

The small nation of Suriname, on the northern rim of South America, has become a favorite destination for traveling birders. This summary of recent discoveries will aid the visitor in knowing what to look for.



## Additions to The Birds of Suriname

THOMAS H. DAVIS

In 1968 Francois Haverschmidt published *Birds of Surinam* (now spelled "Suriname"). This book presented a modern account of a little-known avifauna, graced with numerous, lavish illustrations by Paul Barruel.

In 1968 a 'modern' account of the Suriname avifauna detailed mainly the coastal and savanna habitats within 60 kilometers of the coast, and what I regard as "transitional forest" along the Afobaka highway from Phedra and Brokopondo south to Afobaka Lake. This transitional forest contains elements of savanna and interior forest types, as well as coastal species inland along the broader rivers. At that time only scattered specimen reports existed for much of the interior, and virtually nothing from elevations exceeding 200 meters. In 1968, 600 species were listed for Suriname.

*Birds of Surinam* attracted much attention from amateur and professional ornithologists. Notable among the latter was Gerlof Mees; his widespread investigations and subsequent publications form the backbone of my summary below. The avifauna of the Sipaliwini savanna on the Brazilian border, the Voltzberg — Raleigh Falls area, and Brownsberg at 500m elevation are now reasonably well known. Yet there are still fertile fields for investigation — higher elevations (exceeding 1000m at Tafelberg), Brazilian border forests, and the offshore shelf waters.

This report presents a summary of 56 species additions to Haverschmidt's work. These include published and unpublished specimen and sight records through 1979 segregated into two categories. Where published accounts gave subspecies designations these are repeated here; otherwise the subspecies question is ignored. Taxonomy and nomenclature follow the works of R. Meyer de Schauensee and others (1966, 1970, 1978). In general, specimens credited to either Mees or Renssen are deposited in the Rijksmuseum van Natuurlijke Historie at Leiden, the Netherlands.

**Part 1.** Specimen records (39), banding recoveries (2), and sight reports supported by overwhelming documentation (6):

## GREATER SHEARWATER

*Puffinus gravis*

In June 1974 a number of dead shearwaters were found along the coast east of Paramaribo. One of these birds was preserved and sent to the Museum of Natural History in Leiden, Netherlands, where it was pronounced an immature Greater in emaciated condition (Mees 1976).

## LITTLE EGRET

*Egretta garzetta*

A nestling banded 11 June 1968 at Doñana, Spain (San Sebastian scheme, Ring No. H15215) was shot 3 June 1969 at Paramaribo (Th. A Renssen, *vide* A.L. Spaans). Occurrence of this Old World egret in Suriname is surprising but perhaps not totally unexpected, as there are previous records for the eastern Caribbean region at Barbados, Martinique, and Trinidad (Meyer de Schauensee 1966).

## (GREAT) SKUA

*Catharacta* ssp?

Remains washed ashore 5 May 1976 along the Nickerie coast — “. . . the best at this moment is to give the record without subspecific identification . . . [but] the bird belongs to one of the ssp. breeding in the Southern hemisphere” (A.L. Spaans, in prep.).

## ROSEATE TERN

*Sterna dougallii*

Spaans (1978) notes the absence of Suriname reports in literature “but data from the Bird Banding Laboratory indicate that several Roseate Terns banded in U.S.A. have been recovered in Surinam.”

A search of the files at the Bird Banding Laboratory, Laurel, Maryland, revealed five Suriname recoveries processed through August 1978, as follows:

- 483 - 86482. Caught due to injury near Paramaribo at the mouth of the Suriname River. Reported by a letter dated 3 December 1955.  
 533 - 90107. Recovered without details near Nickerie at the mouth of the Corantijn River. Reported by a letter dated 8 March 1955.  
 533 - 90788. Caught by hand at Afobaka Lake 4 March 1955. Although this locality lies about 130km inland, there exists another record for a storm-blown seabird at this large man-made lake: a Sooty Tern *S. fuscata* was found dead here 15 January 1964 (Haverschmidt 1968).  
 553 - 91177. Shot near Nickerie. Reported by a letter dated 1 December 1955.  
 563 - 99575. Caught due to exhaustion near Nickerie 29 November 1957.

— *Note: all of these birds were banded in Massachusetts under Dr. Oliver L. Austin's permit. The records are included here with the kind permission of Dr. Ian C. T. Nisbet.*

Suriname apparently lies at the far periphery of the wintering range for the North American population of Roseate Tern. Meyer de Schauensee (1966) states that they winter chiefly in the eastern Caribbean and adjacent Atlantic and cites no definite records east of Venezuela. The tabulation of recoveries received from the Bird Banding Laboratory included the entire Guianan region with over 200 Guianan recoveries, the five above-mentioned Suriname recoveries, and only one French Guianan recovery.

## PEACH-FRONTED PARAKEET

*Aratinga a. aurea*

Three specimens collected 30-31 January 1970 at Sipaliwini savanna (Renssen 1974a). Also recorded by Mees and Spaans in other months of the year, probably resident (A.L. Spaans, pers. comm.).

## FERRUGINOUS PYGMY-OWL

*Glaucidium brasilianum phaloenoides*

One collected 21 January 1970 at Sipaliwini savanna in a Mauritia Palm swamp (Renssen 1974a).

## SEMICOLLARED NIGHTHAWK

*Lurocalis semitorquatus*

This species was noted for the Guianas by Meyer de Schauensee (1966), although not included for Suriname by Haverschmidt (1968). The author, with Guy Tudor, Michael Gochfeld, G. Stuart Keith, and others, has observed this distinctive dark short-tailed nighthawk in Suriname on numerous occasions. The small size of these birds suggests one of the northern subspecies but one of the southern migratory races might also occur in the summer months. This species prefers forest edge and small clearings. Months of observation are late January to early April, and early November, at the following localities (see Figure 1):

1. About 200m east of the Afobaka highway along the Carolina road.
2. Five kilometers west of Kraka along the Zanderij road.
3. Several kilometers north of Brownsweg along the road to Berg en Dal.
4. Brownsberg Nature Park, mainly at the guesthouse clearing and the intersection of the Mazaroni Plateau and main jeep roads.
5. Along the Coppename River en route from Witagron (Bitagron is a frequent misspelling) to Raleigh Falls.
6. Foengoe Island at Voltzberg — Raleigh Falls Nature Reserve, at the airstrip and over the Coppename River.

## RUFIOUS NIGHTJAR

*Caprimulgus r. rufus*

Collected 26 October 1965 near Brownsweg (Mees 1968).

## WHITE-COLLARED SWIFT

*Streptoprocne zonaris*

This large, distinctive-looking swift was first observed 14 February 1974 at Foengoe Island (T.H. Davis, G. Tudor *et al.*). It has subsequently been noted in flocks of up to 30 individuals here and at nearby Voltzberg in the months of March, April, August, and September (A.L. Spaans, pers. comm.). Whether these sightings pertain to migrants or to a breeding population is not yet clear.

## GREAT-BILLED HERMIT

*Phaethornis malaris*

Collected along the Suriname River at Ligolio 19 July 1965 and Brokopondo 1 March 1966 (Mees 1977).

## HORNED SUNGEM

*Heliactin cornuta*

Collected 26 January 1966 at Sipaliwini savanna (Mees 1968). Also recorded here by Mees and Spaans in other months, probably resident (A.L. Spaans, pers. comm.).

## LONG-BILLED STARTHROAT

*Heliomaster l. longirostris*

Collected 10 February 1966 at Sipaliwini savanna (Mees 1968).

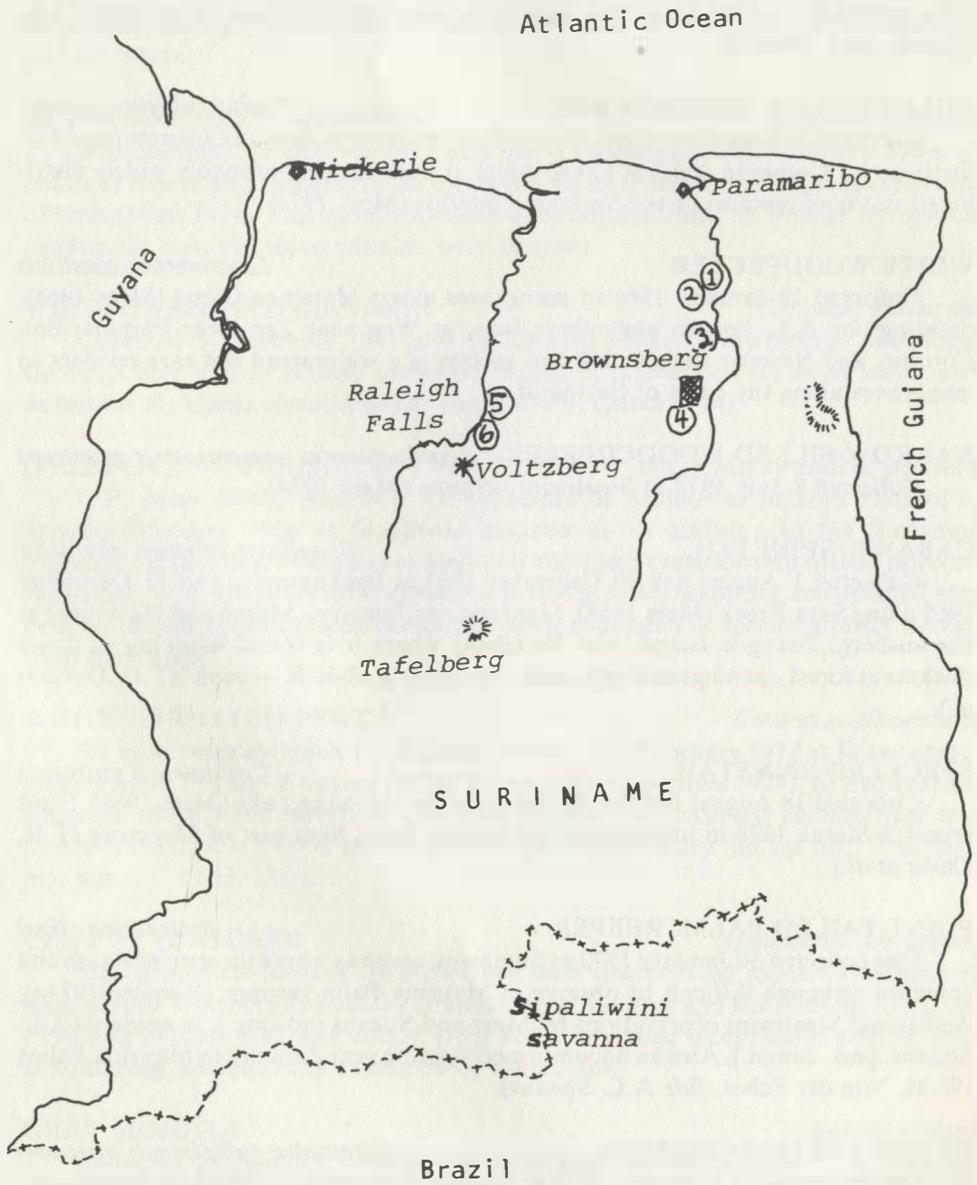


Figure 1. Numbers 1-6 represent localities of sightings of the Semicollared Nighthawk *Lurocalis semitorquatus* in Suriname. See text for details.

## CAMPO FLICKER

*Colaptes c. campestris*

Two specimens collected 15 February 1966 at Sipaliwini savanna (Mees 1968). Also recorded here by Mees and Spaans in other months, may be resident (A.L. Spaans, pers. comm.).

## GOLDEN-OLIVE WOODPECKER

*Piculus rubiginosus* spp.

Collected at Brownsberg (ssp. *P. r. poliocephalus*) and Nassau Gebergte (ssp. *P. r. fortirostris*). Common resident above 400m at both locales, probably widely distributed in the mountains of the Suriname interior (Mees 1974).

## WHITE WOODPECKER

*Leuconerpes candidus*

Collected 10 January 1966 in mangroves along Matapica Canal (Mees 1968). Sightings by A.L. Spaans and others here, at Weg naar Zee (near Paramaribo), Coronie, and Nickerie suggest that this species is a widespread but rare resident in mangroves along the coast of Suriname.

NARROW-BILLED WOODCREEPER *Lepidocolaptes angustirostris griseiceps*

Collected 8 July 1972 at Sipaliwini savanna (Mees 1974).

## CABANIS' SPINETAIL

*Synallaxis cabanisi obscurior*

Collected 1 August and 30 December 1965 at Brokopondo, and 11 December 1965 along Sara Kreek (Mees 1968). Sight reports January - March and November at Brownsberg, Foengoe Island, and Voltzberg where it is found skulking in dense thickets at forest openings and edge, calls "K-IR-R-R-R-R — cook" (T.H. Davis *et al.*).

## SPECKLED SPINETAIL

*Cranioleuca gutturata*

Collected 18 August 1965 at Njoenkondre on Afobaka Lake (Mees 1968). Sight report 5 March 1978 in undergrowth of swamp forest 8km east of Meerzorg (T.H. Davis *et al.*).

## POINT-TAILED PALMCREEPER

*Berlepschia rikeri*

One collected 30 January 1970 at Sipaliwini savanna where the species was found common although difficult to observe in Mauritia Palm swamps (Renssen 1974a). Additional Sipaliwini observations by Mees and Spaans indicate it is resident (A.L. Spaans, pers. comm.). Also an unconfirmed sighting near Zanderij in Mauritia Palms (W.M. Van der Schot, *vide* A.L. Spaans).

## RUDDY FOLIAGE-GLEANER

*Automolus rubiginosus obscurus*

One collected 12 February 1970 at Sipaliwini savanna — obtained from a pair observed feeding in the lower trees, vines, and undergrowth of high forest surrounding the savanna (Renssen 1974a). Also an individual was studied and tape-recorded in March 1978 at Brownsberg by G.F. Mees, T.H. Davis *et al.* Copies of Davis' tape are filed in the Library of Natural Sounds, Laboratory of Ornithology at Cornell University, Ithaca, New York. This bird's dawn call consisted of the phrase "ku - coi" repeated endlessly at 2 - 3 second intervals (T.H. Davis).

## TAWNY-THROATED LEAFSCRAPER

*Sclerurus mexicanus macconnelli*

Collected 27 January 1966 and 18 June 1972 at Sipaliwini savanna (Mees 1974).

## BLACK-TAILED LEAFSCRAPER

*Sclerurus c. caudacutus*

One collected 21 February 1970 at Sipaliwini savanna in the undergrowth of high forest surrounding the savanna (Renssen 1974a). Also recorded here in June and July by G.F. Mees.

## RUFIOUS-RUMPED ANTWREN

*Terenura callinota*

One collected 14 October 1972 near the Tafelberg airstrip, elevation 300m — obtained from a pair foraging in the crown of a forest tree among a large mixed swarm of birds (Mees 1974). This specimen was erroneously described by Mees as *Hylophilus puellus*, sp. nov. (F. Haverschmidt, pers. comm.).

## WHITE-THROATED MANAKIN

*Corapipo gutturalis*

Collected 5 December 1971 and 18 January 1972 at Brownsberg. Additional sightings here and at Nassau Gebergte suggest it is confined to, or at least more numerous at, higher elevations (i.e. above 470m) (Mees 1974).

[PELZELN'S = SWAINSON'S FLYCATCHER *Myiarchus swainsoni pelzelni*]

G.F. Mees (1968) described the collection of *Myiarchus pelzelni pelzelni* in January-February 1966 at Sipaliwini savanna as an addition to the Suriname avifauna. At that time confusion existed over this form's relationship with *Myiarchus swainsoni*. W.E. Lanyon (1978) explained previous misconceptions and detailed why *pelzelni* should be considered conspecific with *swainsoni* (a species already known from Suriname).

## WHITE-THROATED PEWEE

*Contopus albogularis*

Six specimens obtained 13 December 1971 — 25 February 1972 at Brownsberg, plus six more 19 July - 7 August 1972 at Nassau Gebergte (Mees 1974). At Brownsberg common above 400m elevation, calls and forages from exposed perches near tree trunks in the middle level of the forest. Its daylong call is a dry "jip, jip, jip . . ." or "pip, pip, pip . . ." (T.H. Davis).

## CLIFF FLYCATCHER

*Hirundinea ferruginea*

This distinctive-looking flycatcher has been observed on numerous occasions since 1976 at Voltzberg and nearby Granmisibergi (de Jong and Holthuijzen 1977). On 17 March 1978 an American visitor, Greg Toffic, obtained recognizable photographs at Voltzberg, subsequently examined by the author.

## GRAY MONJITA

*Xolmis cinerea*

Collected 24 January 1966 at Sipaliwini savanna (Mees 1968). T.A. Renssen (1974b) observed a pair feeding two small young on 30 January 1970 at Sipaliwini. He noted this species "rather common in all scrub areas, behaving much like Tropical Kingbirds *Tyrannus melancholicus* and easily recognized by the white wing stripes." Also recorded by Mees and Spaans in other months (A.L. Spaans, pers. comm.).

RUFIOUS SIDED PYGMY-TYRANT *Euscarthmus rufomarginatus savannophilus*

Two specimens collected 26 and 30 January 1966 at Sipaliwini savanna (Mees 1968). Also recorded here by Mees and Spaans in other months (A.L. Spaans, pers. comm.).

## BEARDED TACHURI

*Polystictus pectoralis brevipennis*

Collected 24 January 1966 at Sipaliwini savanna (Mees 1968. Note: in this paper Mees uses the archaic generic title *Habrura*). Also recorded here by Mees in other months.

## SUIRIRI FLYCATCHER

*Suiriri suiriri affinis*

Collected 1 and 7 February 1970 at Sipaliwini savanna in open scrub on rocky hills (Renssen 1974a). Also recorded here by Mees and Spaans in other months, probably resident (A.L. Spaans, pers. comm.).

SEPIA-CAPPED FLYCATCHER *Leptopogon amaurocephalus obscuritergum*

Collected 28 December 1971, 23 February and 19 August 1972 at Brownsberg, and 4 October 1972 at Tafelberg (Mees 1974).

## SHARPBILL

*Oxyruncus cristatus hypoglaucus*

Collected 20 and 27 August 1972 at Brownsberg where it was found solitary or in pairs, sometimes mixed bird swarms, perhaps uncommon but not rare. Also observed once on the Nassau Tablelands (ca. 500m), which suggests a wide distribution in the mountains of Suriname (Mees 1974). At Brownsberg males advertise from the canopy with a high-pitched, buzzy "e-e-e-e-e-e-you-u-u-u" (T.H. Davis, in prep.).

## WHITE-THIGHED SWALLOW

*Neochelidon t. tibialis*

Collected 16 February 1966 at Sipaliwini savanna (Mees 1968. Note: reported in this paper as *Neochelichon*, evidently through a typographical error).

## WING-BANDED WREN

*Microcerculus b. bambla*

Collected 12 September 1965 at Avanavero Falls on the Kabalebo River (Mees 1968). Three or more singing males were noted in early February 1979 at Brownsberg; tape-recordings of one of these birds (by T.H. Davis) are on file in the Library of Natural Sounds, Laboratory of Ornithology at Cornell University, Ithaca, New York.

## CHALK-BROWED MOCKINGBIRD

*Mimus s. saturninus*

One collected 3 February 1970 at Sipaliwini savanna in a Mauritia Palm swamp; two pairs were observed in the area (Renssen 1974a). Also recorded here by Mees and Spaans in other months, probably resident (A.L. Spaans, pers. comm.).

## YELLOWISH PIPIT

*Anthus l. lutescens*

An adult male and two young were collected 28-29 January 1970 at Sipaliwini savanna. "The species was quite common in the grassy hills where we observed short songflights high in the air during which the two white outer tail feathers were very conspicuous" (Renssen 1974a). Also recorded here by Mees and Spaans in other months, resident (A.L. Spaans, pers. comm.).

## BLACK-WHISKERED VIREO

*Vireo a. altiloquus*

Collected 17 December 1967 near Phedra (Haverschmidt 1970).

## TROPICAL PARULA

*Parula pitiayumi*

"A moderately common member of mixed flocks on Brownsberg (at higher

elevations) . . . seen frequently . . . The fact that we did not observe the species on Nassau may possibly be significant" (Mees 1974). Numerous observations at Brownsberg; tape-recording of a singing male (by T.H. Davis) on file in the Library of Natural Sounds, Laboratory of Ornithology at Cornell University, Ithaca, New York.

WHITE-SHOULDERED TANAGER *Tachyphonus l. luctuosus*

Collected 24 July and 4 October 1965 and 7 March 1966 at Brokopondo, also seen at Avanavero Falls on the Kabalebo River (Mees 1968). Males observed among canopy foraging flocks in January 1979 near Zanderij and at Voltzberg (T.H. Davis, P. Donahue *et al.*). This would appear to be an uncommon member of canopy flocks, at least in savanna and transitional forest.

HEPATIC TANAGER *Piranga flava* ssp.

Ssp. *P. f. saira* collected 24 January 1966 at Sipaliwinisavanna (Mees 1968). Also recorded here by Mees and Spaans in other months, probably resident (A.L. Spaans, pers. comm.).

Ssp. *P. f. haemalea* collected 17 December 1971 atop the Mazaroni plateau at Brownsberg, and 7 August 1972 at Nassau Gebergte ca. 500m elevation. An uncommon, solitary mountain bird with a preference for forest edge (Mees 1974).

In his 1974 paper Mees questions whether these two forms are conspecific, the former inhabiting open lowland savanna, the latter mountain forest; see also Meyer de Schauensee 1966.

WHITE-RUMPED TANAGER *Cypsnagra hirundinacea pallidigula*

Four specimens taken 24-30 January 1970 at Sipaliwini savanna, where it was found "very common in the dry savannah areas, living in pairs or family parties. They were very restless and noisy, their very loud and clear call being similar to that of [the Black-capped Mockingthrush] *Donacobius atricapillus*. They were seen feeding in bushes and small trees" (Renssen 1974a). Also recorded here by Mees and Spaans in other months, probably resident (A.L. Spaans, pers. comm.).

MAGPIE TANAGER *Cissopis leveriana*

First observed in August 1976 at Foengoe Island at the Voltzberg — Raleigh Falls Nature Reserve (Zimmerman 1977). A single pair continues to reside here in dense thickets bordering the airstrip and others have been found in nearby similar habitat on the opposite bank of the Coppename River (A.L. Spaans, T.H. Davis *et al.*).

RED-AND-BLACK GROSBEAK *Periporphyrus erythromelas*

At Brownsberg a group of three or four pairs was encountered 27 February 1972, the males in full song; one of them was collected. There is also an observation of a single male at Nassau Gebergte (Mees 1974).

CAPPED SEEDEATER *Sporophila b. bouvreuil*

Collected 24 and 31 January and 5 February 1966 at Sipaliwini savanna (Mees 1968). Also recorded here by Mees and Spaans in other months, probably resident (A.L. Spaans, pers. comm.).

WHITE-BELLIED SEEDEATER *Sporophila leucoptera cinereola*

Collected 28 January 1970 at Sipaliwini savanna. Mixed flocks of this species

with *S. lineola* and *S. plumbea* were observed several times, feeding on grass seeds in the drier parts of the savanna (Renssen 1974a).

#### YELLOW-BELLIED SEEDEATER

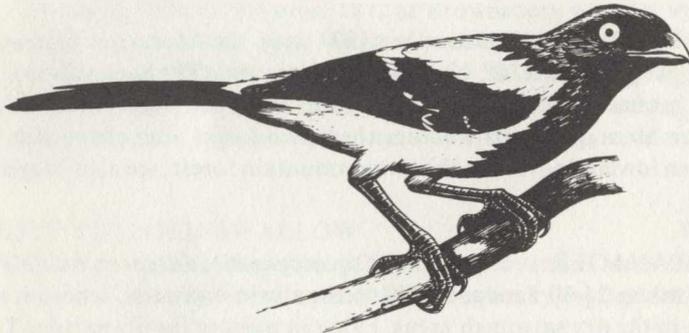
*Sporophila nigricollis*

This distinctive-looking seedeater was observed in the wild and in captivity during early 1966 at the Sipaliwini airstrip (Mees 1968). Also observed here in September 1972 (A.L. Spaans).

#### STRIPE-TAILED YELLOW-FINCH

*Sicalis citrina browni*

One collected 3 February 1970 at Sipaliwini savanna. "Two pairs observed in the steep rocky hills covered with some open scrub and a few small trees. The males were singing in treetops and were shy and difficult to approach" (Renssen 1974a). G.F. Mees did not encounter this species at Sipaliwini during June-July 1972 but Spaans found it in flocks in September of that year — a migrant species? (A.L. Spaans, pers. comm.).



Magpie Tanager  
*Cissopis leveriana*

MARILYN HOFF STEWART

### Part 2. Hypotheticals — lone sight reports (9):

#### LESSER SCAUP

*Aythya affinis*

At the Marienburg sugar estate near Paramaribo, a pair was observed 22 November and a single male 29 November 1968 (Renssen 1974a).

#### BAIRD'S SANDPIPER

*Calidris bairdii*

Observed 14 September 1971 at a lagoon near Motkreek (A.L. Spaans, in prep.).

#### HUDSONIAN GODWIT

*Limosa haemastica*

Observed 9 October 1972 along the coast near Weg naar Zee 10km northwest of Paramaribo (A.L. Spaans, in prep.).

#### BLACK-HEADED GULL

*Larus ridibundus*

Fifteen individuals reported 20 February 1970 at Paramaribo Harbor in the company of Laughing Gulls *L. atricilla*, Large-billed Terns *Phaetusa simplex* and other *Sterna* terns (Emanuel Levine, Richard A. Sloss, Eugene T. Mudge). While this number of individuals might seem remarkable, and the report constitutes the first record for South America, there are numerous records for the species in the northern and eastern Caribbean area (Bond 1971), with records of multiples in Puerto Rico (Buckley and Buckley 1970).

## SCISSOR-TAILED NIGHTJAR

*Hydropsalis brasiliiana*

Pair observed 26 June 1972 at Sipaliwini savanna on a grassy hillside with dispersed blocks of granite and open stony patches (Mees 1974).

## FIERY-TAILED AWLBILL

*Avocettula recurvirostris*

Male observed 11 July 1978 at Voltzberg foraging "among abundant purple leguminaceous flowers, at heights of 1-2 meters. These plants were growing in several large clumps in the middle of otherwise bare rock" (Trail 1978).

## EASTERN KINGBIRD

*Tyrannus tyrannus*

Observed 26 February 1970 at Nickerie (Emanuel Levine, Richard A. Sloss, Eugene T. Mudge).

## OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHER

*Nuttallornis borealis*

Observed 15 March 1977 about 2km south of Brownsweg, perched on a dead stub projecting above the forest (T.H. Davis, Karl Overman *et al.*).

## SUMMER TANAGER

*Piranga rubra*

Male observed 11 March 1978 at the Paramaribo Botanical Gardens (Robert Laskowski, Michael Gochfeld *et al.*).

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am especially grateful to Arie L. Spaans for the wealth of information he forwarded me: without his kind assistance it would have been impossible to produce this compilation; he also read and commented upon the manuscript. Valuable input was also received from François Haverschmidt, Emanuel Levine, and Gerlof Mees. Michael Jenkins of the Nieuwe Grond Plantation, Suriname, translated Dutch papers; Guy Tudor reviewed the manuscript; and STINASU (Stichting Natuurbehoud Suriname) provided arrangements for my Suriname visits. F. Haverschmidt deserves added recognition for the inspiration his book provided me and so many others to visit Suriname and study its birds.

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This gull portrait appeared on the rear cover of the October 1979 *C.B.*, labeled only as a late September photograph from somewhere over North American waters. Can you identify the bird?

## Answer to Snap Judgment 5

WAYNE HOFFMAN



This obviously is a subadult of one of the large *Larus* gulls. It is much too dark to be a Glaucous *L. hyperboreus*, Iceland *L. glaucoides*, or Glaucous-winged *L. glaucescens* gull, and the heavy bill, large head, heavy shoulders, and broad rounded wings all point to a bird of at least Herring Gull *L. argentatus* size; California Gulls *L. californicus* and all smaller species can be forgotten. The saddle of grey adult plumage on the back, the heavily marked tail, and the primary pattern together identify the bird as a second winter subadult (second basic plumage). Possibilities include Great Black-backed *L. marinus*, Lesser Black-backed *L. fuscus*, Herring, Western *L. occidentalis*, Slaty-backed *L. schistisagus*, and Thayer's *L. thayeri* gulls, and various hybrid combinations. The Slaty-backed, Great Black-backed, and Lesser Black-backed gulls would all have much darker dorsal saddles, so they can be