

**Notes on a nocturnal roost of Spotted Sandpipers in Trinidad, West Indies.**

—The Spotted Sandpiper, *Actitis macularia*, occurs in winter over a large portion of the Western Hemisphere, from the warmer parts of the United States to Chile and Argentina. Although the species is common in most of this extensive wintering range, little has been published about its winter behavior. Neither Tyler (1929) nor Matthiessen (*in* Stout et al., 1967: 212) discuss it. Several authors (Wetmore and Swales, 1931; Friedmann and Smith, 1960; Russell, 1964; Haverschmidt, 1968) note that the species is usually solitary on its wintering grounds rather than in flocks. In Panama, Wetmore (1965: 404) observed flocks of 100 and 200 Spotted Sandpipers during April that he believed were probably northbound migrants, and he reported one of these flocks roosting at night on the tar-gravel surface of an airfield. Russell (1964: 63) and Slud (1964: 95) remark that in British Honduras and in Costa Rica the species sometimes occurs in flocks, especially during migration along the coast. Swinebroad (1964) indicates that in Ohio the bird spends the night among other migrant shorebirds on mud flats, and Matthiessen (*idem*), remarks that it roosts on stumps, logs, and rocks, presumably during the breeding season. French (1966) mentions flocks of Spotted Sandpipers roosting in mangroves in Trinidad, West Indies, and adds (*pers. comm.*) that this is apparently not unusual as he had noted it in both autumn and spring, and had not looked for it in other months.

During the spring of 1965 while studying the ecology of marsh- and swamp-inhabiting birds on Trinidad, I several times found Spotted Sandpipers roosting at night on the edge of mangroves on the brackish side of a canal and dike near the southernmost point of the Caroni Swamp, about 9 miles south of Port-of-Spain, and about 1 mile inland from the western coast of the island. There a few minutes after sunset on 16 April I discovered 29 sandpipers roosting in a loose association on prop roots and branches of dead mangroves (*Rhizophora mangle*). The birds were perched 6 inches to 5 feet above the water, and some were only 6 inches apart. At dawn on 18 April I found 9 birds in the same place and 10 birds roosting on a small boat dock about 60 feet away. Later that morning I estimated about 30 Spotted Sandpipers feeding along the canals within a half-mile of the roost. Some of these birds may have roosted elsewhere, or, as Swinebroad (1964) suggested, they may have left the roost while it was still dark. On the evening of 6 May the water level was 6 inches lower than before, exposing an extensive mud flat partly covered with dying vegetation near the mangrove roost site. I saw no birds on the mangroves nor on the dock, but 14 sandpipers fed actively on the mud flat until dark, and then began crouching down and retracting their necks, apparently preparing to spend the night on the mud. By spotlight I watched two birds continue to feed after dark.

It is open to speculation whether the sandpipers prefer to roost on the mud flat and use the elevated perches only when the flats are covered. Most of the other mud flats I noted during the spring were subject to daily tidal flooding, whereas at the roost the lowering of the water was due mainly to the advancing dry season. Relative danger from potential predators in the two places may be a consideration; also different energy requirements may be involved in roosting in different postures.

Our knowledge of the wintering behavior of the closely related Common Sandpiper, *Actitis hypoleucos*, is at a similar stage. Most faunal books and papers indicate that it is mainly solitary in winter. Bannerman (1932) mentions that small flocks are seen during migration, and Clancey (1964: 162) and Meinertzhagen (1954: 502) mention small flocks associated with both migration and roosting.

I am grateful to Richard French who showed me the area in which the roost was

located, commented on an earlier draft of the manuscript, and allowed me to mention some of his observations.

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**First Rhode Island record of Bewick's Wren.**—On 4 October 1969 I netted a Bewick's Wren (*Thryomanes bewickii*) on Block Island, Rhode Island. The bird was collected and is now No. 793543 at the American Museum of Natural History in New York where John Bull confirmed the identification. Some of the tail feathers were missing when the bird was netted, and, as the rest of them fell out easily, the wren was presumably molting.

This is the first known record for Rhode Island and one of the few records for New England. The only New England specimen I have found was collected in Alton, New Hampshire 25 April 1890 (Forbush, *Birds of Massachusetts and other New England states, part 3*, Norwood, Massachusetts Dept. Agr., 1929). There seems to be no specimen record for New York, although Bull lists several recent sightings from the New York City region (*Birds of the New York area, New York, Harper and Row, 1964*, pp. 327-328). Bewick's Wren is a southern and western bird breeding as far northeast as central Pennsylvania (Check-list of North American birds, fifth Ed., Baltimore, Amer. Ornithol. Union, 1957), and it is usually rather sedentary. Its appearance on Block Island about 15 miles off the coast of Rhode Island is surprising, especially as the weather records of the Block Island State Airport show no unusual winds or storms preceding October 4.—ELISE LAPHAM. Accepted 9 Feb. 70.