



First record of the Knot *Calidris canutus*, and other records, from Belize (British Honduras)

by *Richard Erickson*

Received 26 March 1977

The distribution of the avifauna of Belize has been analysed by Russell (1964), and more recent records have been published in three subsequent papers (Barlow *et al.* 1969, 1970, 1972) and in recent Christmas Count issues of *American Birds* (Young 1973–1976b). Young's data are included here together with observations I made while visiting Belize in late December 1974, and which affect the published status of some species. Scientific nomenclature follows Morony *et al.* (1975) except in the genus *Sterna* where amended by the American Ornithologists' Union (1976).

EUDOCIMUS ALBUS *White Ibis*. Ten, including several immatures, were flushed from mangroves just south of Stann Creek on 26 December. Although found locally throughout most of Mexico and Central America, Russell lists no recent records and none from the Stann Creek District. Recorded by Young 1973–75 at Christmas at Belize City.

ANAS ACUTA *Pintail*. About 30 present on a lagoon in mangroves just south of Stann Creek on 26 December. A rare to uncommon winter visitor in Central America, Russell mentions no more than six together at one time.

SPIZAETUS TYRANNUS *Black Hawk Eagle*. An adult I saw on 29 December c. 3 km east of Belmopan on the Hummingbird Highway is the third record for Belize. Russell cites one collected at nearby Middlesex in February 1923, and Young records singletons at Belize City 26 Dec 1974 and at Belmopan 31 Dec 1975.

GALLINULA CHLOROPUS *Moorhen*. Eight were counted on several ponds on the Northern Highway between Orange Walk and Belize City on 23 December, and three on a pond c. 8 km west of Belize City on 24 December.

Russell listed several sight records from two localities, and there are now three April specimens from Rockstone Pond near Belize City (Barlow *et al.* 1969). Young gives 1973–76 Christmas sight records at Belize City, including no less than 60 on 27 Dec 1975. The species is obviously more common than once thought.

CATOPTROPHORUS SEMIPALMATUS *Willet*. One present at Belize City on 23 December, another at the mouth of Stann Creek 26 December and four there the next day. Russell lists very few records and only in February, April and August. Young records it for Christmas 1974 and 1975 in very small numbers at Belize City.

CALIDRIS CANUTUS *Knot*. One with terns and other shorebirds at the mouth of Stann Creek on 27 December is the first record for Belize. Rarely reported, almost solely as a migrant, between the United States and its major wintering grounds in South America (Bond 1971, Peterson & Chalif 1973), there are no records for the Caribbean coast of Guatemala (Land 1970) and only one for the Caribbean coast of Honduras (Monroe 1968). Its inclusion in a list of the birds of Belize by Davis (1968) is apparently an unsubstantiated assumption.

CALIDRIS ALBA *Sanderling*. Forty on the beach at Stann Creek on 27 December. Surprisingly, Russell lists only two previous records: North Two Cays in 1864 (date and number seen unknown) and four at Stann Creek 28 Mar 1956. Not uncommon throughout most of Central America (Peterson & Chalif 1973).

LARUS DELAWARENSIS *Ring-billed Gull*. A sub-adult and an immature at Belize City 23 December. Only two previous records: five at Corozal 15 Aug 1960, and a sub-adult at Belize City 22 Aug 1961 (Russell). Rarely found in the Atlantic south of the northern Gulf coast of Mexico (Petersen & Chalif 1973) and the northern West Indies (Bond 1971). There is only one record from Guatemala (Land 1970) and three from Honduras (Brown & Monroe 1974).

GELOCHELIDON NILOTICA *Gull-billed Tern*. One at Belize City 24 December. Russell lists only two records: five collected from a flock of ten at Stann Creek 28 Mar 1956 and two at Belize City 7–9 Aug 1957. Uncommon throughout much of Mexico and Central America in winter (Peterson & Chalif 1973).

STERNA CASPIA *Caspian Tern*. One present with Royal Terns *Sterna maxima* at the mouth of Stann Creek 26–27 December. Russell listed only three records, all to the north, and Young recorded two at Christmas in 1973 and three in 1974. Land (1970) shows no records from the Caribbean coast of Guatemala, and Monroe (1968) lists only three from Honduras, which are the southernmost for Central America, though they do winter on the Caribbean coast of South America (Meyer de Schauensee 1970).

STERNA SANDVICENSIS *Sandwich Tern*. Six at Belize City 24 December and 15 at the mouth of Stann Creek 27 December. Russell lists only four records, none south of Belize City or the Northern Two Cays. Barlow *et al.* (1972) reported two at the mouth of Stann Creek on 18 Dec 1970. Listed as rather rare in southeastern Mexico (Edwards 1972) and Guatemala (Land 1970), and not recorded until recently from Honduras (Brown & Monroe 1974).

COLUMBA FLAVIROSTRIS *Red-billed Pigeon*. One seen at the southern outskirts of Stann Creek 26 December is the southernmost record for Belize. Russell lists one record for 19 Aug 1960 at Corozal. More recently Barlow *et al.* (1970) reported three or four at Rockstone Pond between 8 February and 25 June 1969 and Young records singles at Belize City Christmas 1973, 1975 and 1976. Occurs as far south as Costa Rica (A.O.U. 1957) but prefers more arid regions. Land (1970) mentions no records for the Caribbean slope of Guatemala, and Monroe (1968) considered them uncommon in arid interior valleys on the Caribbean slope of Honduras.

CHORDEILES sp. Four nighthawks flying high over Stann Creek at dusk on 24 December and five the next evening were probably *minor*, though the Antillean form, *gaudlachi*, cannot be excluded. Russell and other authors give no winter records of either form north of South America, but Young records the "Common Nighthawk" at Belize City every Christmas 1973-76.

CHLOROSTILBON CANIVETII *Fork-tailed Emerald*. Two males and a female were seen just north of the Sittee River on the Southern Highway 26 December. Widespread throughout southern Mexico and Central America, Russell, however, has no records south of Manatee Lagoon.

AMAZILIA RUTILA *Cinnamon Hummingbird*. At least two present at Stann Creek 24-27 December. Russell and Young both give few records for mainland Belize and none from this far south. Apparently absent from the Caribbean slope of Guatemala (Land 1970) and northwestern Honduras (Monroe 1968).

MELANERPES PYGMAEUS *Red-vented Woodpecker*. Belize is the southern limit for this very local species. A male at Maskalls 29 December is only the fourth record. Russell lists two collected at Belize City in 1931 and Barlow *et al.* (1969) another near there in 1960 and one from Rockstone Pond in 1967.

HIRUNDO RUSTICA *Swallow*. Fifteen counted on the Northern Highway between Orange Walk and Belize City on 23 December and three more at Stann Creek 27 December. Russell lists no records after 24 November but Young has Christmas records at Belize City for 1973-76. Uncommon in winter north of Panama (A.O.U. 1957).

MOLOTHRUS AFNEUS *Bronzed Cowbird*. About 25 birds together at Benque Viejo, near the Guatemalan border, on 28 December. Russell mentions only one, undated, record from nearby Cayo. Barlow *et al.* (1969) report one collected at Rockstone Pond 16 June 1968 and Young has recorded a few at Christmas at Belize City 1974-76. Widespread throughout much of Central America but rare in the Petén (Land 1970) and not recorded from Tikal (Smithe 1966).

PASSERCULUS SANDWICHENSIS *Savannah Sparrow*. Seven in a grassy field at the north end of Stann Creek on 27 December. Russell considered it an occasional winter visitant and listed few records, including four in a grassy field at Stann Creek 28 Mar 1956. Monroe (1968) lists very few records for Honduras and considered it a rare winter visitant. Land (1970) shows no records for the Caribbean slope of Guatemala and Miller *et al.* (1957) listed the subspecies *savanna* as a sparse winter visitor to the Atlantic coast of Mexico, including records for Yucatan and Quintana Roo.

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References:

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