

New and noteworthy bird records from Belize including the first record of Chestnut-collared Swift *Cypseloides rutilus*

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Received 18 October 1996

Over thirty years have passed since Russell (1964) summarized what was then known about the status and distribution of birds in the Central American country of Belize. Among the more recent publications that have added to our understanding of avian distributions in that area are those of Howell *et al.* (1992), Barlow *et al.* (1969, 1970, 1972), Mills & Rogers (1988), and Miller & Miller (1992).

Since 1992, we have spent a combined total of 45 weeks in Belize. The following notes are all based on sight records made during the period January 1992 to April 1996. Included are the first record of Chestnut-collared Swift *Cypseloides rutilus* for Belize as well as notes on seven other species of poorly known or marginal occurrence in that country. It is noteworthy that while most of our time was spent in northern Belize, four of the eight observations detailed below resulted from less than four weeks spent in the poorly known southern half of the country. Further investigations in southern Belize will doubtless bring to light additional unusual records and range extensions (S. N. G. Howell pers. comm.).

CINNAMON TEAL *Anas cyanoptera*

Although described by Wood *et al.* (1986) as a very rare transient, Belize was not included in the range of this species by Howell & Webb (1995). An adult male Cinnamon Teal was observed feeding and roosting in flooded rice fields in the company of some 400 Blue-winged Teal *A. discors* and eight American Wigeon *A. americana*, approximately 3 km west of San Felipe, Orange Walk District, on 2 March 1996. This bird was identified by its overall bright cinnamon coloration and red eye.

BICOLORED HAWK *Accipiter bicolor*

Russell (1964) listed three records of this species from Belize. Wood *et al.* (1986) described it as a very rare permanent resident in Belize. On 9 April 1996, an adult Bicolored Hawk was observed carrying nesting material into a dense vine tangle along a logging road at Gran del Oro, Cayo District. As far as we know, this observation represents the first evidence of nesting by this little known species in Belize.

CHESTNUT-COLLARED SWIFT *Cypseloides rutilus*

At least four adult Chestnut-collared Swifts were present in a concentration of approximately 40 *Chaetura* swifts (probably *Chaetura vauxi*) at The Cockscomb Basin Wildlife Sanctuary, Stan Creek

District, on 15 March 1993. Identification of these birds was based on their clearly visible chestnut collars. It is possible that several other (uniformly dark) swifts, seen with these birds, may have been *C. rutilus* immatures. Subsequently, S. N. G. Howell (*in litt.*) observed a single individual of this species on 22 March 1996 at Monkey Bay Wildlife Sanctuary, Belize District. Howell & Webb (1995) noted that *C. rutilus* seems to withdraw from montane areas during the northern winter and that there is some evidence for migratory behaviour in this species. As far as we know, these observations represent the first records of this species from Belize.

BLUE-THROATED GOLDENTAIL *Hylocharis eliciae*

The first record for Belize was reported recently from Cayo District (Mills & Rogers 1988). A single male of this species was closely observed on 3 April 1994 as it perched and called in a *Heliconia* thicket along a disturbed creek-bed near Columbia Village, Toledo District.

WHITE-WINGED BECARD *Pachyramphus polychopterus*

Wood *et al.* (1986) described this species as a rare permanent resident in the southern half of the country, and Howell *et al.* (1992) reported a single mist-netted bird from Gallon Jug. On 30 March 1996, a single male White-winged Becard was found in the company of a mixed flock at the edge of a pasture at Bermudian Landing, Belize District. Identification was based on the absence of a whitish supraloral mark, thus ruling out *P. major*.

NASHVILLE WARBLER *Vermivora ruficapilla*

Russell (1964) listed two sight records of this species (both perhaps involving the same individual) three days apart at Gallon Jug, Orange Walk District. Lacking a specimen, he considered the species hypothetical in Belize. Wood *et al.* (1986) described it as a "very rare" transient. T. Aversa observed a single individual feeding with a flock of migrants at the edge of a clearing at Bermudian Landing, Belize District, on 31 March 1996. The identification of this bird was based on its small size, all-yellow underparts, grey cap and whitish eye-ring.

CERULEAN WARBLER *Dendroica cerulea*

Russell (1964) listed three records of this species from Belize. Wood *et al.* (1986) considered it a rare transient and (incorrectly) winter resident. Parker (1994) hypothesized that the Maya Mountains may form an important staging area for this species during spring migration. We noted a single male feeding in the mid-story along a logging road during a brief visit to New Maria Camp, Cayo District, on 7 April 1996. This date is consistent with Parker's (1994) observations made during 3–13 April 1992 at Toledo District.

BLUE SEEDEATER *Amaurospiza concolor*

Howell *et al.* (1992) listed several records of this species from Monkey Bay and reported a mist-netted bird from Bermudian Landing, Belize District. T. Aversa saw at least two individuals (at least

one male and one female) in bamboo thickets along the Belize River at Bermudian Landing on 30 March 1996.

GRASSLAND YELLOW-FINCH *Sicalis luteola*

Wood *et al.* (1986) described it as a rare permanent resident in Belize. Howell & Webb (1995) noted that this species is "somewhat nomadic". We observed a flock of 40–50 Grassland Yellow-finches as they flew and called over rice fields 3 km west of San Felipe, Orange Walk District, on 17 January 1994. Numerous subsequent visits to this site failed to produce further observations.

Acknowledgements

The authors thank D. Dyer, V. Giles, M. Kasprzyk and D. Nyzio for their companionship in the field. A. Vallely is grateful to Manomet Observatory For Conservation Sciences and Program For Belize for making his fieldwork possible. P. Sweet and S. N. G. Howell commented on a draft of this paper.

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