

SECOND RECORD OF BAIRD'S SANDPIPER (*CALIDRIS BAIRDII*) FOR TRINIDAD, WITH NOTES ON ITS OCCURRENCE IN THE CARIBBEAN BASIN

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A Baird's Sandpiper (*Calidris bairdii*) in juvenal plumage was observed on 17 November 1989 at the Port-of-Spain, Trinidad, wastewater treatment ponds (10°23'N, 61°09'W), inland approximately 1.6 km from the Gulf of Paria, by six members of a Peregrine Enterprises, Inc., birding group. This sighting is the second record for Trinidad. Identifying characters included a typical horizontal posture, wingtips extending well beyond the tip of the tail, overall brownish coloration, pointed black bill with a slight droop at the tip, black legs, very dark tertials with whitish edgings (giving a typical scaly appearance), dark rump and upper tail coverts, white chin and throat, a buffy wash across the finely streaked breast, and clear white flanks. Two adult White-rumped Sandpipers (*C. fuscicollis*) were nearby for comparison; in North America, Baird's Sandpiper often associates with White-rumped Sandpipers (pers. observ.). Other *Calidris* species present included a Red Knot (*C. canutus*), Western Sandpiper (*C. mauri*), and an undetermined number of Western and Semipalmated (*C. pusilla*) sandpipers.

Baird's Sandpiper is virtually unreported from the northeastern part of South America (Jehl 1979), to which the avifauna of Trinidad has strong affinity. Hilty and Brown (1986) have no records from Colombia east of the Andes, although de Schauensee and Phelps (1978) listed one inland record in Venezuela (Ocumare, Aragua; 725 km west of Trinidad) in October and Wetmore (1939) listed several sight records from the lowlands of Venezuela, again in late October. Baird's Sandpiper also is very uncommon in Central America. Stiles and Skutch (1989) described its status in Costa Rica as a very uncommon, but probably regular, fall migrant (September to early November), chiefly in the highlands but also sparingly along the Pacific coast.

Baird's Sandpiper has been recorded only four times previously from the Caribbean. French (1977) published the only other record from Trinidad (2 September 1976, at Waller Field), and he remarked (French 1988) that similarity to other

sandpipers may have precluded its identification in Trinidad on other occasions. Bond (1962, 1985) included in his list of vagrants to the West Indies a specimen from Barbados (present 26 August - 5 November, year not given), shot from a flock of five birds. Most recently, Perez-Rivera (1987) reported a Baird's Sandpiper from Puerto Rico (1 September 1980) and Fred Sladen observed this species on St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands (27 August 1982; Norton 1983).

Hayman et al. (1986) wrote that Baird's Sandpiper migrates south through the North American prairies, overflying Central America, and following the Andes, with the first juveniles reaching Argentina by late August. Vagrants have been reported from northern and southeastern Australia, Tasmania, New Zealand, Japan, Hawaii, the Galapagos Islands, the Falkland Islands, South Africa, Senegal, the Azores, and northwestern Europe east to Sweden and Poland. Although vagrants have exceptionally wintered in Europe, there are no documented records for North America after December (Hayman et al. 1986).

Juvenile Baird's Sandpipers migrate later than adults (Jehl 1979). Their migration is much more protracted than that of the adults, which can take as little as five weeks. The slower, broader movements of juveniles in part account for the fact that among fall-taken specimens, juveniles are more than five times more common than adults (Jehl 1979).

The west coast of Trinidad along the Gulf of Paria is a haven for migrant shorebirds (pers. observ.). Morrison et al. (1989) reported that of 13,600 Nearctic shorebirds found in Trinidad in February 1982, all but 39 were found on the west coast. They noted that more shorebirds were found there than on the Venezuelan coastline of the Gulf of Paria, with Trinidad sectors accounting for 60.3% of 22,600 shorebirds found.

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