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NEW INFORMATION ABOUT COSTA RICAN BIRDS

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Costa Rica's avifauna is one of the best known in the Neotropics. The study of birds in Costa Rica began in the mid 1800's with von Frantzius' investigations (Stiles 1983) has resulted in knowledge accumulated by many ornithologists for a century and was summarized by Stiles & Skutch (1989). Since the publication of this landmark book new information has been obtained about the avifauna of Costa Rica. This paper documents the presence of new species for Costa Rica. The records were obtained between 1990 and 1996. Also, new information regarding the current geographic distribution and natural history of the Melodious Blackbird (*Dives dives*) a recent arrival in Costa Rica, is included. Species names and systematic order follow those of the 1983 AOU Check-list (AOU 1983).

SPECIES ACCOUNTS

Southern Lapwing (*Vanellus chilensis*). One individual was photographed on 11 April

1993 near Trinidad (10°43'N, 8°56'W) by Gary W. Diller and Dorothy Harvey (photo deposited at the Museo Nacional de Costa Rica). This individual seen by 10 observers from a boat was standing on a sand bank of the Sarapiquí River while calling "Keeyooo keeebooo". This species is widely distributed in South America from Chile and Argentina northward to Colombia, Venezuela, and the Guianas (e.g., Sibley & Monroe 1990); it has been occasionally observed in eastern Panamá (Wetmore 1965, Ridgely 1976, Blake 1977). Recently the Southern Lapwing has been increasing its range. It is now considered resident in Panamá (Ridgely & Gwynne 1989). This is the first known record of this species in Costa Rica. The color pattern of the individual photographed was brownish-gray above; forehead, throat, and chest black; white belly, and blackish crest.

Brown-throated Parakeet (*Aratinga pertinax*). Two individuals were observed and photographed on 19 July 1996 by Esteban Estrada

at Pueblo Nuevo, Prov. Puntarenas near Ferry Station of Coto River (8°32'N, 83°02'W). This location is approximately 22 km west of Paso Canoas, the Costa Rica–Panamá border town, where patches of secondary forest, farmland, palm, and banana plantations are found. This species is distributed from northern Brazil, the Guianas and Colombia to western Panamá, reaching westward near Esperanza, a Panamanian town 15 km from the Costa Rican border (Ridgely & Gwynne 1989). Since this species inhabits savannas, arid scrub, cultivated lands and plantations (AOU 1983, Ridgely & Gwynne 1989), it has probably been extending its distribution westward from Panamá into Costa Rica because of deforestation of the area. This is the first record of this species in Costa Rica and the westernmost to date. Individuals observed were green above with a conspicuous orange spot underneath their eyes. Sides of the head, lores, and chest were buffy-brown; with yellowish-green belly (photo deposited at the Museo Nacional de Costa Rica).

Mouse-colored Tyrannulet (*Phaeomyias murina*). An adult male (Museo Nacional de Costa Rica [MNCR] 5309) was mist-netted and collected on 24 November 1996 by J. Zook at La Trocha, Prov. San José (9°21'N, 83°40'W), 650 m altitude. The bird had not been detected before it was netted. Further netting and search efforts failed to turn up other individuals. The collection site was in open pasture scrub on the Río General flood plain. *Psidium guajava* (Myrtaceae) and *Gliricidia sepium* (Papilionaceae) are the predominate shrub level trees. The Mouse-colored Tyrannulet (MCT) occurs in scrub and agricultural areas from western Panamá to northwestern Argentina, Paraguay, southeastern Brazil and Trinidad (Hilty & Brown 1986, Ridgely & Gwynne 1989). In Panamá, it has apparently been expanding its range with deforestation. It is inconspicuous and easily

overlooked. The Costa Rican records is 175 km west of its previously reported range limit at Estero Rico, south of Concepción, Panamá (Ridgely & Gwynne 1989). This is the first record of this species in Costa Rica. Mouse-colored Tyrannulet roughly resembles the Southern-Beardless Tyrannulet (SBT), but they can easily be differentiated by the larger size of the former species (MCT: weight = 10.0 g, wing cord = 56 mm, tail = 53.5 mm; while for two specimens of SBT the measurements are: weight = 6.5 g, wing cord = 52.45 mm, tail = 38.5 mm). Furthermore, Mouse-colored Tyrannulet has a strikingly orange mouth lining.

Melodious Blackbird (*Dives dives*). This species was first recorded in Costa Rica by S. G. Howell in the northern Pacific foothills (Stiles & Skutch 1989). Since then, it has been steadily increasing its range in the country. One individual was observed on 10 January 1990, eating seeds from the birdfeeder at J. E. Sánchez's backyard in Cartago. On subsequent days, one pair was vocalizing actively around the house. Another pair was observed nesting at Ujarras, Prov. Cartago (9°49'N, 83°50'W) on 14 April 1991. The nest was ca. 10 m above the ground at the tip of a branch of a tree with dense foliage at the border of old secondary growth. This is apparently the first documented nesting record of this species in Costa Rica; details of the nest were not possible to observe from the ground. Presently, this species is found locally in the Valle Central and along the Pacific coast south to Quepos in cultivated land, secondary growth, and around human habitation, although it is not very common. Since this species inhabits secondary vegetation, scrub, forest edge, and areas around human habitation (AOU 1983), deforestation has also probably favored the expansion of its range. Individuals of this species are entirely black (males glossed with blue); iris dark brown; and bill and legs black.

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