVORY-BILLED WOODPECKER.—Female, July 13, 232 gm.; and female, July 24, 222 gm. Both birds had eaten only wood-boring beetle larvae. *P. guatemalensis* and *C. castaneus* appeared to be the most common forest woodpeckers.

Xiphorhynchus flavigaster eburneirostris Des Murs, IVORY-BILLED WOODHEWER.—Female, July 30, 43 gm.; and sex?, July 15. The stomachs contained insects and lepidopterous larvae. Commonly associated with mixed forest flocks.

Dendrocolaptes certhia sancti-thomae Lafresnaye, BARRED WOODHEWER.—Female, August 2, 63 gm., ova somewhat enlarged. Two snails plus many insect parts, including a large beetle, were contained in the stomach. The specimen measures: wing, 115; tail, 124 mm. This woodhewer has not previously been recorded from the Tabascan district.

Automolus ochrolaemus cervinigularis (Sclater), BUFF-THROATED AUTOMOLUS.—Female, July 9, 46 gm. Taken from a thicket bordering a cornfield.

Taraba major melanocrissa (Sclater), GREAT ANT-SHRIKE.—Female, July 6, 73 gm., ova enlarged, molting (rectrices).

Microrhopias quixensis boucardi (Sclater), BOUCARD'S ANT-WREN.—Female, July 5, 9.5 gm., molting (rectrices), one egg was present in the oviduct; and male, August 3, molting (primaries, head). The male was one of two birds, probably a pair.

Formicarius analis moniliger Sclater, MEXICAN ANT-THRUSH.—Male, July 9, 58 gm., testis 12 mm. Taken near the ground in deep forest.

Cotinga amabilis Gould, LOVELY COTINGA.—Female, July 20, 73.5 gm. Collected in deep forest. This was the only cotinga collected that had eaten fruit; specimens of the following five species had eaten only insects. Seemingly uncommon.

Attila spadiceus flammulatus Lafresnaye, FLAMMULATED ATILLA.—Immature, sex?, August 5, 41 gm. Taken from a mixed flock of about five forest birds of which one was *Lanio aurantius*.

Rhytipterna holerythra holerythra (Sclater and Salvin), RUFOUS MOURNER.—Female, August 5, 33 gm., iris brown. Secured in heavy forest. It measures: wing, 100; tail, 90 mm. This is the second Mexican record of this cotinga. Heretofore, three specimens recorded by Blake (Nat. Hist. Misc., No. 42, 1949) from Tutla, Oaxaca, comprised the first definite Mexican record. An earlier tentative record was based on an unsexed adult skin labeled "Mexico" in the British Museum.

Lipaugus unirufus unirufus Sclater, RUFOUS PIHA.—Male, August 5, 84.8 gm., testis 8 mm., molting (primaries, rectrices, head). Rarely seen but frequently heard, responding instantly to any loud noise such as thunder or a gun shot. Its call is a sharp, explosive cry with a downward inflection.

Pachyrhamphus cinnamomeus fulvidior Griscom, CINNAMON BECARD.—Immature male, July 8, 19 gm.; and female, July 22, 19.5 gm. An abundant bird of the forest and forest edge. A nest was discovered on July 16 near the top of a trumpet tree about 10 meters from the ground. It was somewhat spherical in appearance and measured roughly 25 cm. in diameter. No further nesting was noted after July 26.

Platypsaris aglaiae sumichrasti Nelson, SUMICHRAST'S ROSE-THROATED BECARD.—Male, July 27, 33 gm.

Pipra mentalis mentalis Sclater, YELLOW-THIGHED MANAKIN.—Male, August 4, 16 gm., testis 6 mm.

Megarhynchus pitangua mexicanus (Lafresnaye), MEXICAN BOAT-BILLED FLYCATCHER.—Male, July 13, 69 gm. Observed daily along the marginal forest and in isolated trees of clearings. Most often seen in small flocks.

Myiozetetes similis texensis (Giraud), GIRAUD'S FLYCATCHER.—Immature female, July 10, 30 gm. The bulk of the stomach contents was made up of vegetable matter, with some insects present. Common in clearings and forest edge.

Pitangus sulphuratus guatemalensis (Lafresnaye), CENTRAL AMERICAN DERBY FLYCATCHER.—Female, July 18, 62 gm., molting rectrices. A large caterpillar was found in the stomach. A common species of the forest border and cornfields.

Contopus cinereus brachytarsus (Sclater), SHORT-LEGGED PEWEE.—Male, July 20, 12 gm.

Empidonax minimus (Baird and Baird), LEAST FLYCATCHER.—Male, August 6, 11 gm. One of two taken from the top of a brush pile in a clearing. This appears to be the earliest published fall record for Chiapas.

Myiobius sulphureipygius sulphureipygius (Sclater), SULPHUR-RUMPED MYIOBIUS.—Female, July 14, 11 gm. Secured in heavy forest from a small mixed flock including ant tanagers, *Habia* sp.

Onychorhynchus mexicanus mexicanus (Sclater), MEXICAN ROYAL FLYCATCHER.—Female, August 4, 18 gm. A nest was found on July 9 attached to the end of a thin vine about eight meters long, and suspended four meters above a forest stream. The pensile nest, constructed mainly of roots, grass, and moss, measured 60 by 15 centimeters with a side entrance four centimeters in diameter. Two unoccupied nests, similar in construction to that described, were located five and eight meters away. Observations were made on the afternoon of July 11. During that time 12 feedings were noted; the intervals ranging from five to 38 minutes with an average of 3.6 feedings per hour. The pattern of approach and departure was usually the same; the bird first coming to a certain bush (A) about three meters from the nest, and then flying to another bush six meters away on the opposite stream bank, before finally going to the nest. Upon leaving, it would fly back to bush A where it invariably engaged for a minute in preening, spreading its tail and wing feathers, raising its crest, calling, and finally flying away either up or downstream. Its call was a plaintive 'wee-aah,' slurring downward. No further nesting was noted after July 13.

Platyrinchus mystaceus cancröminus Sclater and Salvin, MEXICAN SPADE-BILLED FLYCATCHER.—Immature male, August 4, 12 gm., molting (primaries); and immature, sex?, August 4, 9.5 gm. These specimens were taken about 40 meters apart in the forest understory. One had been eating ants.

Elaenia viridicata placens Sclater, PLACID ELAENIA.—Male, July 27, 13 gm., testis 5.5 mm., molting (primaries, rectrices); and male, July 31, 13 gm., testis 6 mm., molting (primaries, rectrices). These were collected in the vicinity of forest-edge flocks numbering 10 to 14 birds. The stomachs contained insect parts, some of which were of ants and hemiptera.

Leptopogon amaurocephalus pileatus Cabanis, BROWN-CAPPED LEPTOPOGON.—Female, July 16, 15.2 gm. One of two seen together in a small forest-edge flock.

Campylorhynchus zonatus restrictus Nelson, TABASCO CACTUS WREN.—Male, July 26, 41 gm., testis 5.5 mm.; and sex?, August 4, 36 gm. Iris red; tarsi and feet buff. The wings measure: male, 87 mm.; sex?, 83 mm. The tails of both specimens are

very worn. Common. These wrens were secured from forest-edge flocks numbering eight to 12 birds. One flock included tanagers of the genus *Tanagra*. This appears to be the first record of this race from Chiapas.

Thryothorus rutilus umbrinus Ridgway, GUATEMALAN SPOTTED-BREASTED WREN.—Male, July 21, 17.5 gm. Common in the lower forest levels and constantly observed feeding in the tall weeds and grasses of the clearings. A nest was discovered on July 29 along the forest edge bordering a small clearing. It was situated about 13 cm. from the ground in the crotch of a fern and contained two nestlings. The nest was dome-shaped and measured 10 by 15 centimeters with a side entrance four centimeters in diameter. During a brief observation of the nest on the afternoon of July 30, three feedings were noted in an hour and 15 minutes. Both parents were present at the nest on one of these feedings and alternately fed the young. The nest was abandoned by noon of the following day.

Henicorhina leucosticta prosthaleuca (Sclater), SCLATER'S WOOD WREN.—Male, July 15, 15.5 gm., testis 5.5 mm. Collected near the ground from a flock in deep forest. Often found in association with *Thryothorus rutilus* and, like *T. rutilus*, this wren was common in both forest and clearing.

Cyanerpes cyaneus carneipes (Sclater), CENTRAL AMERICAN BLUE HONEYCREEPER.—Male, July 5, 11 gm., testis 8 mm.; immature male, July 28, 14 gm.; and female, August 2, 13 gm. The immature male is in an advanced stage of postjuvenile plumage with black wings, cerulean crown-patch coming in, and the underparts and back spotted with black and blue. Two were secured from forest-edge flocks containing *Tanagra gouldi* and *Tanagra lauta*. Stomachs of two specimens contained fruit with small seeds. The measurements are—males: wing, 60–63; tail, 36.5–38 mm.—female: wing, 57; tail, 35 mm. Encountered often in second growth areas as well as in the forest. Not previously reported from the Tabascan district.

Seiurus motacilla (Vieillot), LOUISIANA WATER-THRUSH.—Male, July 21, 20 gm.; and female, August 2, 19.5 gm. The August specimen was one of two. Between July 12 and August 2, five of these water-thrushes were observed on four occasions feeding along forest streams. The July dates are the earliest recorded for Chiapas, and the birds have not been previously recorded from the Tabascan district.

Amblycercus holosericeus holosericeus (Lichtenstein), PREVOST'S CACIQUE.—Female, July 9, 77 gm., ova enlarged, iris yellow; one egg present in oviduct. This and all of the following three species of icterids were collected in the vicinity of cornfields.

Psomocolax oryzivorus impacificus Peters, RICE GRACKLE.—Immature female, August 7, 133 gm., iris brown. The bill of this grackle was largely horn colored and streaked throughout with brownish black, the base of the lower mandible being yellowish. This condition is probably due to immaturity.

Icterus prothemelas prothemelas (Strickland), LESSON'S ORIOLE.—Immature female, July 21, 25 gm. This specimen is in first plumage. A lepidopterous larva was found in the stomach.

Icterus mesomelas mesomelas (Wagler), YELLOW-TAILED ORIOLE.—Female, July 21, 42 gm. The ovary contained three enlarged ova measuring six, four, and three millimeters in diameter. Spiders and beetles had been eaten.

Tanagra lauta lauta Bangs and Penard, BONAPARTE'S EUPHONIA.—Male, July 17, 16 gm., testis 8 mm.; and male, August 2, 15.5 gm., molting (primaries). These were secured from flocks in the marginal forest. Quite common.

Tanagra gouldi gouldi (Sclater), GOULD'S EUPHONIA.—Female, July 16, 14.8 gm., ova enlarged; male, July 19, 14.8 gm.; male, July 28, 15 gm.; and male, July 28, 15.5 gm. Two were taken from treetop flocks in heavy forest. All had been eating small-seeded fruits. A very common flocking species of the forest and forest border.

Tanagra nigrocincta larvata (Du Bus), GOLDEN-MASKED TANAGER.—Male, August 4, 23 gm., testis 6 mm. Collected along the forest edge from a mixed flock of which *Campylorhynchus zonatus* formed the nucleus.

Ramphocelus passerinii passerinii Bonaparte, PASSERINI'S TANAGER.—Male, July 5, 29 gm., testis 10 mm., iris red. Fairly common in second growth areas.

Phlogothraupis sanguinolenta sanguinolenta (Lesson), CRIMSON-COLLARED TANAGER.—Male, July 12, 44 gm., testis 10 mm.; and female, July 18, 38 gm., ova enlarged. Common.

Piranga leucoptera leucoptera Trudeau, WHITE-WINGED TANAGER.—Immature male, juvenal plumage, July 26, 16 gm. Seemed to be scarce.

Habia rubica rubicoides (Lafresnaye), MEXICAN ANT TANAGER.—Immature male, July 5, 33 gm., molting (primaries); female, July 14, 36 gm.; male, July 31, 41 gm., molting (primaries, rectrices, head); and immature male, July 31, 36 gm., molting (primaries, rectrices, head). Stomachs contained insects, vegetable matter, and snails. A very common flocking species and often associated with *Habia gutturalis* and smaller tanagers.

Habia gutturalis littoralis (Nelson), TABASCO ANT TANAGER.—Male, July 6, 43 gm., testis 8 mm. Similar in habits to *Habia rubica*, but not as common.

Lanio aurantius aurantius Lafresnaye, MEXICAN SHRIKE TANAGER.—Male, July 22, 38.5 gm.; and male, August 5, 38 gm. Taken in deep forest from small flocks.

Caryothraustes poliogaster poliogaster (Du Bus), BISHOP GROSBEAK.—Male, July 7, 47 gm., testis 6.5 mm.; male, July 19, 47.5 gm.; and female, July 23, 46 gm. Flocks of 15 to 18 were often observed passing through the marginal forest as well as the forest interior.

Cyanocompsa cyanooides concreta (Du Bus), BLUE-BLACK GROSBEAK.—Male, July 29, 36 gm., testis 8.5 mm. It had been eating seeds, insects, and spiders. Not uncommon. Noted in the forest and along the brushy borders of clearings.

Sporophila torqueola Bonaparte, CINNAMON-RUMPED SEEDEATER.—Frequently seen in the trees of clearings. A nest was found on July 22 in a citrus tree located in a clearing. It was a loosely woven, cup-like structure, nine centimeters in diameter, and situated about 2.5 meters from the ground. Young still being fed July 29.

Volatinia jacarina splendens (Vieillot), NORTHERN BLUE-BLACK GRASSQUIT.—Male, July 9, 5 gm., testis 5 mm. It had been eating small caterpillars and seeds. An abundant flocking bird of the clearing herbage. Similar in habits to the wrens, *T. rutilus* and *H. leucosticta*, and often associated with those species.

Arremonops conirostris chloronotus (Salvin), GREEN-BACKED SPARROW.—Sex?, August 4, 30 gm.; and male, August 5, 26 gm., testis 8.5 mm. Fairly common along the brushy edges of clearings.

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