

## NORTH AMERICAN SHORE BIRDS IN SURINAM

By F. HAVERSCHMIDT

Along the coast of Surinam vast tidal mud flats, shallow brackish lagoons, rivers, and creeks provide habitat for large numbers of migrating or wintering shore birds which breed in North America. The records herein reported are the result of nine years of work in many places along the coast, but mainly in the western part of the country from the mouth of the Corentyne River east to the mouth of the Surinam River, including the coast near Nickerie, the lagoons east of Nickerie, the coast near Coronie, and the mouth of the Coppename River. Farther to the east I also visited the lagoons near Matapica Creek, Commewijne District, which, unlike the natural lagoons east of Nickerie, are flooded and deserted cotton plantations. I visited these places in all months of the year, and for nearly all the common shore birds I was able to determine that many non-breeding individuals spend the northern summer along our coast.

Readers may be interested to learn that in Surinam shore birds are comparatively little disturbed by hunters, who, in general, are interested in large game. Occasionally a hunter will shoot into a compact flock of the larger species of shore birds, but wholesale killing or even regular hunting, as seems to be practiced in neighboring French Guiana, does not occur in Surinam. The game law of Surinam prohibits hunting of all shore birds except the Hudsonian Curlew, which may be taken in the period from October 1 to April 1.

In the following list only those species which I have personally observed and collected are included. If not otherwise indicated all specimens are preserved in the Leiden Museum. I have omitted the Black-necked Stilt (*Himantopus himantopus*), which at times is extremely common on shallow lagoons near the coast, as it is possible that individuals occurring in Surinam during the northern winter are members of the local breeding population rather than migrants from North America. According to James Greenway (in *litt.*), there is a specimen of the Stilt Sandpiper (*Micropalama himantopus*) from Surinam in the Museum of Comparative Zoology; I have never recorded this species. Nor have I any records of godwits (*Limosa*), oystercatchers (*Haematopus*), or Baird Sandpiper (*Erolia bairdii*).

*Squatarola squatarola*. Black-bellied Plover. Rather common on coastal mudflats and along outer rivers. The largest flock recorded consisted of about 50 birds noted at the coast near Coronie on September 12, 1946. Northern summer records: 2 on coast near Nickerie, June 15, 1953; 2 on coast near Coronie, July 13, 1953. All summering birds were in winter plumage. On November 17, 1953, I collected a bird that was still in nearly full breeding plumage on the coast near Nickerie.

*Pluvialis dominica*. Golden Plover. Apparently rare, as I have only two records: 3 near a lagoon at Coronie, September 12, 1946; and about 10 at the same locality, September 13, 1946.

*Charadrius hiaticula semipalmatus*. Semipalmated Plover. One of the commoner shore birds on coastal mudflats and along outer rivers. Present throughout the year; many individuals spend the northern summer along the coast; many at mouth of Coppename River, June 5 and 6, 1948; 12 near Nickerie, June 15, 1953; about 100 near Coronie, June 18, 1954 (specimen); numerous at mouth of Coppename River, July 10 and 11, 1947. Also occurs inland; a single individual was recorded at Republik, about 55 kilometers from the coast, on September 30, 1948 (specimen).

*Charadrius wilsonia wilsonia*. Wilson Plover. On December 1 and 2, 1952, there were a great many *C. wilsonia* in a large flock of *Ereunetes pusillus* and *Charadrius hiaticula* on a sandbank isolated by a high tide on the coast near Coronie. I collected 3 specimens which were identified as *C. w. wilsonia* by Dr. Junge of the Leiden Museum. This apparently is the first record of the northern race in Surinam; but its occurrence was to be expected, as Lincoln (Migration of North American Birds, 1935) mentioned the recovery in British Guiana of a bird banded in the United States. The

resident race of this plover, *C. w. cinnamominus*, cannot be distinguished in the field from the nominate race. Both are confined to sandy beaches.

*Bartramia longicauda*. Upland Plover. My records are as follows: one collected from flock of 4 near Paramaribo, March 26, 1947; one at same locality, December 26, 1949; one on dry savanna near Zanderij, about 50 kilometers south of Paramaribo, January 1, 1950. Bangs and Penard (Bull. Mus. Comp. Zool., 62, 1918:44) mentioned a bird collected near Paramaribo in April. The fact that this species frequents rather dry ground inland may account for its apparent rarity in Surinam.

*Numenius phaeopus*. Hudsonian Curlew. Regular and quite common on coastal mudflats and along outer rivers. Present throughout the year; a few spend the northern summer along the coast; few at mouth of Coppename River, June 5 and 6, 1948; few at mouth of Corentyne River, June 13, 1953; few near Nickerie, June 9, 1954; 6 near Coronie, June 18, 1954; 2 at same locality, July 9, 1946. Arrival of wintering birds from the north begins at the end of July; on July 30, 1954, there were about 50 on the coast near Coronie.

*Tringa flavipes*. Lesser Yellow-legs. Very common on coastal mudflats and shallow lagoons inland from the coast line. Recorded throughout the year; quite a number remain through the northern summer: several flocks at mouth of Coppename River, June 5 and 6, 1948; flock of 38 in rice field on the "Peperpot" plantation along the right bank of the Surinam River, June 9, 1949 (specimen); several at mouth of Coppename River, July 10 and 11, 1947; few near Coronie, July 13, 1953.

Arrival of wintering birds from the north seems to begin at the end of July, as I noted a flock of about 250 near Nickerie on July 31, 1947, and about 200 birds at the mouth of the Corentyne River on August 1, 1947. In areas of favorable habitat large numbers may be assembled. Thousands were present on very shallow lagoons near Nickerie on December 20 and 21, 1946, and near the Matapica Creek, Commewijne District, on November 30, 1947. *T. flavipes* also occurs far inland, as I collected a specimen at Republiek, about 55 kilometers from the coast, on September 9, 1948.

*Tringa melanoleuca*. Greater Yellow-legs. Numerous on coastal mudflats and lagoons, occurring in smaller flocks than *T. flavipes*. Recorded throughout the year. Northern summer records: few at mouth of Coppename River, June 5 and 6, 1948; 3 at Nickerie, June 15, 1953, and 3 at Coronie, on July 10, 1946, and few on July 13, 1953; 2 near Leonsberg, Surinam River, on July 6, 1953.

This species is more common inland than *T. flavipes*. I collected specimens at Zanderij, about 60 kilometers from the coast, on October 9, 1947, December 4, 1949, February 5, 1950, and September 2, 1951.

*Tringa solitaria*. Solitary Sandpiper. Quite common, frequenting fresh-water marshes, shallow ditches, creeks, and temporary pools; avoids coastal mudflats. Apparently no individuals of this species spend the northern summer in Surinam, as there are no June records. My earliest date of its arrival from the north is July 22, 1951, when I noted a single bird at a ditch near Paramaribo. By the end of July this species is common; several were present in a swamp near the Corentyne River on July 31, 1953. My latest spring record is of a few at the same locality on May 4, 1947.

*Actitis macularia*. Spotted Sandpiper. Very common, lone individuals occurring on coastal mudflats, along rivers from the coast far inland, along ditches and creeks, and at temporary pools on roads; never seen in flocks. Arrival of birds from the north begins early in July. Two individuals were recorded at Leonsberg on July 6, 1953, where none was recorded during the previous month. On July 10 and 11, 1947, several were noted at the mouth of the Coppename River. By the end of July the species is quite common; many were seen near Nickerie on July 24, 1946, and all along the Cottica River on July 29, 1946. Wintering birds remain in Surinam until the latter part of May and, rarely, the first part of June. The species was recorded at Paramaribo on May 18, 1948; 2 were seen at the Saramacca River on May 24, 1953, and 3 were present at Nickerie on May 23, 1954. Although I have been constantly on the watch for this species in June, I have recorded it only once, on June 9, 1954, when two birds in full breeding plumage were found near Nickerie. One of these proved to be a male with enlarged testes, suggesting that it is a late migrant rather than a summering bird.

The first migrants from the north arrive in Surinam in breeding plumage. Transition to winter plumage begins at the end of August, as indicated by a few birds in mixed plumage near Nickerie on August 22, 1954. The breeding plumage begins to appear in the last part of March; 2 birds in full breeding plumage were recorded at Leonsberg on March 23, 1955 (specimen), and on March 25, 1955, one in breeding and one in winter plumage were noted near Coronie.

*Catoptrophorus semipalmatus*. Willet. Common but confined to tidal mudflats and outer rivers.

Many remain through the northern summer: several at mouth of Coppename River, June 5 and 6, 1948, and July 10 and 11, 1947; few at Coronie, June 18, 1954; several at Saramacca River, July 12, 1946. Arrival from the north seems to begin at the end of July; hundreds were present on the coast near Coronie on July 30, 1954.

*Arenaria interpres morinella*. Ruddy Turnstone. One of the commoner shorebirds on tidal mudflats and along outer rivers. Recorded throughout the year; many remain through the northern summer: several at mouth of Coppename River, June 5 and 6, 1948; 12 at Nickerie, June 9, 1954; about 30 at same locality, June 15, 1953; 12 at Coronie, June 18, 1954 (specimen); several at mouth of Coppename River, July 10 and 11, 1947; small flock at Coronie, July 13 and 14, 1953. Birds which summer in Surinam generally do not assume breeding plumage, but on June 15, 1953, a single individual in full breeding plumage was seen among a flock of about 30 at Nickerie.

At high tides these birds frequently rest in long rows on the branches of mangroves, often several feet above the water, and also on stakes put into the water by fishermen.

*Limnodromus griseus griseus*. Short-billed Dowitcher. A very locally distributed species which I have found numerous only on the vast tidal mudflats at the mouth of Coppename River. Here great numbers were assembled on June 5 and 6, 1948, July 10 and 11, 1947, and April 1, 1953 (specimen). On the last date some birds were partially in breeding plumage. A few were present at a shallow lagoon near Coronie on September 13, 1946 (specimen).

*Calidris canutus*. Knot. A rare bird which I have recorded only twice: compact flock at the coast near Nickerie, August 23, 1953; single individual in breeding plumage at same locality, May 23, 1954.

*Crocechia alba*. Sanderling. Uncommon singly or in groups of two or three on sandy beaches along the coast. Recorded throughout the year. Northern summer records: Nickerie, June 14, 1953; Coronie, June 18, and July 30, 1954.

*Ereunetes pusillus*. Semipalmated Sandpiper. The commonest small sandpiper on tidal mudflats and along outer rivers; never seen inland. Many remain through the northern summer: numerous at mouth of Coppename River, June 5 and 6, 1948; small flock near Coronie, June 18, 1954 (specimen), and few at same locality, July 14, 1953.

*Ereunetes mauri*. Western Sandpiper. On December 1, 1952, a very large flock of *Ereunetes pusillus*, mixed with large numbers of *Charadrius hiaticula* and *Charadrius wilsonia*, was concentrated by a high tide on a sandbank at the coast near Coronie. Among a number of birds collected at that time was a single specimen of *Ereunetes mauri* (specimen in American Museum of Natural History). This appears to be a considerable extension of known winter range. According to Peters (Check-List of Birds of the World, 2, 1934:283), *E. mauri* has not been recorded farther east in South America than Venezuela.

*Erolia minutilla*. Least Sandpiper. Much less numerous than *E. pusillus* and, in contrast to that species, not found on tidal mudflats, occurring only on shallow lagoons and far inland. Because this species is difficult to distinguish in the field from *E. pusillus*, all my records are based on specimens, as follows: Nickerie, April 20, 1953; Republiek, October 12, 1947; Zanderij, October 23, 1949; Matapica Creek, October 26, 1954; Leonsberg, November 6, 1953.

*Erolia fuscicollis*. White-rumped Sandpiper. Two records, both inland: Coronie, September 21, 1946 (specimen); Republiek, November 2, 1947 (specimen).

*Erolia melanotos*. Pectoral Sandpiper. Two records, both inland: Republiek, September 30, 1948 (specimen), and October 12, 1947 (specimen).

**Summary.**—Many northern shore birds winter along the coast of Surinam, and small numbers of the following species also remain through the northern summer: *Squatarola squatarola*, *Charadrius hiaticula*, *Numenius phaeopus*, *Tringa flavipes*, *Tringa melanoleuca*, *Catoptrophorus semipalmatus*, *Arenaria interpres*, *Limnodromus griseus*, *Crocechia alba*, and *Ereunetes pusillus*. As a rule, summering individuals are in immature or in winter plumage.

*Charadrius hiaticula*, *Tringa flavipes*, and *Tringa melanoleuca* occur inland on shallow lagoons as well as on tidal mudflats along the coast. *Erolia minutilla*, *Erolia fuscicollis*, *Erolia melanotos*, and *Tringa solitaria* seem to be confined to inland habitats.

*Ereunetes mauri* is recorded for the first time from Surinam.

Paramaribo, Surinam, April 5, 1955.