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## THE WEST INDIAN PARROTS.

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FROM the writings of the earlier authors on West Indian subjects who include in their works accounts of the ornithology of those islands as it was in their time, we find that (although the continental systematists included many species which we have no reason to suppose ever inhabited the islands) there were then certain now unrecognized, but apparently well-authenticated forms, bridging over gaps in the avifauna of the district as we understand it at the present day. That these early writers were aware of the difference in the ornithological conditions in the various islands, and of the differences between the avifauna of the islands and that of the mainland, is amply proved by their statements; and I see no reason why we should not accept their assertions as true, at any rate until they can be proved to be false.

The only genera of Psittaci which appear ever to have occurred in the West Indies are *Ara* (Martinique, ? Dominica, Guadeloupe: Haiti, Cuba, including the Isle of Pines, and Jamaica; now everywhere extinct), *Amazona* (St. Vincent, St. Lucia, Martinique, Dominica, Guadeloupe: Porto Rico, Haiti, the Bahamas, Cuba, Grand Cayman, and Jamaica, extinct on Martinique and Guadeloupe), and *Conurus* (Barbados, Martinique, Dominica, Guadeloupe: St. Croix, St. Thomas, Porto Rico, Haiti, Cuba, and Jamaica, extinct in the Lesser Antilles). We thus have two distinct faunal areas indicated by West Indian Psittaci; (1) a Greater Antillean, with its center at Jamaica (*Ara*, two species of *Amazona*, *Conurus*), extending to Cuba and Haiti (*Ara*, *Amazona*,

*Conurus*), Porto Rico (*Amazona, Conurus*), the Bahamas (*Amazona*), St. Thomas and St. Croix (*Conurus*); and (2) a Lesser Antillean, with its center at Dominica (*Ara*, two species of *Amazona, Conurus*), extending to Guadeloupe and Martinique (*Ara, Amazona, Conurus*), and southward to St. Lucia (*Amazona*), St. Vincent (*Amazona*), and Barbados (*Conurus*). We have no trustworthy evidence that any of the Psittaci ever occurred on Grenada or the Grenadines (southern Lesser Antilles), Montserrat, Antigua, Barbuda, Nevis, St. Kitts, or on the small islands between St. Kitts and St. Croix (northern Lesser Antilles); thus these two faunal areas (I am speaking of the Psittaci alone) are entirely separated from each other, and the Lesser Antillean is separated from the continental (as represented by Trinidad with continental species of *Ara, Amazona, Pionus*, and *Urochroma*,<sup>1</sup> and Tobago with *Amazona* and *Pionus*) by another wide gap. None of the South American forms occur nearer to the Greater Antilles than Yucatan, and are there represented by quite different species.<sup>2</sup>

At the present day *Ara* has disappeared from these islands, *Amazona* has been extirpated from Guadeloupe and Martinique, and *Conurus* from all parts of its Lesser Antillean range.

#### GREATER ANTILLES.

Fortunately, all the species of *Amazona* which have been recorded from the Greater Antilles have survived, though in greatly diminished numbers, to the present day. They are:

Jamaica: *Amazona collaria* (Linn.); *A. agilis* (Linn.).

Cuba: *A. leucocephala* (Linn.), var. (a) albinistic, *paradisi* Linn.

Bahamas: *A. leucocephala bahamensis* Bryant.

Haiti: *A. salliei* (ScL.).

Porto Rico: *A. vittata* (Bodd.).

<sup>1</sup> *Conurus* does not appear to occur in Trinidad, although recorded from there by a number of authors.

<sup>2</sup> *Conuropsis* occurs in Florida; the white-headed Greater Antillean parrots appear to be allied to *Amazona albifrons* of Central America, and the Lesser Antillean species to *A. vinacea* of Brazil.

Among the earlier authors we find other species, which have been erroneously credited to these islands; these are:

Jamaica: *Amazona aestiva* (Linn.), Brisson, Orn. IV, p. 277, 1760, "Psittacus amazonicus jamaicensis."<sup>1</sup>

*A. amazonica* (Linn.), Brisson, *l. c.* p. 233, "Psittacus Jamaicensis icterocephalus" (variety).

*Psittacus erithacus* Linn., Linnæus, Syst. nat. I, p. 144, no. 24, 1766.<sup>2</sup>

Cuba: *A. versicolor* (Müll.), D' Aubenton, Pl. Enl. 360, "Le Perroquet de la Havane."

Haiti: *A. vittata* (Bodd.), D' Aubenton, Pl. Enl. 792, "Le Perroquet de St. Domingue."

#### LESSER ANTILLES.

GUADELOUPE.—Dutertre, in his 'Histoire Générale des Isles des Christophe, de la Guadeloupe, de la Martinique, et autres dans l'Amérique' (Paris, 1654), says (p. 298): "The Parrot of Guadeloupe is almost as large as a fowl. The beak and the eye are bordered with carnation. All the feathers of the head, neck, and underparts are of a violet color, mixed with a little green and black, and changeable like the throat of a pigeon.<sup>3</sup> All the upper part of the back is brownish green. The long quills are black, the others yellow, green, and red, and it has on the wing-coverts two rosettes of rose color. When it erects the feathers of its neck, it makes a beautiful ruff about its head,<sup>4</sup> which it seems to admire, as a peacock its tail. It has a strong voice, talks very distinctly, and learns quickly if taken young. It lives on the wild

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<sup>1</sup> I have only given one reference in each case.

<sup>2</sup> The habitat is given by Linnæus as Guinea and Jamaica. The species was probably often brought to Jamaica in slave ships and reshipped to Europe.

<sup>3</sup> It is not remarkable that the bird is described as iridescent; freshly killed birds of several species of *Amazona* (perhaps most noticeable in *A. guildingii*) examined in the field appear to possess this quality to a greater or lesser degree.

<sup>4</sup> Other species of *Amazona* when excited can raise a "ruff" about their neck. I have noticed it particularly in *A. guildingii*.

fruits which grow in the forests, except that it does not eat the manchioneel. Cotton seed intoxicates it, and affects it as wine does a man, and for that reason they eat it with great eagerness.

"The flavor of its flesh is excellent, but changeable, according to the kind of food. If it eats cashew nuts, the flesh has an agreeable flavor of garlic; if 'bois des inde' it has a flavor of cloves and cinnamon; if on bitter fruits, it becomes bitter like gall. If it feeds on genips, the flesh becomes wholly black, but that does not prevent its having a very fine flavor. When it feeds on guavas it is at its best, and then the French commit great havoc among them."

Later, in his 'Histoire Générale des Antilles<sup>1</sup> habitées par les François' (II, p. 250), he repeats this description and adds: "We had two which built their nest a hundred paces from our house in a large tree. The male and the female sat alternately, and came one after the other to feed at the house, where they brought their young when they were large enough to leave the nest."

In the 'Histoire Naturelle et Morale des Isles Antilles de l'Amérique' (Rotterdam, 1658)<sup>2</sup> we find (p. 157; 2nd. edition, p. 175): "There are in almost all the Antilles Parrots, which the Indian inhabitants call in their language 'Kouléhuéc,' and which go in flocks like starlings. The hunters place them in the rank of game birds, and do not think it a waste of powder to shoot them; for they are as good and fat as the best fowl, especially when young, and at the season of the fruiting of the many trees upon which they feed. They are of different sizes and colors in the different islands, so that the old inhabitants can tell the place of their birth by their size and color."

Père Labat in his 'Nouveau Voyage aux Isles de l'Amérique'<sup>3</sup> (II, p. 214, 1742) says: "The Parrots of these islands are distinguishable from those of the mainland of Guinea (? Guiana) by

<sup>1</sup>In three volumes; Vols. I, II, 1667; Vol. III, 1671. Antilles is spelt Ant-Iles in the third volume to agree with a theory of the author's as to the derivation of the word.

<sup>2</sup>Anonymous, but credited to C. César de Rochefort. A second edition appeared in 1665.

<sup>3</sup>In five volumes; there is an earlier edition (Paris, 1722) in ten volumes which I have not been able to examine.

their different plumage; those of Guadeloupe are a little smaller than the Macaws. The head, neck, and underparts are slaty, with a few green and black feathers; the back is wholly green, the wings green, yellow, and red."

Brisson (Orn. IV, p. 302, 1760), under "Le Perroquet de la Guadeloupe, *Psittacus aquarum lupiarum insulæ*," says: "*Psittacus major brevicaudatus, superne viridis, inferne cinereo-cærulescens, capito et collo cinereo-cærulescentibus, viridi et nigro variegatis; retribus viridibus.* Head, throat, and neck ashy bluish, varied with green and black. Back and rump green. Upper tail-coverts and scapulars green. Under parts, sides, thighs, and under tail-coverts, ashy bluish. Wings green, varied with red and yellow. Found in Guadeloupe."

Buffon (Hist. Nat. Ois. VI, p. 233, 1779), under "Le Craik à tête violette," quotes Dutertre's descriptions given above and says: "We have never seen this parrot, and it is not found in Cayenne. It is even very rare in Guadeloupe to-day, for none of the inhabitants of that island have given us any information concerning it; but that is not extraordinary, for since the islands have been inhabited, the number of parrots has greatly diminished, and Dutertre remarks in particular of this one that the French colonists wage a terrible war on it in the season when it is especially fat and succulent."

Latham (Gen. Hist. Birds, IV, p. 217, 1822) refers to this bird under the name of "The Ruff-necked Parrot," and quotes Dutertre's description.

Gmelin has given (Syst. Nat. I, p. 337, 1789) the name *Ps[ittacus] violaceus*, based on the "*Psittacus aquarum Lupiarum insulæ*" of Brisson, "Crick à tête violette" of Buffon, and "Le Perroquet de la Guadeloupe" of Dutertre.

These are the chief references to this bird, which appears to have become extinct at a very early date. Count Salvadori (Cat. Birds Brit. Mus. XX, p. 336, 1891) refers this bird to *Deroptyus accipitrinus* (Linn.), a continental species<sup>1</sup> ranging from Guiana southward and westward through the Amazons valley. The genus *Deroptyus* is characterized (in part) by having a comparatively

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<sup>1</sup> The genus is monotypic.

long tail (more than two thirds of the length of the wing) and the feathers of the hind neck very long, broad, and erectile. *D. accipitrinus* is colored as follows: green; head brown, pileum grayish white; breast and abdomen, and long feathers of nape, dark red with blue edges; wings green and black, slightly tinged with blue on the tips of the secondaries; tail green; measurements: length, 14 in., wing 8 in., tail 6.4 in. The only apparent reason for referring the Guadeloupe bird to this form appears to be the mention of its having a frill about its neck, a peculiarity common (although not in such a marked degree as in *Deroptylus*) to several species of *Amazona*. The colors of the two birds are quite different as given; we have good evidence that the parrots of Guadeloupe really did exist, and Buffon states that it is not found in Cayenne (in the habitat of *D. accipitrinus*.) *D. accipitrinus* was well known to Buffon, and is figured in the *Planches Enluminées* (No. 526).

The Guadeloupe parrot appears to have been most nearly related to *Amazona imperialis* Richm.<sup>1</sup> of Dominica, at present the largest of the genus.

The color of the two birds is

*A. imperialis.*

Head, neck, and underparts dark purple blue.

Upper parts green.

Wing: primaries dark brown; secondaries purple, green, and blue; speculum, and metacarpal edge, crimson.

Orbital ring and cere grayish blue.

*Parrot of Guadeloupe.*

Head, neck, and underparts violet, mixed with a little green and black<sup>2</sup> (Dutertre); slaty (Labat); ashy bluish (Brisson).

Upper parts brownish green<sup>3</sup> (Dutertre); green (Labat; Brisson).

Wing: long quills black, other feathers yellow, green, and red<sup>4</sup> (Dutertre); green, yellow and red (Labat).

Orbital ring and cere red (Dutertre).

<sup>1</sup> *Augusta* Vigors; *vide* Richmond, Auk, XVI, p. 186, 1899.

<sup>2</sup> Possibly the borderings of the feathers (*A. imperialis* has the feathers edged with black). The green may be an evidence of immaturity; the young of *A. guildingii* is green.

<sup>3</sup> *A. guildingii* when not quite adult is brownish green.

<sup>4</sup> Dutertre's "rosettes" are probably scattered feathers in the lesser wing coverts.

I propose, then, that the following species be admitted to a place in the Lesser Antillean avifauna.

***Amazona violacea* (Gmel.).**

GUADELOUPE PARROT.

*Characters.* Nearest to *A. imperialis* of Dominica. Size large; head and underparts violet or slaty gray. Wings green, varied with red and yellow; longest quills black.

*Habitat.* Guadeloupe.

No other parrot has ever been mentioned as occurring in Guadeloupe.

DOMINICA.—*Amazona imperialis* Richm. *A. bouqueti* (Bechst.).

MARTINIQUE.—Although all the earlier writers mention parrots on Martinique, they give us no detailed account of them. Labat says, "The Parrot is too common a bird for me to stop to give a description of it." He says later, however (II, p. 214) that the parrot "of Dominica has some red feathers in its wings, in its tail, and under the throat (*A. bouqueti*)." "That of Martinique (*loc. cit.*) resembles it, except that the top of the head is slate color, with a little red."

Buffon says (Hist. Nat. Ois. VI, p. 214): "The Parrot of Martinique, mentioned by Père Labat, which has the top of the head slaty with a few spots of red is, as is seen, different from our 'White Headed Parrot' (*A. leucocephala*) and M. Brisson states without foundation that it is the same."

For the sake of completing the list of this genus in the Lesser Antilles, we may adopt, provisionally, for this species, the name of

***Amazona martinicana* nom. nov.**

The following species have been erroneously credited to Martinique:

*Amazona sallæi* (Scl.), D'Aubenton, Pl. Enl. 548, "Le Perroquet à ventre pourpre de la Martinique."

*A. leucocephala* (Linn.), Brisson, Orn. IV, p. 242, 1760.  
"Psittacus Martinicanus."

ST. LUCIA.—*Amazona versicolor* (Müll.).

ST. VINCENT.—*A. guildingii* (Vig.).<sup>1</sup>

The species of *Amazona* known from the West Indies are :

*Amazona agilis* (Linn.). *Jamaica.*

*Amazona collaria* (Linn.). *Jamaica.*

“ *caymanensis* (Cory). *Grand Cayman.*

“ *leucocephala* (Linn.). *Cuba.*

“ “ *bahamensis* Bryant. *Bahamas.*

“ *sallæi* (Scl.). *Haiti.*

*Amazona vittata* (Bodd.). *Porto Rico.*

*Amazona violacea* (Gmel.) *Guadeloupe.*<sup>2</sup>

“ *imperialis* Richm. *Dominica.*

*Amazona bouqueti* (Bechst.). *Dominica.*<sup>2</sup>

“ *martinicana* nom. nov. *Martinique.*

*Amazona versicolor* (Müll.). *St. Lucia.*

*Amazona guildingii* (Vig.). *St. Vincent.*

<sup>1</sup> Concerning parrots in Barbados, Sir Hans Sloane says (Nat. Hist. Jamaica, I, p. 34, 1707): “Turner (ap. Purchas. p. 1265) found Hogs, Pigeons, and Parrots here (Barbados). This is the only statement I can find of their occurrence on that island by a person who actually visited the place. Albin (Nat. Hist. Birds, III, p. 11, pl. 11, 1738, “The Barbados Parrot”). Edwards (Birds, IV, p. 162, 1751, “The Great Green Parrot from the West Indies” [Barbados]; *loc. cit.* p. 246, “*Psittacus viridis major occidentalis*”). Latham (Gen. Syn. I, p. 284, No. 90, 1781 “The Ash-fronted Parrot” [Barbados]; Gen. History, II, p. 238, 1822). Brisson (Orn. IV, p. 236, 1760, “Le Perroquet des Barbades . . . *Psittacus Barbadensis*”) and Gmelin (Syst. Nat. I, p. 339, 1788 “*Psittacus barbadensis*”). These authors all give a parrot as having inhabited Barbados. The species as described is referable in all cases to varieties of *A. aestiva* or *A. ochroptera*. Possibly there was an *Amazona* on the island at the time of its colonization allied to these species, but there is no definite proof that such was the case. If there were parrots there, they might very well have been members of this group, as species occur on Trinidad and on Tobago. The evidence of the occurrence of parrots on Grenada is very poor, the single reference (Dutertre, Hist. Gén. des Antilles habitées par les François, II, p. 249, 1667) possibly referring to Tobago.

<sup>2</sup> Extinct.