

This is the SOUTH EASTERN CARIBBEAN BIRD ALERT April 2008 summary of sightings through the Region. Sponsored by the TT Field Naturalists Club, our aim is to promote birding and ornithology by fostering communication among resident and visiting birders regarding the study of birds in the region. The SCBA and information about TTFNC, TT Rare Bird Committee and our Photo Gallery are accessible at "http://www.wow.net/ttfnc" . Reports should be sent to Martyn Kenefick tel 674.7609; Email "martynkenefick@hotmail.com" The TT Rare Birds Committee requires details for species indicated with an asterisk.

From St Lucia, a EURASIAN SPOONBILL at Cul de Sac river (apparently found at the end of 2007) and still present on 20th Apr at least and a male ROSE BREASTED GROSBEAK at La Toc on 25th Apr. The recent expansion of HOUSE SPARROWS through the Caribbean has reached the town of Gros Islet where several pairs are nesting. Also of interest, 12 probable SHORT-TAILED SWIFTS around Castries

From Guadeloupe, a total of 8 hours sea watching during the month from Petite-terre Nature Reserve produced : 279 MANX SHEARWATERS, 2 CORY'S SHEARWATERS, 17 WILSON' S STORM PETRELS, 2 LEACHS'S STORM PETRELS, 4 POMARINE and 2 LONG TAILED JAEGERs together with 5 unidentified small shearwaters, 170 storm petrels and 9 jaegers. Also on the island, an AMERICAN GOLDEN PLOVER on 14th Apr, 5 WILLET on the 19th a male SUMMER TANAGER and 2 WESTERN SANDPIPERS on the 26th
From Desirade Is, a DOUBLE CRESTED CORMORANT (3rd record for Guada) found on the 12th died the following day. On 15th Apr a male ROSE BREASTED GROSBEAK was found and on the 26th there were 3 SCARLET TANAGERS and a female ROSE BREASTED GROSBEAK
Seawatching for 8 hours from Point des Chateaux produced a mammoth total of 4327 MANX SHEARWATERS and a RING BILLED GULL was at Point a Pitre on the 29th

From Tobago, a GRAY HERON (1st for Tobago) was found at Bon Accord on Apr 1st. The first BROWN NODDIES of the season were at Smith Is on 20th Apr and on the same date a migrating flock of 100+ BROAD WINGED HAWKS soared over Bon Accord. A female SWALLOW TANAGER * (1st for Tobago) was both seen and photographed at Cuffie River on 23rd Apr

From the northern range of Trinidad, single VARIEGATED FLYCATCHER * and CRIMSON CRESTED WOODPECKER both found at an elevation of approx 1800ft in Lopinot valley on 12th Apr

On the west coast of Trinidad, maxima counts on the tidal mudflats between Waterloo and Orange valley during the month 2th Apr include 350 BLACK SKIMMERS, 210 LARGE BILLED TERNS, 90 ROYAL TERNS, 25 YELLOW BILLED TERNS, 16 COMMON TERNS together with 20 RED KNOT, 12 SHORT BILLED DOWITCHERS, 4 WILSON'S PLOVERS and a LEAST TERN. A SNAIL KITE * was reported from Orange valley on the 7th . At the same locality, a party of 8 GREATER FLAMINGOS * were present on 19th Apr increasing to 16 on the 27th together with the first reported COLLARED PLOVERS of the season and a CLAPPER RAIL

On the east coast of Trinidad, the WHITE TAILED HAWK * found on 22nd Feb was still present at Kernaham on 27th Apr. On the same date, a BLACK COLLARED HAWK was reported from the same locality

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION :- there is, in preparation, an article to appear in the magazine Neotropical Birding on Estrilid finches in the Neotropics. The author would gratefully appreciate information on current status / change in distribution for any such species occurring in the Caribbean islands. Any relevant comments can be sent via "martynkenefick@hotmail.com"

RARE BIRD REPORTING :- many of the identifications from Trinidad and Tobago reported in the SCBA are tentative. The TT Rare Birds Committee, founded in 1995, requests details for all rare birds observed (see Species Review List at our website). Please submit details to the TTRBC Secretary : Martyn Kenefick, 36 Newallovile Ave, San Juan - Email "martynkenefick@hotmail.com"

This is the SOUTH EASTERN CARIBBEAN BIRD ALERT May 2008 summary of sightings through the Region. Sponsored by the TT Field Naturalists Club, our aim is to promote birding and ornithology by fostering communication among resident and visiting birders regarding the study of birds in the region. The SCBA and information about TTFNC, TT Rare Bird Committee and our Photo Gallery are accessible at "http://www.wow.net/ttfnc" . Reports should be sent to Martyn Kenefick tel 674.7609; Email "martynkenefick@hotmail.com" The TT Rare Birds Committee requires details for species indicated with an asterisk.

From Guadeloupe, a total of 15 hours sea watching from Petite Terre Nature Reserve during the month produced totals of 392 CORY'S SHEARWATERS, 1 GREAT SHEARWATER, 1 BLACK CAPPED PETREL, 1 SOOTY SHEARWATER, 8 POMARINE JAEGER, 2 PARASITIC JAEGER, 1 LONG TAILED JAEGER, 36 AUDUBON'S SHEARWATERS, 9 MANX SHEARWATERS, 23 WILSON'S STORM PETRELS AND 5 LEACH'S PETRELS together with 10 "large shearwaters", 14 jaeger sp, 18 "small shearwaters" and 49 storm petrel sp.

From Pointe des Chateaux, a total of 12 hours surveying produced 57 CORY'S SHEARWATERS, 51 SOOTY SHEARWATERS, 15 MANX SHEARWATERS, 12 AUDUBON'S SHEARWATERS, 53 WILSON'S STORM PETRELS, 2 LEACH'S PETRELS, 20 PARASITIC JAEGER, 18 POMARINE JAEGER, 10 LONG TAILED JAEGER, 2 ARCTIC TERNS and single ROSEATE and SANDWICH TERNS. Also recorded were 3 "large shearwaters", 1 "small shearwater", 120 storm petrel sp and 43 tern sp

On land at Petite Terre, a CAPE MAY WARBLER was found on 3rd May and an EARED DOVE on the 19th. A BLACK THROATED GREEN WARBLER was seen on 20th May together with 3 WEST INDIAN WHISTLING DUCKS, single WESTERN SANDPIPER and BLACK NECKED STILT and a pair of WILSON'S PLOVERS with 3 chicks. A RED FOOTED BOOBY was seen on 21st May and a BALTIMORE ORIOLE and 2 EURASIAN WHIMBRELS were present from 25th - 27th. From Desirade Is, single FORK TAILED FLYCATCHER, RED EYED VIREO (3 present the following day) and BLACKPOLL WARBLERS were found on 4th May together with 4-5 WHITE WINGED DOVES. Finally a further 9 WHITE WINGED DOVES were found at Pointe des Chateaux on the 22nd

From Tobago, proven nesting of MASKED DUCKS * at Lowlands, with a female and five ducklings seen on 7th May, also at the same site, a party of 9 WILLET. On 11th May, a WHITE TAILED TROPICBIRD seen at Little Tobago

In the northern range of Trinidad, early morning in Lopinot valley on 24th May produced a total of 69 species including 2-3 AMERICAN SWALLOW TAILED KITES, 2 (probable) GREAT BLACK HAWKS *, 2 VARIEGATED FLYCATCHERS* and a BLACK WHISKERED VIREO*. On 28th May, a hike along Lalaja ridge produced 72 species including ORANGE BILLED NIGHTINGALE THRUSH, 2 CHESTNUT WOODPECKERS and a SWALLOW TANAGER

From the west coast of Trinidad, the flock of GREATER FLAMINGOES present since 19th Apr had increased to 25 by 8th May and 35 by 17th May . High tide roost maxima during the month at Orange Valley include approximately 1000 BLACK SKIMMERS, 300 YELLOW BILLED TERNS, 100 LARGE BILLED TERNS, 100 ROYAL TERNS and 40 RED KNOT. At the same locality, the first reported WHITE RUMPED SANDPIPERS of the season were found with 6 on May 11th and on 17th May there were 3 CLAPPER RAILS and a PARASITIC JAEGER

In south west Trinidad, a COCOI HERON was photographed in Oropouche lagoon on 4th May and a CRANE HAWK over Roussillac on the 31st

From north east Trinidad, early morning in the forest south of Grande Riviere produced 3 TRINIDAD PIPING GUAN, 6 CRIMSON CRESTED WOODPECKERS, 2 BRIGHT RUMPED ATTILA, 2 YELLOW-OLIVE FLYCATCHERS and a WHITE WINGED BECARD

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From Guadeloupe, a maximum of 320 SNOWY EGRETS were at saline du Gosier on 11th Jun. On the 17th there were 6 MASKED DUCKS at Bel Etang and the first ever summer record of a GULL BILLED TERN at Port-Louis

During June, the main attention is on the seabird passage. From a total of 6 hours watching at Petite-terre Nature Reserve, there passed 164 GREAT SHEARWATERS, 33 CORY'S SHEARWATERS, 11 large shearwater sp 8 WILSON'S STORM-PETRELS, 1 LEACH'S STORM PETREL, 5 storm-petrel sp, 6 AUDUBON'S SHEARWATERS, 2 MANX SHEARWATERS and a small shearwater sp However, these figures were totally eclipsed on 27th June where from Pointe des Chateaux, there passed 1281 GREAT SHEARWATERS, 7 CORY'S SHEARWATERS, 145 large shearwater sp

, 5 AUDUBON'S SHEARWATERS and 2 MANX SHEARWATERS ,

From Tobago, a flock of 65 BLACK SKIMMERS at Bon Accord on 29th June

In northern Trinidad, at least 3 BAT FALCONS were present close to La Filette on 1st June and up to 5 birds in Lopinot valley throughout the month. On Morne Bleu a non-breeding plumaged male RUFIOUS SHAFTED WOODSTAR * was found on 8th June. It remained for at least a week being joined by a second similarly plumaged bird on the 14th and, incredibly a third, in full breeding dress was seen briefly on the 15th. In the same general area 2 TRINIDAD PIPING GUAN, up to 10 CHANNEL BILLED TOUCANS fed in fruiting trees a party of 8 AMERICAN SWALLOW TAILED KITES fed on low flying insects on 14th - 15th. Also on the 15th, a male LONG BILLED STARHROAT. Certainly even more unexpected was a GRAY NECKED WOOD RAIL seen and photographed feeding actually on the tray tables from the balcony at Asa Wright on the 14th In Surrey village Lopinot, single male BLUE TAILED EMERALD and LONG BILLED STARHROAT were seen regularly throughout the month, a probable adult BLACK HAWK EAGLE drifted over on the 11th and a SMALL BILLED ELAENIA was found on the 17th, at the same site as in 2007

On the west coast of Trinidad, the party of GREATER FLAMINGOS first reported from Orange Valley on 19th Apr peaked at 37 birds on 7th June, with 35 still present on the 14th and remaining to month's end. Monthly maxima at the high tide roost included 600 BLACK SKIMMERS, 70 LARGE BILLED TERNS, 50 ROYAL TERNS, 45 YELLOW BILLED TERNS, 29 RED KNOT, 10 COLLOARED PLOVERS and 4 WILSON'S PLOVERS

In south west Trinidad, 2 male LEAST BITTERNs and a single PINNATED BITTERN at Sudama Steps on 10th June

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From Barbados , single LEAST TERNS off the S. coast and one off the NW coast on 13th and 15th July respectively. On 20th July shorebird migration was underway with an early SOLITARY SANDPIPER, 2 LESSER YELLOWLEGS and a SEMI-PALMATED PLOVER at Constitution River, Bridgetown. Also at the turf-farm in St. Lucy, 50 adult LEAST SANDPIPERS, 5 SEMI-PALMATED PLOVERS and a LESSER YELLOWLEGS, with 2 adult SPOTTED SANDPIPERS nearby.

From Guadeloupe, at Port Louis swamp, a TRICOLORED HERON (1st summer record for the island) was found on 11th July together with 280 SNOWY EGRETS, 2 LITTLE EGRETS, 5 LEAST BITTERNs, and a BLACK NECKED STILT whilst an AMERICAN OYSTERCATCHER was present from 13-19 July.

Elsewhere on the island a male AMERICAN REDSTART (1st summer record for the island) was at Pointe des Chateaux on 8th July; 3 WHITE WINGED DOVES were at Moule on the 12th; a BLACK CROWNED NIGHT-HERON (rare on the island) was found at Gosier on the 18th and CARIBBEAN MARTIN numbers peaked at 766 on the 24th a Pointe a Pitre

In the northern range of Trinidad, a female BLUE TAILED EMERALD still in a Surrey village garden on 5th July. On 27th July a SHORT TAILED PYGMY TYRANT was found along Las Lapas. On the same date a movement of at least 80 WHITE COLLARED SWIFTS flew north up the Arima valley and a party of approx 65 SWALLOW TAILED KITES were soaring low over Guanapo valley

On the north west peninsula of Trinidad an immature REDDISH EGRET* has been seen continuously on the Diego Martin river from 10th July to the month end. This is a different bird to that found at Brickfield (see below)

On the west coast of Trinidad, the flock of GREATER FLAMINGOS still present at Orange Valley with 35 present on 5th July (but only 16 found on the 20th) together with approx 200 SHORT-BILLED DOWITCHERS On the 6th, single BLACK TERN and PARASITIC JAEGER drifted along the coast . A party of 4 basic plumaged RED KNOT were found on the 8th together with an unprecedented flock of 21 WILSON'S PLOVERS (still 16 present on the 20th). Also on 8th, an immature REDDISH EGRET* was seen beside the fishing boats at Brickfields, before flying north into Caroni Swamp. At this same site, on 18th July, the first reported GULL BILLED TERNS of the season were found and on the 20th there were 49 COMMON TERNS and 2 SANDWICH TERNS

In south western Trinidad, a census in forest east of Rousillac recorded 62 species on 19th July including GRAY HEADED KITE, CRIMSON CRESTED WOODPECKER and WHITE SHOULDERED TANAGER (a species becoming scarce in recent years). On the 20th a male LINED SEEDEATER * and a possible female were reported from Oropouche lagoon. On the 24th an apparent wild MUSCOVY DUCK* (see Central Trinidad news) was seen strongly flying south and on the 26th a banded immature GLOSSY IBIS* was seen and photographed both from the same area.

In south Trinidad, a BRIGHT RUMPED ATTILA was seen at Quinam on 20th July. At Erin, single PARASITIC and POMARINE JAEGERs were reported on 28th July

In central Trinidad, a census on Caroni rice project on 8th July produced 12 PINNATED BITTERNs and 30 LIMPKINS together with approx 200 each of SOUTHERN LAPWING and BLACK NECKED STILT and an early returning WHITE RUMPED SANDPIPER. At the same locality, the highlight on the 26th was a flyover GLOSSY IBIS * heading towards Caroni swamp together with 25 STILT SANDPIPERS (1st for the season) 12 SHORT BILLED DOWITCHERS and 9 WHITE CHEEKED PINTAIL. Elsewhere at Lower Fishing Pond, North Oropouche a presumed wild MUSCOVY DUCK* was seen and photographed on 9th July

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In Barbados, the highlights for the month were a WHITE-WINGED BLACK TERN (5th Record for Barbados) and an AMERICAN BLACK TERN at Bright Hall, St. Lucy on 19th Oct. Even rarer, an ARCTIC TERN (1st for Barbados) seen and photographed at Golden Grove, St Philip on 22nd Oct. At least three pairs of BLACK-BELLIED WHISTLING DUCKS were found breeding at St Philip during the month.

From Guadeloupe, the undoubted star bird of the month was a BLACK KITE present from 23rd - 29th at Gaschet Reservoir (1st for Guada and only 3rd for the Caribbean). The other major rarity found on the island this month was an ORCHARD ORIOLE at Pointe des Chateaux on the 10th (1st for Guada and the Lesser Antilles). Other noteworthy sightings in chronological order were 2 TRICOLORED HERONS on 4th Oct at Vieux Habitants, a maxima of 617 CARIBBEAN MARTINS still at Point a Pitre on the 5th; a NORTHERN PINTAIL at Port Louis on the 15th; a LESSER BLACK BACKED GULL at Saint Francois on the 17th; the COLLARED PLOVER, first found on 15th Aug, still present at Pointe des Chateaux on the 25th ; visible migration of 50 BLACKPOLL WARBERS through Vieux Habitants on the 28th and finally nesting LEAST BITTERN with 4 eggs at Port Louis swamp on the 29th

From Tobago, higher than usual passage of AMERICAN GOLDEN PLOVERS, PECTORAL and WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPERS was noted early in the month and the first MERLIN of the season was found on 9th Oct. The following day, there were 2 UPLAND SANDPIPERS* on the Hilton grounds golf course and up to 3 SCARLET IBIS * were reported from the mangrove fringes of Bon Accord lagoon

In the northern range of Trinidad, an adult BLACK HAWK EAGLE flew north over Asa Wright Nature Centre on 14th Oct and the first reported BLACKPOLL WARBLER of the season was in a Surrey village, Lopinot Rd garden on the 19th

In west Trinidad a CRANE HAWK * was seen flying east over St Mary's on 19th Oct. Birding the tidal mudflats between Brickfields and Orange Valley on 23rd Oct produced a single sub-adult GREATER FLAMINGO, 40 SHORT BILLED DOWITCHERS, 11 WILSON'S PLOVERS, 6 RED KNOT, 2 COLLARED PLOVERS, 1 WHITE RUMPED SANDPIPER, 8 CAYENNE TERNS, 1 SANDWICH TERN, 1 ROYAL TERN and 4 LESSER BLACK BACKED GULLS

In south west Trinidad, a single NACUNDA NIGHTHAWK (the lone remnant of the group first found on 10th Sept) was seen on 21st Oct in South Oropouche together with a PIED BILLED GREBE, 2 LEAST BITTERNS, single STRIPE BACKED BITTERN and COCOI HERON; an adult male SNAIL KITE * and 2 YELLOW BREASTED CRAKES

From north eastern Trinidad, a BLACKPOLL WARBLER at Galera Pt on 28th Oct and 2 rather late WHITE RUMPED SANDPIPERS on a football pitch close to Rampanalgas on the same date

On the east-west corridor of Trinidad, 5 EURASIAN COLLARED DOVES (1st for T&T) in suburban Barataria on 23rd Oct.

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Without doubt the birding highlight of the month came from Barbados with 3 EURASIAN SPOONBILLS present on the island; two on 17th Nov at St Lucy and one in St Philip. Continuing the old world theme at St Lucy, a BLACK KITE was seen on 18th Nov and there were records of GRAY HERON, BLACK-HEADED GULL and LESSER BLACK BACKED GULL

From Guadeloupe, 12 AMERICAN REDSTARTS, 4 BARE EYED THRUSHES and a BLACK CROWNED NIGHT-HERON were found at Beautiran on 2nd Nov. Still 3 CARIBBEAN MARTINS and a single PURPLE/CUBAN MARTIN were present at Pointe a Pitre on 26th and at Gaschet Reservoir, a male HOODED WARBLER and 2 PECTORAL SANDPIPERS were present on 27th Nov

Belated news from Tobago, where on 28th Oct, there were 3 KILLDEER * at the Bacolet stadium. In November, a YELLOW BILLED CUCKOOS was found at Speyside on the 1st; 3 RING NECKED DUCKS* at Lowlands on the 3rd and a further YELLOW BILLED CUCKOO at Bloody Bay on the 7th.

In the northern range of Trinidad, a BROWN VIOLETEAR was seen briefly at Asa Wright Nature Centre on 13th Nov

On the west coast of Trinidad, regular checks on the tidal mudflats roost at Orange Valley and Waterloo during the month yielded maxima of 2000 LAUGHING GULLS, 5 LESSER BLACK BACKED GULLS, 1 RING BILLED GULL, 70 BLACK SKIMMERS, 20 lingering BLACK NECKED STILTS, 14 WILSON'S PLOVERS and 8 RED KNOT together with an over-wintering FORK TAILED FLYCATCHER on the 9th

In south west Trinidad at Rahamut trace, there were 2 STRIPE BACKED BITTERNS and a PINNATED BITTERN on 6th Nov together with a late migrant WHITE RUMPED SANDPIPER, a female RUDDY BREASTED SEEDEATER and a further un-identified female/immature *Sporophila* seeeater. At the same site, 5 YELLOW BREASTED CRAKES were found on 9th Nov and the first reported WILSON'S SNIPE of the season whilst on 22nd Nov a party of 60 BOBOLINKS * were found together with 3 WHITE TAILED GOLDENTHROATS

Elsewhere in the area, single CLIFF SWALLOW* and BANK SWALLOWS were found at Sudama Steps on 11th Nov. On 15th Nov, a DOUBLE TOOTHED KITE was seen at Icacos and the following day, 4 GRAY NECKED WOOD RAILS were found inside Oropouche lagoon together with a CLAPPER RAIL

On the east coast of Trinidad, an adult WHITE TAILED HAWK* seen at Kernaham on 13th Nov may well be the same individual seen during Feb-Apr this year and close by a a SHORT EARED OWL* (2nd record for Trinidad) on the 28th. Finally, a DOUBLE TOOTHED KITE was found in Bush Bush forest on 14th Nov.

From north east Trinidad, a BLACK HAWK EAGLE* was seen near Toco on 28th Nov

BIRD BANDING

A color banded RED KNOT photographed on the west coast of Trinidad in Aug 2008 had been banded in Rio Negro province, Argentina in March 2006

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