

Three species of exotic passerine in Venezuela

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Se presentan registros de tres especies exóticas de Passeriformes, sin previos registros en Venezuela. *Lonchura malacca* fue encontrado en junio de 1996 en Guacara, cerca de Valencia: hay evidencia anecdótica que sugiere que la especie ha colonizado algunas áreas de los Llanos. *Lonchura oryzivora*, una popular ave de jaula, parece estar bien establecida en áreas al oeste y norte del país, p.e. en Caricuao y Maracay. *Passer domesticus* fue encontrado en el puerto La Guaira en agosto–septiembre de 1996, donde parece estar nidificando. Se está tramitando una licencia para exterminar la especie en Venezuela.

Introduction

Three new species of exotic passerine have apparently become established in northern Venezuela, each of them representing new documented records for the country.



Tricoloured Munia *Lonchura malacca* (Lyn Wells)

Tricoloured Munia *Lonchura malacca*

On 18 June 1996 a presumed colony of Tricoloured Munia was found in a roadside meadow close to Guacara near the city of Valencia. The group consisted of c.10 birds including displaying males, although this does not necessarily indicate breeding¹. However, anecdotal evidence suggests that this species has become naturalised in small numbers in the Llanos, with sporadic unconfirmed reports in recent years. Additionally, when RR interviewed several cage-bird dealers in Caracas in 1995, all asserted that their stock of this species is of wild origin, although they declined to give localities. The species is native to south India and Sri Lanka, but has also been introduced in Tokyo, Japan, Hong Kong and Hawaii¹.

Java Sparrow *Lonchura oryzivora*

The Java Sparrow is being observed with increasing frequency in Acarigua and the Caracas–Maracay area in west and north-central Venezuela. It is a popular cage-bird, and individuals are occasionally seen around motorway service stations where birds are sold (e.g. the Oh! Campo services between Caracas and Maracay). A popu-

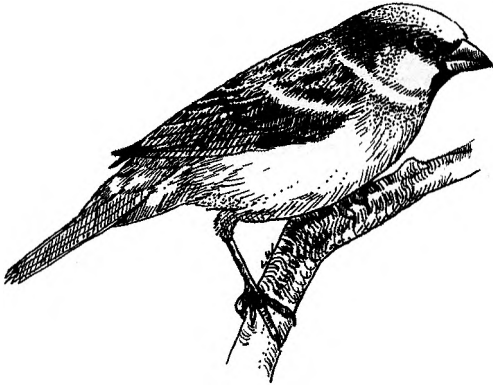
lation in the Caricuao area appears to have been established for a number of years, as do others near Maracay (M. Lentino pers. comm. 1996). Specimens for the cage-bird trade apparently come from Acarigua, a major area for rice cultivation (RR). The species is native to Java and Bali in South-East Asia, with introduced populations in many parts of the world including Florida, USA, and Puerto Rico. It is apparently only able to maintain stable populations where rice is plentiful¹, such as the Acarigua–Barinas area, although the true nature of its ecological requirements in Venezuela is unknown.



Java Sparrow *Lonchura oryzivora* (Lyn Wells)

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

A long-awaited arrival, House Sparrow *Passer domesticus* was seen in the port of La Guaira on 31 August 1996 (DA). The presence of a colony was confirmed on September 1996 (DA & CS), when numbers were estimated at c.30 birds. They were associating with native Saffron Finches *Sicalis flaveola*. The number of birds involved suggests that breeding had already taken place, and thus the species may have been present for a year or more. It is also possible that other colonies have become established nearby. Originating in west Asia and North Africa, the range has expanded to



House Sparrow *Passer domesticus* (Lyn Wells)

include most of the world. In South America, the species is already naturalised in Bolivia, Chile, east Argentina, Paraguay, Uruguay, Brazil; coastal Peru, Ecuador, and Colombia; and many Caribbean islands including nearby Curaçao, Netherlands Antilles. A permit is being sought from the Venezuelan Wildlife Service to exterminate the species in the country.

Reference

1. Restall, R. (1996) *Munias and Mannakins*. Robertsbridge, Sussex: Pica Press.

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