

## RECORDS OF NEW OR LITTLE KNOWN BIRDS FOR NICARAGUA<sup>1</sup>

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*Key words:* Bird distribution; Nicaragua.

During my research on birds of the Nicaraguan highlands, I collected five species new to the country and one form known previously from only one specimen. These are listed below and grouped according to locality. The specimens are deposited either in the Museo de Zoología de Nicaragua, Managua (MZN) or in the Museo de la Estación Biológica de Doñana, Spain (EBD).

The following records were obtained in the Department of Matagalpa at Finca Santa María de Ostuma, 10 km N of Matagalpa, and Finca La Hamonia, 8 km N of Matagalpa, between 1,350 and 1,650 m. These fincas cover about 600 ha of one of the last cloud forests remaining in north-central Nicaragua.

### *BOLBORHYNCHUS LINEOLA*, BARRED PARAKEET

An adult female was collected on 4 May 1985 (MZN 00146) at Santa María de Ostuma; it lacked body fat and the ovary did not have enlarged follicles. The bird was in a flock of 15 individuals flying across an open area. This is the first record for Nicaragua although the species is locally common in the highlands of Honduras and Costa Rica.

### *TROGLODYTES RUFOCILATUS*, RUFOUS-BROWED WREN

One bird (MZN 00148), unsexed, was collected on 14 May 1985 in the forest canopy at an elevation of only 1,250 m at La Hamonia. This is below the lowest elevation (1,700 m) at which Monroe (1968) found the species in Honduras and represents the first record for Nicaragua and the southernmost for the species.

### *HAPLOSPIZA RUSTICA*, SLATY FINCH

A solitary female (EBD 641) was collected on 14 November 1983 at the edge of a cloud forest at 1,400 m at Santa María de Ostuma. The skull was fully ossified but the ovarian follicles were not enlarged and there was no body fat. This is the first record for Nicaragua, and the species seems to be genuinely rare in Central America; there are only three records for El Salvador (Thurber et al. 1987), two for Honduras (Monroe 1968), and six for Costa Rica (Slud 1964, Stiles and Hespénheide 1972). The Nicaraguan locality is equidistant (400 km) from the nearest localities of occurrence in Honduras and Costa Rica.

### *DIGLOSSA BARITULA*, CINNAMON-BELLIED FLOWERPIERCER

A male was collected on 22 April 1983 (EBD 329) in exactly the same place as the preceding species. The testes were not enlarged (1.3 × 1.0 mm), the skull fully ossified, and there was no body fat. This is the first record for Nicaragua and represents my only observation of the species. The specimen is clearly of the northern form *baritula* and not the more southern form *plumbea*.

All of the highland records are for species found elsewhere in Central America primarily at altitudes higher than are found in Nicaragua, and the absence of these birds has been attributed to a lack of sufficient extent of suitable montane habitats. Quite possibly, these records represent recent extensions of range into north-central Nicaragua as the region around Matagalpa has been ornithologically well-worked compared to most other regions. As a matter of fact the professional collector W. B. Richardson resided in Matagalpa from the 1890s until at least 1927 and obtained bird specimens throughout this time span. In 1917 he was joined by W. de W. Miller and L. Griscom, who assiduously sought rarities and new subspecies in the highlands and elsewhere. Also B. Ponsol collected highland birds at Santa María de Ostuma in the 1940s (Howell 1964) and other ornithologists later worked there for brief periods. Richardson was a thorough and discriminating collector and it is unlikely that either Richardson or the other collectors would have failed to obtain any of these species during their long residence unless they were very rare or absent. The following registers pertain to different localities.

### *COLIBRI THALASSINUS*, GREEN VIOLET-EAR

A solitary male (MZN 00285) was collected on 3 December 1985 at 1,250 m at the edge of the crater of Volcán Casita, 14 km ENE of Chinandega, Depto. Chinandega. The vegetation there is open forest, predominantly *Pinus oocarpa* and *Lysiloma* spp. The testes were enlarged (3 × 3 mm) and there was no body fat. The specimen appears to represent the subspecies *thalassinus* (Berlioz 1938, Monroe 1968). This is the first record of the species for Nicaragua, and the nearest other locality of occurrence is 150 km away, at Cerro Uyuca, 15 km SE of Tegucigalpa, Honduras (Monroe 1968). There is a broad area of swamps and deforested plains between these localities, habitats in which the species does not normally occur in Central America. Wagner (1945) suggested that breeding populations of *C. thalassinus* from the Valley of Mexico and surrounding areas migrate south to Chiapas and Guatemala where they might breed again, although this hy-

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pothesis has not been confirmed. Wagner also stated that the species adapted to clearing of forest if some tall trees were left standing. Skutch (1967) stated that part of the population of the Costa Rican highlands is absent during the dry season, and Wolf et al. (1976) considered this species a true altitudinal migrant in Costa Rica. Evidently, birds of this species move down from high-altitude breeding sites and can cross lowland areas of unfavorable habitat to reach other montane environments, a behavior which favors colonization of new areas. It will be of considerable interest if the species establishes a breeding population in Nicaragua.

*THRYPOTHORUS LUDOVICIANUS ALBINUCHA*,  
CAROLINA WREN

I collected three males of this species at Hacienda Las Rojas, 750 m, Volcán San Cristóbal, 14 km NE Chinandega, Depto. Chinandega. Two were collected on 3 August 1984 (MZN 00008 and 00009) and one on 12 November 1985 (MZN 00245). This species was previously known from Nicaragua only from the single specimen collected at Calabasas (400 m), 8 km S of Metapa (=Ciudad Darío), Depto. Matagalpa, by Miller and Griscom and described by them (1925) as *Thryothorus albinucha subfulvus*. The type locality is in an arid thorn scrub habitat, very different from the semi-deciduous broad-leafed forest at Hacienda Las Rojas. I have not been able to compare my specimens with the unique type of *subfulvus* and thus cannot assign them definitely to the subspecies. The *albinucha* group is currently considered part of the *T. ludovicianus* complex, and Nicaragua is the southern limit of the species' range.

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HARPY EAGLE ATTEMPTS PREDATION ON ADULT HOWLER MONKEY<sup>1</sup>

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*Key words:* Harpy Eagle; predation; howler monkey.

In the past, investigators have gathered the remains of prey items found around Harpy Eagle (*Harpia harpyja*) nests (Rettig 1977, 1978; Izor 1985), monitored prey items brought to the nest or to recently fledged juveniles by adult Harpy Eagles (Fowler and Cope 1964;

Rettig 1977, 1978), and in one case even staged predation by placing a sacrificial three-toed sloth near a Harpy Eagle nest (Rettig 1978). However, to my knowledge no observer has published a report of a naturally occurring predation attempt by a Harpy Eagle.

On 22 March 1987, I observed a subadult Harpy Eagle attempt to prey on an adult female red howler monkey (*Alouatta seniculus*) at Cocha Cashu Biological Station, which is located at 11°51'S, 71°19'W in the tropical moist forest of Manu National Park in southeastern Peru. I was observing howler monkeys from a boat at the southern tip of Cocha Cashu, the oxbow lake for which the research station is named.

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