

The first record of Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus* for South America

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Se describe el registro del primer *Tringa erythropus* para América del Sur, en las lagunas Bon Accord, Tobago, el 13 febrero 1983. El registro ha sido recientemente aceptado por el Comité de Rarezas de Trinidad & Tobago. Se discute este registro a la luz de otras apariciones en USA, Barbados y aquellos de otras aves del Paleártico Occidental en Trinidad & Tobago.

On the morning of 13 February 1983, while leading a combined Sunbird/Wings birdwatching tour to Trinidad and Tobago, I found a Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus* at the Bon Accord lagoons in south-west Tobago. It was associating with a small group of Willets *Catoptrophorus semipalmatus*, Greater Yellowlegs *Tringa melanoleuca* and Lesser Yellowlegs *T. flavipes*.

Features which immediately made the bird stand out from the other waders present were its orange-red legs, long fine black bill with a red basal half to the lower mandible, and broad white supraloral stripe extending just to the rear of the eye. The upperparts were rather uniform pale grey, though the tertials were well notched in the usual way for this species in winter plumage. The underparts were white.

The record was submitted to Richard ffrench who included it in the second edition of his *A guide to the birds of Trinidad and Tobago*¹, but square bracketed the record as species were only admitted to the main Trinidad and Tobago list if documented with photographs or a specimen. However, a rarities committee has recently been established for the islands in order to adjudicate sight records, and the sighting has been accepted by the committee (see first Trinidad & Tobago Rarities Committee Report in Neotropical Notebook, this issue). It therefore seems appropriate to publish details of this record and add it unambiguously to the South American list.

Spotted Redshank is a widespread Palearctic species, breeding in the north of this region and undertaking long-distance migrations to winter as far south as Africa, India and South-East Asia. It has occurred in Australia as a vagrant and in North America on at least 30 occasions, most frequently in Alaska, but also in the eastern half of the lower 48 states more than 10 times. Most of these have been in spring or autumn, suggesting that such individuals winter further south (P. Lehman pers. comm.). In addition, the species has occurred on Barbados on at least four occasions, once, in March

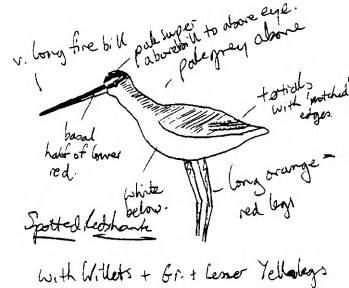


Figure 1. Field notes on the Spotted Redshank *Tringa erythropus*, made at the time of observation.

1980, concurrently with a Greenshank *Tringa nebularia* (R. ffrench pers. comm.).

Tobago is, of course, well placed to receive vagrants from the Western Palearctic and during eight visits to Tobago between 1976–1989, I saw single Ruff *Philomachus pugnax* and Black-headed Gull *Larus ridibundus* on two occasions each and a single Lesser Black-backed Gull *L. fuscus* on one occasion. Little Egret *Egretta garzetta* has also been recorded in recent years. Many of the Western Palearctic species that have occurred in the eastern USA are potential vagrants to the northern part of South America, particularly to the offshore islands, and this should be firmly borne in mind by visiting birdwatchers.

Acknowledgements

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Reference

1. ffrench, R. (1991) *A guide to the birds of Trinidad and Tobago*. Second edition. London: A. & C. Black.

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