

ing the great southward range of the Great Auk, statements not corroborated and apparently rather improbable; nevertheless, in the light of the discovery of the bones of this bird in Florida, they seem to gain considerable claim to respect.

That the Great Auk was a permanent resident in Florida is very doubtful. We can hardly argue with respect to the shell heaps of Florida, as Hardy has maintained in the case of the New England heaps, that they were built up during the summer, and that hence the bones are those of auks which were captured at that season. On the other hand, Ormond is a thousand miles distant in a straight line from Cape Cod, and eighteen hundred from Newfoundland; and either of these distances would be a long trip for a wingless bird to make and repeat in half a year, even though his swimming powers were very great.

We shall probably yet learn that the Great Auk was a permanent resident along our coast considerably further south than Cape Cod. For the further elucidation of this subject, search ought to be made in shell heaps all along the coast. Additional information may possibly be obtained from the early writers on the history, civil and natural, of our country.

---

## THE BIRDS OF MARGARITA ISLAND, VENEZUELA.

BY AUSTIN H. CLARK.

THE observations, from which this list is compiled, were taken during a stay on the island of a little over three weeks, from July 2 to July 25, 1901. Specimens were obtained of all the land birds seen except the two Vultures, the Amazonian Parrot, and the South American Nighthawk. Although the conditions in the main agree with those reported by Capt. Wirt Robinson (Proc. U. S. Nat. Mus., Vol. XVIII, pp. 649-685) still there are some important differences, both in the distribution of species, and in the occurrence of forms not found by him.

This season (1901) was exceptionally dry, the rains having to



a great extent failed, which may in a measure account for some of the differences in distribution, as in the case of the Crested Quail (*Eupsychortyx*) and the Cardinal (*Cardinalis*).

The island of Margarita lies off the Venezuelan coast, directly north of Cumaná, from which it is distant about twenty miles. It is forty-two miles long, and is made up of two parts, each with a high central peak, connected by a narrow neck. The eastern part is the larger and contains all the principal towns; the western is practically barren.

The island has three well defined life zones; first, the flat and hot coast region, sandy, and with scant vegetation, consisting of post and melon cacti, with the dreaded 'tuna' and thorn-trees. This extends all around the island, and occupies a strip averaging about three miles in width, in which the Burrowing Owl (*Speotyto*) is exclusively found, while the Troupial (*Icterus*), Scaled Dove (*Scardafella*), Buzzard (*Buteo*), and Parrakeet (*Conurus*) prefer it to any other region. The chief towns of the island, Asunción, Juangriego, and Porlamar, are situated here. Next comes the intermediate region, of rough, hilly country, with a large amount of scrubby growth, and many varieties of cactus, forming the home of the Tawny Cuckoo (*Diplopterus*), the Spinetail (*Synallaxis*), and the Honey Creeper (*Cæreba*). The interior of the eastern part of the island is a heavily wooded mountain, with its summit 3240 feet above the sea level, and always hidden by clouds. Here occur such forms as the Yellow-billed Thrush (*Platycichla*), Manakin (*Chiroxiphia*), Guan (*Ortalis*) and Parrot (*Amazona*).

Some birds, such as the Creeper (*Dendroplex*) and the Antshrike (*Thamnophilus*), occur everywhere.

Several streams flow down the mountain and one, the most important, attains a considerable size in the rainy season, flowing from high up on the mountain to the sea which it meets a little east of Porlamar. In the valley of this stream, at the base of the mountain, is situated the little town of El Valle, in a large grove of cocoanut palms. It was in this village that most of the work was done, as it was a good place in which to live, and was within easy reach of the mountain forest, and of the hot coast plain.



1. *Larus atricilla* Linn. LAUGHING GULL. — Common along the beaches of the island and of the adjacent mainland.

2. *Rynchops nigra* Linn. BLACK SKIMMER. — A few seen, out in the channel between the island and the main land.

3. *Oceanites oceanicus* (Kuhl). WILSON'S PETREL. — On July 2 a flock of about two dozen of these birds came about the boat in which I was crossing over from the mainland. They appeared about sunset, and approached very near, within a few feet of the stern.

4. *Phalacrocorax* sp. CORMORANT. — I found a small, dark-colored cormorant common at Margarita, and abundant about Carúpano, on the mainland, occurring either singly or in small companies just outside the surf. In the harbor at Carúpano they were especially common, and very tame, coming up to within a few yards of the wharves. They never mingled with the great flocks of other sea birds, but always kept by themselves.

5. *Sula* sp. GANNET. — Midway between the mainland and the island a few small white gannets, probably *Sula piscator* Vieillot, appeared.

6. *Sula* sp. BOOBY. — Abundant all along the coast from LaGuaira to Trinidad, but especially so in the channel between Margarita and the mainland. Here they were to be met with at all times, flying about in small companies, or sitting on the water. In flying they alternately flap and sail, a whole flock acting in unison, like pelicans. At Carúpano, where they were very common, they would mingle with the large flocks of pelicans, and feed together with them, acting like them in every way. Often a solitary pelican could be seen feeding, attended by one of these gannets, which acted like the larger bird in every way, diving at the same time, and always keeping near it while in the air. This species was doubtless *Sula sula* (Linn.).

7. *Pelecanus fuscus* Linn. BROWN PELICAN. — Very common about the island, and along the mainland, especially in and about the harbor of Carúpano. Here they collected by hundreds to fish, accompanied by boobies and frigate birds.

8. *Fregata aquila* (Linn.). MAN-O'-WAR BIRD. — Common along the beaches, sailing about high in air. At Carúpano there would be sometimes over fifty in sight at once, but they were not so common at the island. They often wander inland, and may often be seen circling about two or three miles from the sea.

9. *Garzetta candidissima* (Gmel.). SNOWY HERON. — Common about the mangrove-bordered lagoons, and on the beaches.

10. *Arenaria interpres* (Linn.). TURNSTONE. — Common in large flocks about the lagoons and along the beaches.

11. *Eupsychortyx pallidus* Richmond. MARGARITAN CRESTED QUAIL. — Common along the bases of the hills, and in the scrub on their lower slopes. Although reported by Capt. Robinson as being "abundant in the thorny thickets near the coast," I found none there, although I searched carefully for them. On the lower declivities of the hills, however, their



call, exactly the same as that of our common Bob-white, could be heard at any time.

12. *Ortalis ruficauda* *Jard.* CHACHALACA. — The natives told me that this bird was common on the mountain, but I did not succeed in getting any there, although I found several nests which my guide attributed to this species. They were all about twenty-five or thirty feet from the ground, and were large and bulky. One contained a fresh egg (July 9) which was unfortunately broken in being brought from the nest to the ground.

13. *Leptotila insularis* *Richmond.* MARGARITAN DOVE. — This dove was not rare, although shy and retiring, living on the wooded mountain slopes where it was difficult to approach.

14. *Columbigallina passerina* (*Linn.*). GROUND DOVE. — Abundant everywhere except in the forest. I found several nests of this species constructed in the post-cacti, one containing nearly full grown young (July 17).

15. *Columbigallina rufipennis* (*Bonap.*). RUFOUS GROUND DOVE. — Not very common, occurring mostly on the hill sides about El Valle.

16. *Scardafella ridgwayi* *Richmond.* RIDGWAY'S SCALED DOVE. — Abundant everywhere, except in the forest. In the coast region this was the commonest bird, and could be seen everywhere, running along the ground or perched on some low eminence. When startled their wings emit a peculiar rattle instead of a whistle. About El Valle they were abundant on the barren mountain sides, and in the cocoanut groves. Their cheerful *pó-to-có* was, perhaps, the most characteristic sound on the island, and could be heard at any time coming from some post-cactus, thorn-tree, or other suitable elevation.

17. *Cathartes aura* (*Linn.*). TURKEY VULTURE. — Fairly common about El Valle.

18. *Catharista urubu* (*Vieill.*). BLACK VULTURE. — Abundant, especially about Porlamar and the neighboring beaches.

19. *Buteo albicaudatus* *Vieill.* WHITE-TAILED HAWK. — Fairly common on the hot coast plain west of Porlamar, but rare in the interior. I obtained one specimen, an immature female, and found the remains of an adult nailed to a tree on the mountain side above El Valle. The people at El Valle told me that it was rare there, and when I brought one home, every one came over to have a look at it. This buzzard behaves much like our common Red-tail, but is less shy.

20. *Falco sparverius* *Linn.* SPARROW HAWK. — Although I searched carefully, I saw none of these birds, but a man who had been out hunting quail brought one in which he had shot in an open field near the house. Capt. Robinson records the bird as "abundant" (in 1895).

21. *Gampsonyx swainsoni* *Vigors.* PEARL KITE. — This pretty little kite was very common about El Valle. My first example was shot from an inaccessible nest in the topmost branches of a very tall tree. These birds could be seen almost any time perched on some bare twig on the



lookout for food, or sailing over the cocoanut groves. The stomachs of almost all contained the remains of lizards.

This bird appears to have in some way changed places with the preceding. Although in 1895 Capt. Robinson found the Sparrow Hawk abundant, he did not secure a single specimen of the Pearl Kite: while in the past summer (1901) the Kite was almost abundant, and the other was very rare.

22. *Megascops brasiliensis* (Gmel.). BRAZILIAN SCREECH OWL. — An immature owl of this species was brought to me by a boy who lived high up on the mountain side.

23. *Speotyto brachyptera* Richmond. SHORT-WINGED BURROWING OWL. — These owls were fairly common on the hot coast plain wherever the vegetation was scantier than usual. Near a large shallow lagoon, where there was practically no plant life, there was a colony of them. They are unsuspicious birds, and may be approached very closely before taking wing. They fly but a short distance, alighting with a series of bounds, as if their legs were supplied with springs.

24. *Glaucidium phalaenoides* (Daud.). FERRUGINOUS PYGMY OWL. — Only one specimen was secured.

25. *Conurus æruginosus* (Linn.). RUSTY PARRAKEET. — Very common in the flat coast region, and also in the cassava fields on the mountain sides. On the coast by Porlamar, where it was much more abundant than anywhere else, its loud screeching could be heard on all sides as the flocks flew about searching for food. When in the trees, however, they were very quiet; a whole flock would seem to disappear on alighting, every member becoming instantly still, and, for a time, motionless; but, on being startled, the whole flock would screech louder than ever, and fly swiftly away.

While in Porlamar I noticed many flocks of these birds flying very high in air over the town, toward the mainland. As none were seen to fly back again, I judged it to be a migration. Possibly the birds resorted to the island to breed, and were now leaving, as the breeding season was about over.

This bird is very popular as a pet, but not so much so as is the following species. I saw one belonging to a friend in Trinidad which would imitate any word or short sentence said to it, immediately, even copying emphatic noddings of the head.

All the wild parakeets were in wretched plumage.

26. *Amazona amazonica* (Linn.). AMAZONIAN PARROT. — Occurs in the forest in flocks of various sizes. It is a very noisy bird, but on the approach of a hunter becomes quiet, until its limit of endurance is reached, when it flies screeching off over the tree tops. It is a very popular cage bird with the natives, who call it 'Loro' from its cry.

27. *Crotophaga ani* Linn. ANI. — Common in small companies, rarely over a dozen or fourteen, in and about cocoanut groves, and in open places.



28. *Diplopterus nævius* (Linn.). TAWNY CUCKOO. Not very common ; I only found it in the thickets on a hillside east of El Valle.

29. *Bucco bicinctus* (Gould). TWO-BANDED PUFF-BIRD. — Common about El Valle, especially about the ravines and dry water courses. It is very unsuspicious, and the boys of the village killed two or three for me with stones.

30. *Melanerpes subelegans* (Bonap.). BONAPARTE'S WOODPECKER. — Abundant everywhere, except in the thick forest. They have a harsh rattling cry, unlike that of any other bird on the island.

31. *Stenopsis cayennensis* Gmel. CAYENNE GOATSUCKER. — One specimen secured on the coast west of Porlamar, and two others seen the same day. This species was not found by Capt. Robinson.

32. *Chordeiles acutipennis* (Bodd.). SOUTH AMERICAN NIGHTHAWK. — A few seen at dusk about the streets of Porlamar, and also at El Valle.

33. *Doleromyia pallida* Richmond. BUFF-BREASTED HUMMINGBIRD. — This species was described in 'The Auk' (Vol. XII, p. 369, 1895) by Dr. C. W. Richmond who separated it from *D. fallax* on account of its being much paler below, and having the "metallic green of the upper parts less brilliant and less brassy." The nineteen specimens collected by Capt. Robinson (1895) were all uniformly paler than the specimens of the *D. fallax* with which they were compared, and could readily be distinguished. In the summer of 1900, Capt. Robinson secured at San Julián, near La Guaira, an example of true *D. fallax*, which is interesting as being in the same condition of plumage as those taken on Margarita, whereas the specimens of *D. fallax* with which the Margaritan examples had been previously compared were in fresh condition. The characters given for the Margaritan form hold good, and "*pallida* can readily be distinguished from *fallax*" (Proc. U. S. Nat. Mus., Vol. XXIV, p. 172, 1901).

This bird is common, except in the forest. It is very noisy, especially just before sundown, and may readily be located by tracing up its song, when it will be found perched upon some bare twig or other suitable eminence.

34. *Amazilia aliciae* Richmond. ALICE'S HUMMINGBIRD. — Abundant on the higher parts of the mountain, becoming less common toward the foot. About El Valle they were rather rare, while I saw none at all nearer the sea.

35. *Chlorostilbon caribbæa* Lawr. ATALA'S EMERALD. — Common about El Valle and on the lower slopes of the mountain.

36. *Chiroxiphia lanceolata* (Wagler). LANCE-TAILED MANAKIN. — Common in the forest on the mountain. Although it is difficult to procure specimens by following them through the thick undergrowth, they are, especially the females, readily attracted by imitating the call-note.

37. *Tyrannus dominicensis* (Gmel.). GRAY KINGBIRD. — Fairly common except on the mountain.

38. *Tyrannus melancholius satrapa* (Licht.). CROWNED KINGBIRD. — Occurs about El Valle.



39. *Myiarchus tyrannulus* (Müller). BLACK-BILLED PETCHARY. — Common everywhere on the island.

40. *Sublegatus arenarum* (Salvin). VENEZUELAN FLYCATCHER. — Common, except in the mountains. Two specimens from the island have wing measurements 65 mm. for a ♀, and 66 mm. for a ♂. Six specimens from Panama have the following measurements for the wing: ♀ 71 mm., ♂ 70, 69, 72, 73, 71 mm. The tail measurements of both the Panama and Margaritan examples are identical, and the color is the same.

41. *Thamnophilus doliatus* (Linn.). BARRED ANT SHRIKE. — Common at all points on the island. One of its notes is much like the caw of our common Crow (*Corvus americanus*).

42. *Formicivora intermedia* (Cab.). INTERMEDIATE ANT WREN. — Common about El Valle, and along the bases of the hills, in the scrub.

43. *Dendroplex longirostris* Richmond. MARGARITAN CREEPER. — Abundant at all points on the island. They are oftenest found, however, about the post-cactus. Their cry is much like that of the Belted Kingfisher (*Ceryle alcyon*) but harsher, and more grating.

#### 44. *Synallaxis albescens nesiotis*<sup>1</sup> new subspecies.

##### MARGARITAN SPINE-TAIL.

Common in the scrub about El Valle.

*Type*. — Male adult; No. 2723, collection of E. A. and O. Bangs.

The underparts can be closely matched by specimens from the mainland, but the upperside is paler and more gray, with the patch on the head, and the wing-coverts of a more yellow shade, serving at once to distinguish it from the true *S. a. albescens*. The greatest difference is seen in the under wing-coverts, which in this form are cream-color, while in *S. a. albescens* they are buff. The under tail-coverts are also paler. The measurements are as follows.

			Wing.	Tail.
			mm.	mm.
<i>Synallaxis albescens nesiotis</i>	♂	Margarita Island.	53	76
"	"	<i>albescens</i> ♂ Colombia	58	78
"	"	" . . .	58	84
"	"	" . . .	56	79
"	"	" . . .	55	80
"	"	" . . .	57	80

45. *Icterus icterus* (Linn.). TROUPIAL. — Abundant in the coast region, common about El Valle, but rare farther up the mountain.

<sup>1</sup> Nesiotis, from *νεσιώτης*, an islander.



46. *Icterus xanthornus helioeides*,<sup>1</sup> new subspecies.

## MARGARITAN ORIOLE.

*Type*.—Male, adult, No. 2690 collection of E. A. and O. Bangs.

This oriole differs from the mainland form in being larger, with smaller feet, and a thicker, heavier bill, having the culmen more nearly straight than in continental examples. The Margaritan bird is also somewhat brighter in color, and more strongly tinged with orange, while the black patch on the throat is more extensive.

It differs from *I. x. curasöensis* in having the bill shorter, but stouter and less arched, and in being larger, with more black on the throat, and generally brighter in color.

Common everywhere except in the forest, being much more abundant about El Valle than the Troupial. The notes of these two birds are almost identical, except that that of the Troupial is much louder.

*Measurements.*

		Wing.	Tail.	Exposed culmen.	Tarsus.	Width of bill be- hind nostril.	Extent of beak on throat.
		mm.	mm.	mm.	mm.	mm.	mm.
<i>I. xanthornus helioeides</i>	♂	101	103	23	24	8	52
“	♀	99	102	22	25	8	55
“	♀	94	99	23	25	8	53
“	♀	92	91	24	24	8	50
“	♀	88	96	22	25	8	52
<i>I. xanthornus curasöensis</i>	♂	94	91	26	27	6	42
“	♀	87	88	25	25	6	—
<i>I. x. xanthornus</i>	♂	88	87	20	26	6½	34
“	♂	94	89	20	27	—	41
“	♂	91	92	21	27	6½	39
“	♂	94	88	21	28	6½	38
“	♂	89	87	21	27	6½	40
“	♂	88	87	20	27	6	37
“	♀	82	81	20	27	7	31

47. *Quiscalus insularis* *Richmond*. MARGARITAN GRACKLE. — Abundant both at Porlamar and at El Valle, in the yards of houses and in cocoanut groves.

48. *Cardinalis robinsoni* *Richmond*. ROBINSON'S CARDINAL. — Not common: I saw perhaps a dozen around El Valle, and saw none at all in the coast region. Capt. Robinson found this bird “common in the coast region.”

<sup>1</sup> From ῥῑλιοειδῆς, bright.



49. *Euetheia bicolor omissa* (*Jard.*). CARIBBEAN GRASSQUIT. — Common about El Valle and on the coast.

50. *Tachyphonus melaleucus* (*Sparrman*). BLACK-AND-WHITE TANAGER. — I saw none of these birds, but my companion told me that he saw a black and white bird while collecting plants on the mountain, which was undoubtedly this species.

51. *Tanagra palmarum melanoptera* (*Hartl.*). BLACK-WINGED PALM TANAGER. — The only example from the island is larger than any one of a large series of continental birds with which it was compared, and has a longer and more slender bill.

*Measurements of Tanagra palmarum melanoptera.*

					Wing.	Tail.	Culmen.	Width of beak be- hind nostril.
					mm.	mm.	mm.	mm.
Margarita Island	♂	.	.	.	97	81	16	8
Colombia	♂	.	.	.	89	75	13	9
"	♂	.	.	.	94	72	11	9
"	♂	.	.	.	88	70	12	9
"	♂	.	.	.	93	73	12	9

52. *Tanagra glaucocalpa* (*Cab.*). GLAUCOUS BLUE-WINGED TANAGER. — Abundant about El Valle, occurring in the thick trees, especially the mangoes.

53. *Progne chalybea* (*Gmel.*). STEELY-BACKED MARTIN. — There were two colonies of this bird, one nesting in the crevices of the church at El Valle, and the other under the roofing tiles in Porlamar.

54. *Hylophilus griseipes* *Richmond*. GRAY-FOOTED HYLOPHILUS. — Common about the road-sides and in the scrub around El Valle.

55. *Cœreba luteola* (*Cab.*). VENEZUELAN HONEY CREEPER. — Common, except in the forests: especially so about El Valle.

56. *Mimus gilvus* (*Vieill.*). GRACEFUL MOCKINGBIRD. — Abundant, except in the forest. On the 13th of July two full grown young were brought to me, and after that date I often saw them running about the hillsides.

57. *Polioptila plumiceps* *Lawr.* LAWRENCE'S GNATCATCHER. — Common at all points of the island. On the 12th of July I found a nest of this species in a scrubby bush, about three feet from the ground. It was much like the nest of the Yellow Warbler (*Dendroica æstiva*), and contained two eggs, white, thickly sprinkled with reddish dots. One of the eggs was addled, and the other was well incubated.



ADDITIONAL BIRDS OBTAINED BY CAPT. ROBINSON IN THE SUMMER  
OF 1895.

*Phaëthus magnirostris* (Licht.). Large-billed Tern.  
*Sterna eurygnatha* Saunders. Red-billed Tern.  
*Sterna antillarum* (Lesson). Least Tern.  
*Butorides robinsoni* Richmond. Margaritan Green Heron.  
*Ereunetes occidentalis* Lawr. Western Sandpiper.  
*Calidris arenaria* (Linn.). Sanderling.  
*Œdicnemus bistratus* (Wagler). American Thick-knee.  
*Ægialitis wilsonia rufinucha* Ridgw. Rufous-naped Plover.  
*Ægialitis semipalmata* Bonap. Ring-necked Plover.  
*Ægialitis nivosa* Cass. Snowy Plover.  
*Ægialitis collaris* Vieill. Azara's Ring Plover.  
*Columba gymnophthalma* Temm. Bare-faced Pigeon.  
*Zenaida vinaceo-rufa* Ridgw. Vinaceous Dove.  
*Chaetura cinereiventris lawrencei* Ridgw. Lawrence's Swift.  
*Milvulus tyrannus* (Linn.). Fork-tailed Flycatcher.  
*Volatinia jacarini splendens* (Vieill.). Glossy Grassquit.  
*Vireo chivi agilis* (Licht.). Agile Vireo.  
*Arbelorkhina cyanea eximia* (Cab.). Venezuelan Guit-Guit.  
*Platycichla carbonaria* (Licht.). Yellow-billed Thrush.  
About the lagoons I saw several herons, two terns (*Anous stolidus*? and *Sterna* sp.) and two shore-birds not given in either of the above lists.

---

## THE IPSWICH SPARROW IN ITS SUMMER HOME.

BY W. E. SAUNDERS.

OWING to a happy combination of circumstances I had the pleasure of visiting Sable Island recently, arriving on May 16, 1901, and leaving on the 23d. Ever since reading Dr. Dwight's delightful monograph of the Ipswich Sparrow I have longed to visit this bird at home but with little hope that my desire would ever be realized, and it was therefore an unexpected delight when a feasible opportunity occurred. It will be remembered that not only is Sable Island the only breeding ground of this Sparrow, but also that the Sparrow is the only land bird which breeds there,





Clark, Austin Hobart. 1902. "The Birds of Margarita Island, Venezuela." *The Auk* 19, 258–267. <https://doi.org/10.2307/4069021>.

**View This Item Online:** <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/item/54095>

**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.2307/4069021>

**Permalink:** <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org/partpdf/88270>

#### **Holding Institution**

Smithsonian Libraries and Archives

#### **Sponsored by**

Smithsonian

#### **Copyright & Reuse**

Copyright Status: Public domain. The BHL considers that this work is no longer under copyright protection.

This document was created from content at the **Biodiversity Heritage Library**, the world's largest open access digital library for biodiversity literature and archives. Visit BHL at <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org>.