

# First Record of Bahama Yellowthroat in the United States

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During the fall of 1968, I operated a one-man banding station as part of the Operation Recovery Project of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service near the headquarters of the Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge, Palm Beach County, Florida. On the morning of October 19 an adult male Bahama Yellowthroat (*Geothlypis rostrata*) was captured in a mist net. The net was located in a thicket of willows (*Salix caroliniana*) on the west side of a cypress strand on the eastern edge of the Everglades. That day 14 Common Yellowthroats (*G. trichas*), of which nine were males, were captured, measured, checked for amount of subcutaneous fat, banded, and released. In the course of examining *G. rostrata* in the hand, it escaped, and was not seen again. It was not measured, banded, or photographed. This appears to be the first record of this West Indian species in the United States, and thus the species is entitled to hypothetical rank on the Florida and United States lists.

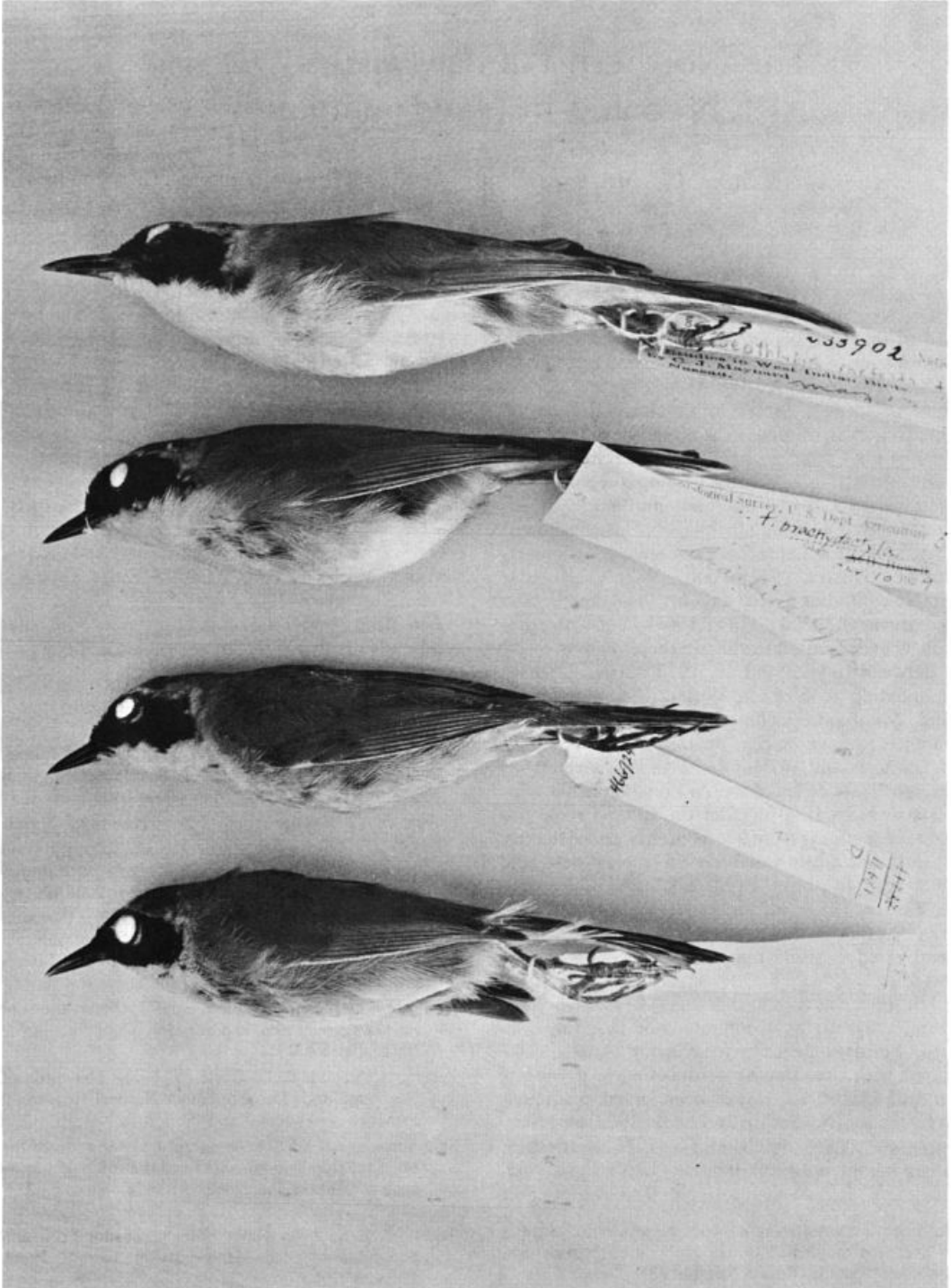
The overall larger size and longer and more massive bill of *G. rostrata* in comparison with *G. trichas* [three subspecies commonly occur in southern Florida (Sprunt, A., Jr. 1954. Florida Bird Life. New York, Nat'l Audubon Soc.)] are readily apparent as shown by the museum specimens in Figure 1. This size difference is striking when birds are in the hand. The absence of a distinct gray border along the top of the broad black mask of *G. rostrata* was carefully noted during the brief examination. The males of all races of *G. trichas* occurring in Florida have a pronounced gray border above and to the rear of the mask. In the males, the underparts of the Bahama

Yellowthroat are yellow from the base of the bill to the tail, whereas in the Common Yellowthroat, the throat, breast, and under tail coverts are yellow and the belly and sides vary from white to light brown or buff. This color difference of the underparts is a good field mark, but is not mentioned by Bond (Birds of the West Indies. Boston, Houghton Mifflin Co. 1971).

Lowery and Monroe (*in* Check-list of Birds of the World, vol. 14. R. A. Payner, Jr., ed. Cambridge, Mus. Comp. Zool. 1968) give the range of *G. rostrata* as the islands of Grand Bahama, Moranie Cay, Little Abaco, Great Abaco, Elbow Cay, New Providence, Andros, Eleuthera, and Cat. Settlement Point on Grand Bahama lies 103 km (64 miles) east of Florida and approximately 122 km (76 miles) from where the bird was captured on the refuge. Also, the northern part of Andros Island lies 251 km (156 miles) southeast of the capture site.

Local climatological data recorded at the Palm Beach International Airport by the U.S. Weather Bureau for October 11 through October 18, 1968, showed average daily surface wind speeds ranging from 7.8 to 20.6 mph (mean 15.4) from the east and southeast. During this period only 2 days (October 14 and 15) had average wind speeds less than 14 mph. Thus, strong prevailing easterly winds over the 8-day period could have resulted in displacement of the Bahama Yellowthroat in view of the close proximity of Grand Bahama and Andros Islands to Florida.

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**Fig. 1.** Comparison of relative size and bill proportion of male *G. rostrata* (top specimen) with males of the three subspecies of *G. trichas* (second specimen from the top to bottom in order: *G. t. brachidactylus*, *G. t. trichas*, and *G. t. ignota*) that commonly occur in southern Florida. Specimens courtesy of the U. S. National Museum.