



PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
NEW ENGLAND ZOÖLOGICAL CLUB

A REMARKABLE NEW BIRD FROM CUBA

BY THOMAS BARBOUR

FOR some years I have heard rumors in Cuba that in an inaccessible part of the Zapata Peninsula there existed a bird which was unquestionably different from any hitherto known from Cuba. Unfortunately, the bird can be found only by following its song in the dense shrubbery, and it sings only in summer, when the torrential rains make the whole Zapata region almost absolutely impassable.

After several unsuccessful attempts it was possible this summer to get transportation on a charcoal schooner for my former assistant, Señor Fermin Z. Cervera, who, after real hardships and great difficulty and exposure, succeeded in securing five specimens of what proves to be the most remarkable find made in the West Indian region in many years. I hope at a later date to be able to publish details concerning the habits and habitat of this bird, with a color plate. Suffice it to say, therefore, at present, that it is a wren rather over medium size, most peculiarly distinct from any genus in the family and paralleling in many respects, and to a quite remarkable degree, the characteristics of the fern bird of Chatham Island, (*Bowdleria rufescens*). The wings are so small and weak, and the

feathers so soft, that the bird must be almost, if not quite, flightless.¹

Unfortunately, the adults are all in somewhat worn plumage. The bird which I have listed as immature is, in reality, sub-adult and in fine fresh plumage.

Ferminia cerveraei gen. et sp. nov.

Generic characters: A medium-sized Troglodytid, with a small rounded wing, a long broad tail, and plumage of back and tail curiously soft and degenerate (somewhat recalling that of *Bowdleria*, but the tail less decomposed).

Bill medium in length, compressed, almost straight; slightly shorter than head; rictal bristles obvious; the anterior feathers of the forehead acuminate, with heavy stiffened rachides and ill-developed webs (somewhat recalling other birds of palustrine association, as some rails, or *Phacelodomus*, etc.). Wing very short, weak, rounded; first and second primaries very short, third primary slightly shorter than the others, which are about equal in length. Tail long and broad, the rectrices all distinctly broadened; distinctly longer than wing. Tarsis one-and-one-third times as long as exposed culmen; the feet rather weak, the toes rather long and slender and the claws but little arched. Back, brown, wings and tail heavily barred above, belly pale and unbarred and tail beneath somewhat recalling that of *Thryomanes*.

Type: Museum of Comparative Zoölogy, no. 235,226, an adult male from Santo Tomás, Peninsula de Zapata, Cuba, collected by Fermin Z. Cervera, in whose honor the genus and species are named.

Sexes alike. Above between olive brown and buffy brown, top of head squamulate, back and rump heavily cross-banded with dusky; wings slightly paler, a little more reddish brown, regularly cross-banded with dusky, inner vanes of feathers unbarred; tail same color as back, but conspicuously and very irregularly cross-banded; sides of head more olivaceous than top of head, with scattered white feathers; throat, chest and middle of under parts soiled white; sides olivaceous brown with a few cross-bars on the flanks; under tail-coverts very long and heavily cross-banded. Feet brown; iris "pardo-claro"-gray.

¹ Messrs. Bangs, J. Grinnell and Peters, who have examined the bird, agree that it may represent some very extremely differentiated offshoot from the stock which gave rise to *Thryomanes*.

MEASUREMENTS (in millimeters)

Males	Wing	Tail	Bill to base of forehead	Tarsus
Type	61	67.5	19.0	21.0
M. C. Z., 235,227	55	66.0	—	21.0
M. C. Z., 235,229	52	61.2	20.5	21.5
M. C. Z., 235,230 (imm.)	53	63.0	18.0	22.0
Female				
M. C. Z., 235,228	51	57	17.5	20.5