

## GENERAL NOTES

**Birds of St. Giles Islands, Tobago.**—The St. Giles Islands (= Melville Islands), at 11° 21' N, 60° 31' W support one of the most important seabird breeding colonies in the southern West Indies. The group consists of the 75-acre St. Giles Island, ½ mile off the northeast coast of Tobago, and several small outlying rocks. All are steep-sloped and rocky, the highest point being just over 350 feet, and are covered with thick masses of cactus, low brush, and trees, some as tall as 30 feet. None has a steady source of fresh water.

The seas around St. Giles are rough much of the year and landing is hazardous, a small cove at the west end of the main island being the only accessible point. Once on the island the thick vegetation and steep slopes make it difficult for a person to get to lower slopes where some seabirds nest.

Mr. Charles Turpin of Charlotteville, Tobago, longtime owner of the islands, recently offered them to the Government of Trinidad and Tobago on condition that they be maintained as a wildlife sanctuary and properly warded. On 26 April 1968, St. Giles and all adjacent islands were proclaimed the St. Giles Game Sanctuary and closed to landing without special permission.

Protection may reduce the poaching by local people. Frigatebirds probably suffer most but boobies, terns, and perhaps other species are affected. As the St. Giles Islands contain the only nesting colonies of Magnificent Frigatebirds (*Fregata magnificens*) and Red-footed Boobies (*Sula sula*) in Trinidad and Tobago, their continued existence in this country is dependent on effective protection at St. Giles.

Several ornithologists have visited the islands and published records of the birds found there. E. A. Armstrong (1947) wrote briefly of his visit to the islands on 23 March 1932, and C. F. Belcher (Belcher and Smooker, 1934, 1935) visited the islands on 27 March 1932. L. Brown (1947, in litt.) visited the islands on 2 February 1940. Recent summaries of the avifauna of Trinidad and Tobago (Junge and Mees, 1958; Herklots, 1961) apparently have relied mainly on Belcher's observations. Much remains to be learned about the birds of the St. Giles Islands, especially the timing of the nesting cycles of the seabirds and the status of several species, notably *Sterna dougallii*, *S. anaethetus*, and *Larus atricilla*.

Since 1958 we visited the islands separately seven times and noted a total of 34 species. On 4–5 April 1958 French spent 31 hours there; he visited them on 3 April 1959, 10 April 1963, and 21 August 1968. He was accompanied by D. W. and B. K. Snow in 1959 and by M. French in 1959, 1963, and 1968. Dinsmore circled the main island by boat on 9 and 23 October 1965 and landed there on 4 May 1966. Most of our observations pertain to the main island of the group.

Our observations are mainly of seabirds but we also recorded the land birds we saw. The proximity of Tobago facilitates passage between it and St. Giles, and doubtless other land birds and some shorebirds visit the islands. We have used the nomenclature given by Meyer de Schauensee (1966).

Mr. Turpin generously gave us permission to land on the island. Dinsmore's stay in Tobago was financed in part by the Forestry Division, Ministry for Tobago Affairs and by graduate fellowships from the University of Wisconsin, Madison.

Audubon's Shearwater (*Puffinus lherminieri*).—French found both eggs and small young in early April. Dinsmore found a young bird just starting to get flight feathers and otherwise covered with gray down on 4 May 1966. Neither of us was able to estimate numbers but French heard many adults on the night of 4 April 1958 and the colony must number in the hundreds.

Red-billed Tropicbird (*Phaethon aethereus*).—On 3 April 1959, French photographed an adult with one egg and saw several other nests. He saw several adults but no nests on 21 August 1968. Dinsmore saw this species on all three visits but found no nests. Belcher and Smooker (1934) listed *P. lepturus* nesting on the island, but neither of us has seen this species in the area (French, 1961; see also Bond, 1962). Brown (1947) also saw *aethereus* here. Perhaps 200 tropicbirds nest on the islands.

Red-footed Booby (*Sula sula*).—Several hundred Red-footed Boobies frequent the islands, building their nests 8–12 feet up in the low trees on St. Giles and several of the outlying rocks. Both color phases are present, the brown with a white tail comprising over 90 per cent of the birds. They seem to have an extended nesting season. French found all stages from eggs to nearly fledged young on all of his visits in early April, and all nests he examined on 21 August 1968 had eggs. Dinsmore saw downy young in October and downy to nearly fledged young in May. Belcher saw eggs on 27 March 1932 and Brown (1947, in litt.) saw nests with single eggs or downy chicks on 2 February 1940. Thus eggs apparently hatch any time from August to April and perhaps for a longer period.

Brown Booby (*Sula leucogaster*).—Although not so abundant as the previous species, the Brown Booby is common on St. Giles. It too has an extended breeding season although peaks of hatching seem to occur in early fall and again from February through March. Belcher and Smooker (1934) say that many young were away from the nests by 27 March 1932. Brown (in litt.) found this species nesting on 2 February 1940. French found many nests containing eggs on 21 August 1968.

Magnificent Frigatebird (*Fregata magnificens*).—Perhaps 2000 frigatebirds nest or roost at St. Giles. French found both eggs and young in April 1958 and 1959 but on 10 April 1963 he could locate only a few young birds in the nest. On 21 August 1968 he saw no nests but did see ballooning males. Dinsmore saw only young capable of flight on 4 May 1966. Armstrong (1947) saw well-grown young in late March while Belcher and Smooker (1934) report eggs on 27 March 1932. Brown (1947, in litt.) found eggs or occasionally small young on 2 February 1940. Poaching may affect the size of the colony considerably as the local people raid it for both eggs and young birds.

Yellow-crowned Night Heron (*Nyctanassa violacea*).—French saw one adult on the island on 10 April 1963 and another 21 August 1968.

Black Vulture (*Coragyps atratus*).—Dinsmore saw one circling over St. Giles on 4 May 1966 and a vulture was reported at St. Giles during the summer of 1965. French saw one over the island on 21 August 1968. Although this species is abundant on Trinidad, it was unknown on Tobago until recently. Herklots (1961) reports the birds being recently introduced to Tobago (about 1959) and the local story is that they were released there by people filming a movie for Walt Disney.

Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus*).—French saw one in April of 1958 and 1959.

Laughing Gull (*Larus atricilla*).—French saw many flying by the islands in April and a few there on 21 August 1968. Dinsmore saw 300–400 there on 4 May 1966. They may nest on St. Giles although we have not found eggs or young. Belcher and Smooker (1935) reported “many” on St. Giles on 27 March 1932 and seeing many flying in that direction on 23 June 1934.

Roseate Tern (*Sterna dougallii*).—Dinsmore saw white *Sterna* terns around St. Giles on 4 May 1966. On 2 June he landed on a rocky slope on Tobago just opposite St. Giles and found downy young and eggs. About 200 adults were present with a steady line returning to the colony carrying fish in their bills. Unfortunately no specimen was collected. On 30 April 1967 French and C. T. Collins saw adult Roseate Terns

carrying fish toward the location of the 1966 colony but rough seas prevented them from locating the colony. French saw a few *dougallii* near St. Giles on 21 August 1968. Thus it seems likely that the 1966 birds were *dougallii* in which case it would be the first nesting record for Trinidad and Tobago. Still the status of this species is uncertain and needs clarification.

Bridled Tern (*Sterna anaethetus*).—Dinsmore saw several fly out from low on the steep slopes of St. Giles on 4 May 1966. French saw several, including some in immature plumage, along the coast on 21 August 1968. They may nest on St. Giles but we have found neither eggs nor young.

Sooty Tern (*Sterna fuscata*).—We both have found this species common around St. Giles in April and May and French saw a few as late as 21 August 1968. It may nest here but we have not searched suitable nesting habitat at the probable time of nesting (April–June).

Brown Noddy (*Anous stolidus*).—At least 1000 noddies frequent the island, nesting in the low trees and thick masses of cactus. French found many nests with eggs on all of his April visits. Dinsmore found several nests on 4 May 1966, most with eggs but one containing a young bird just hours old. He saw only a few in the area in October 1965. French found them still abundant on 21 August 1968 and behavior suggested they may have been nesting but he didn't see any active nests. Belcher and Smoker (1935) reported it breeding here in April.

Pale-vented Pigeon (*Columba cayennensis*).—We both found this species fairly common on the island. French found nests with eggs on 21 August 1968.

Ruddy Ground-Dove (*Columbina talpacoti*).—Dinsmore saw several on 4 May 1966.

White-tipped Dove (*Leptotila verreauxi*).—French saw a few on each of his visits and found a nest with 2 eggs on 21 August 1968.

Smooth-billed Ani (*Crotophaga ani*).—We both have seen this species on St. Giles, 15–20 being present on 4 May 1966. Armstrong (in litt.) saw this species there in March 1932.

Copper-rumped Hummingbird (*Amazilia tobaci*).—French saw one on 4 April 1958.

Tropical Kingbird (*Tyrannus melancholicus*).—French saw several on 21 August 1968.

Brown-crested Flycatcher (*Myiarchus tyrannulus*).—French saw several on each of his April visits.

Fuscous Flycatcher (*Cnemotriccus fuscatus*).—French and Snow saw one at St. Giles on 3 April 1959 and French saw two on 21 August 1968. It is common in similar dry habitat on the northwestern peninsula of Trinidad and the Bocas Islands off Trinidad.

Yellow-bellied Elaenia (*Elaenia flavogaster*).—French saw several in April 1958 and 1959.

Caribbean Martin (*Progne dominicensis*).—French saw a few over St. Giles in April 1958 and 1959 and 21 August 1968.

Barn Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*).—French saw one on 4 April 1958.

House Wren (*Troglodytes aedon*).—Both of us found this species common on the island. French saw an adult feeding a young Shiny Cowbird (*Molothrus bonariensis*) on 21 August 1968.

Tropical Mockingbird (*Mimus gilvus*).—Both of us found this species abundant on St. Giles and saw it on all of our visits.

Bare-eyed Thrush (*Turdus nudigenis*).—French saw one on 5 April 1958.

Northern Waterthrush (*Seiurus noveboracensis*).—French saw one on 10 April 1963.

Shiny Cowbird (*Molothrus bonariensis*).—French saw this species on 5 April 1958, 10 April 1963, and a young bird being fed by a House Wren on 21 August 1968.

Crested Oropendola (*Psarocolius decumanus*).—ffrench saw about 20 on the island on 5 April 1958.

Bananaquit (*Coereba flaveola*).—We both have noted this species on the island. ffrench found it nesting on 4 April 1958 and 21 August 1968.

Blue-gray Tanager (*Thraupis episcopus*).—ffrench found a dead chick on the ground on 21 August 1968.

Blue-black Grassquit (*Volatinia jacarina*).—ffrench saw several on 21 August 1968.

Yellow-bellied Seedeater (*Sporophila nigricollis*).—ffrench heard a male singing on St. Giles on 21 August 1968.

Although most of the land birds we saw at St. Giles are common in Trinidad and Tobago, the seabirds have a more restricted distribution. Red-footed Boobies and Magnificent Frigatebirds nest only at St. Giles. The Audubon's Shearwater, Red-billed Tropicbird, Brown Booby, Laughing Gull, Roseate Tern, Bridled Tern, Sooty Tern, and Brown Noddy all occur along the coast of Tobago or nearby islands during the breeding season and the last two also nest on Soldado Rock west of Trinidad.

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**Glossy Ibis taken in Indiana.**—On 17 April 1968, Lehman saw two Glossy Ibises (*Plegadis falcinellus*) feeding in a small, muddy pond in a cow pasture a mile northeast of Francesville, Pulaski County, Indiana. Later in the day, Lehman, Russell R. Hyer, and Harold Grimmett returned and watched the birds, sometimes from a distance of only 20 feet. Lehman saw them again the next morning; that afternoon Hyer, Lehman, Warren S. Rowe, Duane Shroufe, and Mumford visited the site and Mumford collected one. The second bird flew a half mile and alighted at another pond. The specimen is a non-fat, adult female, which weighed 506 grams and contained ova up to 5 mm in diameter. It has been deposited in the United States National Museum (No. 531517), where Roxie C. Laybourne verified the identification. This is the first glossy ibis taken in Indiana, but an adult was observed 20 May 1962 at Indianapolis (Keller, C. E., *Indiana Audubon Quarterly*, 44:55-86, 1966).