

NOTES ON THE BIRDS OF ST. MARTIN AND
ST. EUSTATIUS.

BY STUART T. DANFORTH.

In 1927 the writer spent a week (from December 21 to 27, inclusive) on St. Martin, and one day (Dec. 28) on St. Eustatius, observing and collecting as many birds as possible in the limited time available. Practically nothing has previously been published upon the birds of St. Martin, and but little upon those of St. Eustatius, so that practically all of my St. Martin records represent additions to the known avifauna of the island. Both islands are members of the Leeward Group of the Lesser Antilles; St. Eustatius being situated just north of St. Christopher and St. Martin between Anguilla and St. Bartholomew.

St. Martin is only some twelve miles long, and has an area of 42 square miles, yet it is divided between two nations, the northern two-thirds being French and the southern third Dutch. The island is hilly and covered for the most part with a more or less xerophytic brushy type of vegetation. The highest hills reach an elevation of between 1100 and 1200 feet. At various points along the shore there are extensive salt-ponds for the production of salt by the open air evaporation of seawater. The salt-ponds near Great Bay (the Dutch town) are especially large, in fact reputed to be the largest in the West Indies, and are frequented by large numbers of shorebirds.

St. Eustatius is much smaller, being three and a half miles long by one and a half miles wide, with an area of about eight square miles. Most of the island is semiarid, but in the southern part of the island an extinct volcano known as "The Quill" rises to a height of about 1800 feet. The crater of this is clothed with quite a dense forest. The shoreline of the island is abrupt, and there are no shallow bays or salt-ponds to furnish refuge for shorebirds.

An annotated list of the birds observed follows.

Pelecanus occidentalis occidentalis Linné. BROWN PELICAN.—Seen at Great Bay and Simpson's Bay, St. Martin.

Fregata magnificens Mathews. MAN-O-WAR BIRD.—A few seen at Great Bay and Simpson's Bay, St. Martin.

Ardea herodias adoza Oberholser. WEST INDIAN GREAT BLUE HERON.—On December 24 Mr. Rodenheis shot a female in a dry field near his residence about a mile and a half west of the town of Great Bay, St. Martin, and presented me with the bird, which I preserved for my collection. Its stomach was extremely full, and contained 45 giant water beetles (*Hydrophilidae*) and five dragonfly naiads.

Butorides virescens maculatus Boddaert. WEST INDIAN GREEN HERON.—Common in the vicinities of Great Bay and Simpson's Bay, St. Martin. The stomach of a male collected at Great Bay contained four small fiddler crabs. The local name of this bird is "Gaulin."

Nyctanassa violacea jamaicensis Gmelin. YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT HERON.—One was observed fishing in the shallow salt-ponds at Great Bay.

Falco sparverius caribaeorum Gmelin. LESSER ANTILLEAN SPARROW HAWK.—The species was rather scarce on St. Martin, where two were collected, while on St. Eustatius it was astoundingly abundant. Three were collected there. The stomachs of all five specimens contained nothing but grasshoppers.

Porzana carolina Linné. SORA RAIL.—One was shot near Great Bay, St. Martin on December 24 while swimming in a very small pool of fresh water.

Oxyechus vociferus rubidus Riley. ANTILLEAN KILLDEER.—Local name "Soldier Bird." About fifteen frequented the vicinity of the salt-ponds at Great Bay, St. Martin. The stomach of a male collected on December 24 contained comminuted insects and coarse sand.

Squatarola squatarola cynosurae Thayer and Bangs.—About 100 frequented the salt-ponds at Great Bay, and lesser numbers were seen at other salt-ponds on St. Martin. The stomach of a female collected December 24 contained some large aquatic Dipterous larvae, the fragments of a beetle, and a little coarse sand.

Arenaria interpres morinella Linné. RUDDY TURNSTONE.—About 80 could be found around the salt-ponds at Great Bay, St. Martin.

Actitis macularia Linné. SPOTTED SANDPIPER.—Local name "Tip-up." This species was common about the salt-ponds of the entire island of St. Martin. Sometimes as many as four were in sight at one time.

Totanus flavipes Gmelin. YELLOW-LEGS.—A few were observed in the saltponds at Great Bay.

Totanus melanoleucus Gmelin. GREATER YELLOW-LEGS.—One observed at Cul-de-Sac Pond, St. Martin, on December 26.

Ereunetes pusillus Linné. SEMIPALMATED SANDPIPER.—About 200 were present on the salt-ponds at Great Bay. The stomach of one collected on December 24 contained many finely comminuted insects and some sand.

Sterna fuscata fuscata Linné. SOOTY TERN.—One was seen on December 28 just off the north shore of St. Eustatius.

Thalasseus maximus maximus Boddaert. ROYAL TERN.—Several times one was seen skimming over the large salt-pond at Great Bay, St. Martin.

Columba squamosa Bonnaterre. SCALED PIGEON.—Seen in the forest high on the volcano at St. Eustatius.

Zenaida aurita aurita Temminck. ZENAIDA DOVE.—Local names "Mountain Dove" and "Touterelle." Common everywhere in brushy areas on St. Martin and in the lowlands and on the lower half of the volcano on St. Eustatius. Specimens were collected on both islands.

Chaemepelia passerina trochila Bonaparte. PORTO RICAN GROUND DOVE.—Local name "Ground Dove." Common throughout the lowlands of St. Martin and St. Eustatius. Specimens were collected on both islands. The bills of these specimens were entirely dusky brown.

Orthorhynchos exilis exilis Gmelin. GILT-CRESTED HUMMINGBIRD.—Local names "Doctor Bird" and "Fou-fou." Common on St. Martin, but extremely abundant on St. Eustatius; I never saw any hummingbird anywhere quite so abundant as this species was there. Specimens were collected on both islands.

Sericotes holosericeus holosericeus Linné. GREEN CARIB HUMMINGBIRD.—Local name "Doctor Bird." Common on St. Martin, where several specimens were collected, but only two were seen on St. Eustatius.

Megaceryle alcyon alcyon Linné. BELTED KINGFISHER.—Seen frequently on St. Martin.

Tyrannus dominicensis vorax Vieillot. LESSER ANTILLEAN GRAY KINGBIRD.—Local name "Chicherri." Common on St. Martin, where three specimens were collected, but not particularly common on St. Eustatius, and found mostly near the town. One stomach contained mostly grasshoppers; another a large wasp, a fleabeetle (*Homophaeta equinoctialis*), and some other insect fragments.

Elaenia martinica martinica Linné. ANTILLEAN ELAENIA.—One observed in the lowlands of St. Eustatius.

Elaenia martinica riisii Selater. RIISE'S ELAENIA.—Common in St. Martin on brushy hillsides, but much more often heard than seen, as it has a habit of uttering its whistled song from a concealed perch. Occasionally the birds lose some of their habitual shyness and perch for a short time in some more exposed place or feed upon fruits growing on trees in open pastures. Two specimens were collected. The stomachs of both contained exclusively large red berries with flat seeds. Mr. J. L. Peters of the Museum of Comparative Zoölogy kindly determined the specimens for me as *riisii*.

Hirundo rustica erytogaster Boddaert. BARN SWALLOW.—One was observed flying over the mangroves at Simpson's Bay, St. Martin on December 23.

Margarops fuscatus fuscatus Vieillot. PEARLY-EYED THRASHER.—Local name "Thrush." Locally common on St. Martin in places covered with the denser and higher brushy woods, but the birds keep well concealed while singing, so they are oftener heard than seen. Two were heard on the volcano on St. Eustatius. One was collected on St. Martin.

Allenia apicalis Hartlaub. SCALY-BREADED THRASHER.—Local name

"Thrush." Several observed in some acacia trees at the base of the volcano on St. Eustatius.

Coereba bartolemica bartolemica Sparrmann. ST. BARTHOLOMEW HONEY CREEPER.—Local name "Yellow Breast." Common and specimens obtained on both islands. Stomachs examined contained entirely small insects, including Coleoptera, Hemiptera and the larvae of Diptera.

Mniotilta varia Linné. BLACK AND WHITE WARBLER.—One observed in a thick manchineel thicket back of the beach at Great Bay, St. Martin on December 24.

Compsothlypis americana pusilla Wilson. NORTHERN PARULA WARBLER.—A few were observed and one collected in the French part of St. Martin.

Dendroica petechia bartholemica Ridgway. LESSER ANTILLEAN GOLDEN WARBLER.—Apparently scarce on both islands. A female was collected in a mangrove swamp at Simpson's Bay, St. Martin on December 23; one was observed singing in a small clump of trees near the edge of a saltpond at Great Bay on December 24; and one was seen in some scrubby brush near the edge of the sea on St. Eustatius on December 28.

Dendroica discolor Vieillot. PRAIRIE WARBLER.—One observed on St. Martin on December 24.

Seiurus noveboracensis noveboracensis Gmelin. NORTHERN WATER-THRUSH.—Local name "Chincherry." Frequently seen by small streams and in mangrove swamps on St. Martin. Two were collected for identification. Their stomachs contained comminuted insects, and one bird had eaten in addition a small lizard.

Seiurus aurocapillus aurocapillus Linné. OVEN-BIRD.—One shot in a manchineel thicket back of the beach at Great Bay, St. Martin on December 24.

Setophaga ruticilla Linné. REDSTART.—Observed on December 22 and 26 in the northern part of St. Martin, and a male was collected in the dense woods high on the volcano of St. Eustatius on December 28.

Tiaris bicolor omissa Jardine. CARIB GRASSQUIT.—Common on St. Martin and at lower altitudes on St. Eustatius. The stomach of a specimen collected on St. Martin contained exclusively small green grass seeds.

Pyrrhulagra noctis ridgwayi Cory. RIDGWAY'S BULLFINCH.—This species was apparently quite scarce on St. Martin, as a diligent search revealed but two, and the natives knew no name for the bird. On December 22 I observed a pair in some thick vegetation along a small stream valley north of Marigot, and collected the male. The subspecific identification of the bird was made by Mr. J. L. Peters. The bird's stomach contained nothing but some small unidentified seeds.

*College of Agriculture,
 University of Porto Rico,
 Mayagüez, Porto Rico.*