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NEW AND INTERESTING RECORDS FROM THE CHIRIQUÍ HIGHLANDS OF PANAMÁ

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During the spring of 1968, while stationed at the Volcán de Chiriquí Field Station and Nature Center in the mountains of Chiriquí province a few miles below the village of Cerro Punta, we recorded a number of birds that contribute to the distributional knowledge of this area. The new Nature Center, acquired by the Florida Audubon Society and operated by the Florida State University Center for Tropical Studies, has been described by Loftin (Florida Naturalist 41(1):21-24, 1968). Our observations were made while working under Dr. Loftin in connection with his migrant bird-banding program, which is supported by the U. S. Public Health Service, research grant AI 06072.

Six of the species mentioned below (marked with an asterisk) appear to be additions to the avifauna of the highlands of western Chiriquí (Eisenmann and Loftin, Field Checklist of Birds of the Western Chiriquí Highlands, Panamá, Florida Audubon Soc., 1967). They are lowland birds taken or observed higher in this area than previously known. Other species mentioned are interesting because of their apparent rarity, recent population increase, or for other reasons indicated.

The following were netted or seen near the highway below the village of El Hato del Volcán, Chiriquí, at an elevation estimated between 3800 and 4000 ft. The netting area was very near the highway and was covered predominantly by second growth brush and scrubby vegetation, with some open pasture. Eugene Eisenmann informs us that the area is one of heavy rainfall, which formerly supported a subtropical forest. He suggests that clearing for roads, agriculture, and pasturage has permitted lowland forms of more open habitats to make their way upwards into the mountains.

Cattle Egret. *Bubulcus ibis*. A large roost contained 680 on 21 April. The Panamá population is said to be growing.

*Yellow-headed Caracara. *Milvago chimachima*. A common pasture-land species of the lowlands, seen well in flight on 28 April.

*Bran-colored Flycatcher. *Myiophobus fasciatus*.

Netted on 20 and 21 April; male taken on 21 April to ensure identification (10.1 g).

*Riverside Wren. *Thryothorus semibadius*. Netted and photographed in color on 20 and 21 April.

*Bananaquit. *Coereba flaveola*. Seen on 20 April; netted on 25 April.

Yellow-bellied Siskin. *Spinus xanthogaster*. Seen on 20 and 21 April; adult male netted, banded, and released on 28 April. The 4000 ft elevation is remarkably low for this species, which was not uncommon near the Nature Center above 5400 ft.

Two other species which regularly occur in the lowlands were observed on the nearby Volcán Lakes at about 4000 ft, on 12 March by Eisenmann, Leck, and others: a *Great Egret (*Casmerodius albus*) and two adult *Green Herons (*Butorides virescens*).

The following two species, netted at or near the Volcán de Chiriquí Nature Center, are interesting because of their supposed rarity in Panamá.

White-throated Flycatcher. *Empidonax albigularis*. A male was netted and preserved on 23 April (weight 9.1 g) at an estimated 5800-6000 ft elevation in a cleared area that has become overgrown with brush about 8-12 feet high. Several other examples were netted, banded, and released at the same locality. Eisenmann informed us that there are very few specimens of this species from Panamá, that its status is uncertain, and that he knows of none previously taken from the west side of the Volcán de Chiriquí massif.

Slaty Finch. *Spodiornis rusticus*. Six individuals were mist-netted at the Nature Center (5400 ft) in a damp habitat near a small stream on the border of humid montane forest; four males were preserved as specimens. These are the first specimens of this species to be taken in Panamá since Davidson described *S. r. barrilesensis* on the basis of a single bird from Chiriquí in 1932. There are no published sight reports except two of a group seen on the ground in July 1948 by Eisenmann at about 5000 ft. (*in* Slud, Bull. Amer. Mus. Nat. Hist. 128:380, 1964). Two males were taken by Loftin on 1 March, one fully adult (18.7 g) and an immature (18 g). Another adult male was taken on 14 April (14.5 g), and another immature male on 18 April (16.7 g). All the specimens are essentially slaty above and below, but the two immatures show an olivaceous wash, and the one taken 18 April also has rather rufescent brown borders to most of the secondaries and greater wing-coverts. Another male in slaty plumage and a brownish bird, presumably a female, were also netted; the former was banded and released, the latter escaped.

We wish to thank Eugene Eisenmann of the American Museum of Natural History for checking our specimens and photographic slides, and for his help in preparing this note. Specimens mentioned have been deposited with the American Museum of Natural History.

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