FIRST RECORD OF BRIDLED QUAIL-DOVE (*GEOTRYGON MYSTACEA*) FOR ST. MARTIN

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*Abstract. –Herein, we document the first record of Bridled Quail-dove (*Geotrygon mystacea*) for St. Martin. An adult male was observed* by four individuals *on the northwest slope of Pic Paradis* on 22 January and subsequently captured and banded on 3 February 2006.

Keywords: *Bridled Quail-dove,* Geotrygon mystacea*, St. Martin, columbid, Lesser Antilles*

Resumen. – PRIMEROS REGISTROS DE BRIDLED QUAIL-DOVE (GEOTRYGON MYSTACEA) EN ST. MARTIN. Adjunto documentamos los primeros observaciónes expediente de frenillado Codorniz-nos zambullimos (*Geotrygon mystacea*) para St. Martin. La especie fue observada en las cuestas del noroeste de Pic Paradis en varios ocasiones múltiples entre el de 22 de enero y 3 de febrero de 2006.

Palabras claves: *Bridled Quail-dove,* Geotrygon mystacea*, St. Martin, columbid, Antillas Menores*

OBSERVATION

On 22 January, Rick Newman (RN) observed a single Bridled Quail-dove (*Geotrygon mystacea*) within secondary dry forest (approximate elevation 250m) on the northwest slopes of Pic Paradis, French St. Martin. At approximately 16:30, RN flushed the bird off a rock wall. The bird flew low (<1m) off the ground and landed approximately 5m away. RN observed the bird for over five minutes before departing and noted all unique plumage characteristics.

On 2 February, Bertrand Jno Baptiste (BJB) and Adam Brown (AB) observed a Bridled Quail-dove at the same location as RN, presumably the same bird. The bird was sitting on a branch of a *Ficus sp*. tree approximately 2m off the ground. On 3 February, AB extracted a Bridled Quail-dove from a mist-net located 5 meters to the north of the location the Bridled Quail-dove was previously observed. The bird was banded, measured, and photographed in the hand by BJB, AB, and Jorge Brocca, before being released. The bird was not observed following its release, however, no surveys were conducted after 3 February.

DESCRIPTION AND MEASUREMENTS

AB banded the dove with a French CRBPO band # GY55814 and recorded the following measurements and observations while the bird was in-hand: wing: 172mm, tail: 102mm, tarsus: 44mm, exposed culmen: 8.6mm, and the furcular hollow was half full of fat. Weight was not taken. The skull was completely ossified indicating it was an after-hatch year bird while the bird was sexed as a male based on extensive iridescence on the hind-neck and upper back. AB noted slight body and feather wear, and synchronous molt of the third primary, where the feathers had grown back by approximately one-third.

The reddish-brown on the primaries was in stark contrast with its otherwise brown upperparts. There was a white horizontal line below the eye. It also had a light colored bill tip. The hind-neck was iridescence blue-purple and extended to the upper back. While the crown appeared dark in stark contrast to the white stripe below the eye, it did not appear to contain iridescent coloration. The individual was light buffy-brown below from the throat down.

DISCUSSION

The Bridled Quail-dove is considered a species of concern by BirdLife International due to its restricted –range, eastern Puerto Rico south to St. Lucia. The species is listed as territorially endangered in the U.S. Virgin Islands (Platenberg *et al*., 2005). It is a resident species throughout much of the Lesser Antilles, Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico, however, it is not found on Anguilla, St. Martin, Barbados, St. Vincent, the Grenadines, or Grenada. The nearest islands to St. Martin where the Bridled Quail-dove is found are on Saba and St. Eustatius, the islands immediately south of St. Martin (Seaman, 1966; Voous and Koelers, 1967; Hoogerwerf, 1977; Bond, 1987; Blankenship, 1990; Chipley, 1991; Rivera-Milan, 1992; Wauer and Wunderle, 1992; Keith, 1997; Evans and James, 1997; and Raffaele *et al*., 1998).

There are no published records of this species moving between islands. However, movements among most Lesser Antillean islands south of St. Martin would be difficult to detect, as the species is found on most islands. Movements of other members of the Columbid family have been documented and therefore it seems possible that this species also might be capable of moving between islands. Rivera-Milan (1995) documented movements of the Scaly-naped Pigeon (*Patagioenas squamosa*) in response to a hurricane on Puerto Rico and particularly on Vieques Island. McNair *et al*. (2006) provided additional information on Bridled Quail Dove movement, where on St. Croix there is a one record of several birds spending a short period within dry forest habitat, dispersing approximately 15 miles from their normal range within the island's moist forest.

The autumn of 2005 was a memorable one for strong westnorthwest moving hurricanes and tropical storms. It is most likely that the bird originated from an island in the southern part of the species range, perhaps having been caught in one of those strong systems and subsequently making landfall on St. Martin. Additional monitoring of this area on St. Martin will take place to survey for additional individuals of this species and perhaps a new breeding population.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would like to thank Jorge Brocca, Bertrand Jno Baptiste, Anthony Levesque, and Natalia Collier for banding this season. We appreciate the comments on this manuscript from Douglas McNair, Pascal Villard, and Ruud van Halewijn. We thank Loterie Farm for continued access to their forest. Our banding research could not have been possible without the support of Merchants Export, Merchants Market, and Island Food.

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