

A NOTE ON THE PARROTS OF NORTHEASTERN ARGENTINA

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OF the 25 species of parrots known to occur in Argentina, more than half inhabit the humid tropical northeastern province of Misiones. Some of these are shared, usually in the form of a distinct race, with the wet tropical spur descending from the north along the eastern base of the Andes as far as Tucuman.

In the immediate vicinity of Iguassú Falls at the Brazilian border I have seen six species representing a like number of genera in the course of a day's field work: *Aratinga leucophthalmus*, *Forpus passerinus*, *Pionus maximiliani*, *Amazona vinacea*, *Ara maracana*, and *Pyrrhura frontalis*. Another genus and species, *Pionopsitta pileata*, was regularly seen at our camp near Tobunas to the south where, of the Iguassú species, *Aratinga* and *Forpus* were not observed.

Throughout Misiones the Red-bellied Parakeet (*Pyrrhura frontalis*) appeared to be the most common and least shy psittacid. The bird pictured opposite was collected and painted on 6 September 1959. At rest or in flight they are much like Aratingas, moving about in small, noisy flocks at high speed.

The flight of the small macaw, *Ara maracana*, was unlike that of any other member of the genus I have seen, including similarly sized species in Trinidad and Surinam. They pitched up in flight, not in the undulatory manner of woodpeckers, but in a peculiarly jerky, rearing motion. As they traveled in pairs I thought at first that this might be a courtship performance, but at no time did I see them in the direct flight typical of macaws.

It might be appropriate here to suggest that future field guides to neotropical birds should point out that the similarly proportioned *Amazona* and *Pionus* parrots can be separated at any distance in flight by the depth of the wing stroke. That of *Amazona* is very shallow, while the primaries of *Pionus* are almost straight down at the end of the stroke.

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