

Interesting avifaunal records from the Dominican Republic

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Presentamos aquí observaciones ornitológicas de interés para 16 especies, resultado de tres visitas a la República Dominicana: en abril 1996 y abril y junio 1998. Entre ellas, los registros de primavera más tardíos de *Falco columbarius* y *Calidris himantopus*, el primer registro para la isla de *Calidris alpina*, el cuarto y quinto registro de *Limnodromus scolopaceus*, el tercer registro de *Sterna forsteri*, registros de altitud para *Geotrygon chrysis* y *G. caniceps*, y el cuarto a sexto registro de *Stelgidopteryx serripennis* en el país.

During three recent short ornithological visits to the Dominican Republic—on 16–23 April 1996, 13–19 April 1998 and 2–13 June 1998—we made a number of significant observations which update our current knowledge of the country's avifauna. Some of the most significant and interesting have been published separately, e.g. of Black-capped Petrel *Pterodroma hasitata*¹¹ and Swainson's Hawk *Buteo swainsoni*¹. Here, we present other records, primarily of species recorded on few previous occasions in Hispaniola. Names additional to our own in parentheses denote those of any co-observers, a full list of whom is presented in the Acknowledgements.

White-tailed Tropicbird *Phaethon lepturus*

Three pairs were nesting in cliffs by Cabo Rojo beach, Pedernales, on 5 June 1998 (RSRW *et al.*). This is the first specific documentation of the species nesting in the Dominican Republic since 1895, although it is suspected to breed relatively routinely in the country (A. Keith pers. comm.).

Green Heron *Butorides virescens*

Two at c.250 m, just north of Duvergé, Independencia, on 18 April 1996 and one in dry scrub at 50 m, below Las Mercedes, Pedernales, on 18 April 1998 (GMK *et al.*) are the highest specific altitudinal records in the Dominican Republic (A. Keith pers. comm.), although it is reported to range "along streams into the high interior"¹⁰.

Merlin *Falco columbarius*

One at Laguna del Rincón, Barahona, on 20 April 1996 is the latest ever spring record in Hispaniola (A. Keith pers. comm.). Previous extreme dates for Hispaniola appear to be 7 December–12 March^{6,10}. The species is listed as a scarce non-breeding resident in the West Indies in August–May, with most departing by March⁷.

Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus*

One at 600 m below El Aguacate, Independencia, on 17 April 1998 (GMK *et al.*). There are few records from Hispaniola and this bird was relatively late; Raffaele *et al.*⁷ state that it occurs in the West Indies primarily from October–April.

White-rumped Sandpiper *Calidris fuscicollis*

One in summer plumage on a roadside pool between Paraíso and Enriquillo, Barahona, on 20 April 1996 is one of the few spring records in Hispaniola. Wetmore & Lincoln⁹ observed singles on Isla Beata, Baoruco, Dominican Republic, on 12 and 15 May 1931.

Dunlin *Calidris alpina*

One in summer plumage on a roadside pool between Paraíso and Enriquillo, Barahona, on 20 April 1996 is the first record in Hispaniola. Considered a rare non-breeding resident in the Bahamas, very rare on the other Greater Antillean islands and a vagrant on the Cayman Islands and three islands in the Lesser Antilles⁷.

Stilt Sandpiper *Calidris himantopus*

One on a roadside pool between Paraíso and Enriquillo, Barahona, on 20 April 1996 is the latest spring record in Hispaniola (A. Keith pers. comm.).

Long-billed Dowitcher *Limnodromus scolopaceus*

One in summer plumage on a roadside pool between Paraíso and Enriquillo, Barahona, on 20 April 1996 (CGB, GMK, RSRW) was the fourth ever, and latest spring, record in Hispaniola (A. Keith pers. comm.). It was principally identified on the basis of the broader dark tail bars, densely spotted foreneck, largely unmarked reddish breast, belly and undertail-coverts, and high-pitched *keek* call. Another, identified at Cabo Rojo, Pedernales, on 4 June 1998 (RSRW *et al.*), is the fifth record. Considered a very rare migrant in the West Indies with records elsewhere from Cuba, Jamaica, the Virgin and Cayman Islands, St. Kitts and Barbados⁷.

Roseate Tern *Sterna dougallii*

Approximately 50 flew south offshore from a headland south of Barahona, on 20 April 1996. The earliest spring date in the Dominican Republic (A. Keith pers. comm.). The species breeds in the east and south Dominican Republic: Wetmore & Lincoln⁹ found the species ready to breed in mid-May 1931

on Isla Beata, Baoruco, and the first-named author discovered it nesting on the cays at the entrance to Bahía de San Lorenzo, Hato, in mid-May 1927¹⁰.

Forster's Tern *Sterna forsteri*

Two summer-plumaged adults flew south offshore from a headland south of Barahona, on 20 April 1996. The third record in Hispaniola (A. Keith pers. comm.). Elsewhere in the West Indies it is considered a rare migrant to the Bahamas, Cayman Islands and Cuba, very rare on Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands and a vagrant to Jamaica and three islands in the Lesser Antilles⁷.

Key West Quail-dove *Geotrygon chrysis*

Three at 1,000 m near El Aguacate, Independencia, on 19 April 1996 are the highest ever altitudinal record. Parker *et al.*⁵ lists the species to at least 500 m, and Wetmore & Swales¹⁰ record that Kaempfer collected the species between 30 and 500 m in the Dominican Republic.

Grey-headed Quail-dove *Geotrygon caniceps*

One at Pueblo Viejo, Independencia, on 7 June 1998, was, at 1,685 m, apparently the highest ever altitudinal record of the species in the Dominican Republic (A. Keith pers. comm.), although del Hoyo *et al.*³ list occurrence to 1,800 m. Wetmore & Swales¹⁰ list the species to 1,500 m.



Grey-headed Quail-dove *Geotrygon caniceps* (J. Fjeldså)

Hispaniolan Parakeet *Aratinga chloroptera*

A total of 118 birds, including one still downy young, roosted in two palm trees outside the Hotel Embajador, Santo Domingo, Distrito Nacional, on 3 June 1998 (RSRW *et al.*). This is the largest flock recorded in recent years, and particularly unusual in being in an urban area (A. Keith pers. comm.).

Olive-throated Parakeet *Aratinga nana*

Several above Puerto Escondido, Independencia, on 18 April 1996; one roosting with Hispaniolan Parakeets (see above) by the Hotel Embajador, Santo Domingo, Distrito Nacional, on 3 June 1998; and two between Duvergé and Coá, Independencia, on 11 June 1998 (RSRW *et al.*). The species' occurrence in the Dominican Republic was recently confirmed by Latta *et al.*⁴ and Hess², following the original report by Smith⁸ in 1996. The species appears reasonably well established in the south-west of the country.

Ashy-faced Owl *Tyto glaucops*

One just after dusk, by the road above El Aguacate, Independencia, on 18 April 1996 (CGB, GMK, RSRW), and one at Pueblo Viejo, Independencia, on 7 June 1998 (RSRW *et al.*). There are apparently few recent records of this Hispaniolan endemic (A. Keith pers. comm. 1998), although Raffaele *et al.*⁷ consider it to be "fairly widespread and common locally".

Golden Swallow *Tachycineta euchrysea*

Approximately 20 birds at c.900 m, above Las Mercedes, Pedernales, on 18 April 1998 (GMK *et al.*) included at least three apparent pairs. One pair had a nest in a large boulder in an abandoned bauxite working. The nest hole was situated c.1.5 m above the ground and what could be seen of the nest consisted of a cup of fresh grasses c.12.5 cm from the entrance. It proved impossible to establish what stage the nesting process had reached, although no young could be heard in the nest. Subsequently, on 6 June 1998, four birds, including three juveniles, were discovered in the same area (RSRW *et al.*). Raffaele *et al.*⁷ list the following nest sites for the species: abandoned woodpecker holes and other tree cavities, under house eaves and possibly in caves. A nest discovered by Bond in an old woodpecker hole was 15 m above the ground¹⁰.

Northern Rough-winged Swallow

Stelgidopteryx serripennis

Three records: one at Bella Vista, near Sosúa, Puerto Plata, on 16 April 1996; c.10 at Bisonó, Santiago, on 17 April 1996; and one at Santo Domingo, Distrito Nacional, on 16 April 1998 (GMK, G. M. Flieg) are the 4–6th records in the Dominican Republic (A. Keith pers. comm.). The species has presumably been overlooked previously.

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