

## Weights of some Cuban birds

by Storrs L. Olson

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Specimen weights are recognized as one important measure of the size of a bird and may also frequently prove to be of systematic value in distinguishing between different populations, particularly of polytypic forms on islands. For example, data on weights from various populations of the West Indian tanager *Spindalis* corroborate plumage differences that suggest these birds are best divided into 3 species rather than one (Steadman *et al.* 1980). In the Cayman Islands, 2 populations of *Vireo crassirostris* currently considered to belong to the same subspecies were shown to differ significantly in weight (Olson *et al.* 1981), these differences subsequently being corroborated by other measurements (Olson & Barlow, in prep.).

The present paper continues previous studies of West Indian bird weights (Olson & Angle 1977; Steadman *et al.* 1980; Olson *et al.* 1981; Schreiber & Schreiber 1984), and results from 2 collecting trips to Cuba. Although many Cuban species are not represented in Table 1, it has not been possible to resume investigations on Cuba to augment the collections and additional weight data will probably be long in coming, especially for the rarer species.

Table 1. Weights (gm) of Cuban birds.

<i>Falco sparverius sparverioides</i>	♂ 97, 100, 103; ♀ 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 104, 120
<i>Jacana s. spinosa</i>	♂ 83, 90, 91, 91, 94, 98; ♀ 140, 149
<i>Capella gallinago delicata</i>	♀ 94
<i>Zenaida macroura</i> subsp	♂ 104, 115
<i>Zenaida a. asiatica</i>	♂ 162
<i>Saurotbera m. merlini</i>	♂ 145
<i>Crotophaga ani</i>	♂ 101
<i>Glaucidium s. siju</i>	♂ 47
<i>Otus</i> ("Gymnoglaux") <i>l. lawrencii</i>	♀ 80
<i>Chlorostilbon r. ricordii</i>	♂ 3.3; ♀ 2.6
<i>Todus multicolor</i>	♀? 5.8
<i>Melanerpes s. superciliaris</i>	♂ 111; ♀ 89
<i>Tyrannus d. dominicensis</i>	♂ 49
<i>Tyrannus c. caudifasciatus</i>	♀ 38, 39
<i>Myiarchus s. sagrae</i>	♀ 18.5
<i>Contopus c. caribaeus</i>	♀ 11.5, 13
<i>Corvus nasicus</i>	♂ 347, 365, 385; ♀ 330, 365, 366
<i>Turdus plumbeus schistaceus</i>	♂ 83; ♀ 69
<i>Turdus plumbeus rubripes</i>	♂ 67.5, 74; ♀ 65, 66
<i>Poliophtila lembeyi</i>	♂ 4.5, 4.6; ♀? 4.5; sex? 4.5, 4.6
<i>Vireo g. gundlachi</i>	♀ 13
<i>Vireo g. orientalis</i>	♂ 12.5, 13; ♀ 13.3
<i>Mniotilta varia</i>	♀ 7.5
<i>Teretistris fernandinae</i>	♂ 9; sex? 9
<i>Teretistris fornsi</i>	♀ 10
<i>Quiscalis niger gundlachii</i>	♂ 92, 93; ♀ 64, 68, 69
<i>Dives atroviolaceus</i>	♂ 85, 86, 89, 90, 90; ♀ 73
<i>Agelaius phoeniceus assimilis</i>	♂ 46, 49, 50, 50, 51, 51, 51, 52, 52, 54; ♀ 36, 37, 38, 38, 39, 39, 39, 40, 42, 42, 43
<i>Agelaius h. humeralis</i>	♂ 37; ♀ 27, 28, 30, 32
<i>Sturnella magna hippocrepsis</i>	♂ 87, 91, 92; ♀ 62, 68, 72, 72, 75
<i>Tiaris o. olivacea</i>	♂ 7, 7.6, 8; ♀ 7, 10
<i>Melopyrrha n. nigra</i>	♀ 13
<i>Torreornis i. inexpectata</i>	♂ 28; ♀ 25; sex? 24
<i>Torreornis i. sigmani</i>	♂ 26, 27, 28.5, 29; ♀ 27.3, 28

population of the widespread Asian babbler *Malacocincla (Trichastoma) abbotti* (for generic assignment to *Malacocincla* see Ripley & Beehler in press). The only other records for the Indian region are from Eastern Nepal and from the Khasi Hills, more than 1000 km to the north.

We have found several plumage characteristics that distinguish this isolated babbler from its nearest related forms to the north. We suggest this south-eastern form be named:

***Malacocincla abbotti krishnarajui* subsp. nov.**

*Holotype.* Adult female collected 15 October 1983 by Bruce Beehler at Pedevalasa, Chintapalli Teluk, Vizag District, Andhra Pradesh, at c. 1000 m (17° 50' N, 82° 20' E), USNM #585181.

*Diagnosis.* The new population differs from the nominate *abbotti* from Nepal and northeastern India as follows:— (1) upper surface of tail and rump deeper brown; (2) crown, back, wings more olive; (3) vent feathering richer rufescent; (4) pale grey of throat extends further onto the breast; and (5) lower breast and belly are slightly paler washed with buff-tan. A comparison of measurements of wing, tail, culmen and tarsus show no significant differences between southeastern and northeastern populations.

*Measurements and soft parts.* Wing (chord) 70.5 mm, tail 44 mm, culmen (from skull) 20.5 mm, tarsus 28 mm, weight 25.5 g. Iris medium brown; legs dusky flesh.

*Distribution and ecology.* First mist-netted by K. S. R. Krishna Raju at Rhagavendra Nagar in 1981. The species is now known from 4 localities in the ghats: Pedevalasa, Rhagavendra Nagar, Lankapakalu and Wangasara, all of which support at least some remnant patches of moist deciduous or semi-evergreen forest. As elsewhere in its range in India (Ali & Ripley 1971), the species appears to prefer wooded ravines and thickly vegetated gulleys, and was usually netted close to the ground.

*Specimens examined.* Visakhapatnam Ghats: 1 ♂, 3 ♀♀ (USNM); Eastern Nepal (Kosi R.) 1 ♀ (USNM); Khasi Hills: 2 ♂♂ (AMNH); Thailand: 5 ♂♂ (USNM).

*Remarks.* This new form is named to honour K. S. R. Krishna Raju of the Andhra Pradesh Natural History Society, for his efforts to promote the survey and conservation of the natural resources of the Eastern Ghats.

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Specimens were collected in 2 very different parts of the island. The first series was obtained from 24 to 30 October 1979, mainly near the village of Santo Tomás, a classic collecting locality at the edge of the Zapata Swamp in what is now Matanzas Province, with additional specimens from the resort of Playa Larga at the head of the infamous Bahía de Cochinos. The second series was taken from 2 to 5 November 1980 in the extremely arid southeastern part of the island, mainly near the town of Baitiquiri and east along the coast to Imías, in what is now the province of Guantánamo (formerly part of Oriente Province).

All specimens were weighed with Pesola spring balances, on the day of capture, never more than 8 hours subsequent to their having been collected. The sequence and nomenclature in general follows that of Garrido & Garcia (1975). The specimen of *Tyrannus dominicensis*, taken 3 km east of San Antonio del Sur on 3 November 1980, represents a late date for this migratory species. The smallest male of *Agelaius phoeniceus* (46 gm) was captured by hand in apparently ill health; despite this, it weighed more than the largest female. The specimens of *Quiscalis niger* are assumed to be referable to the subspecies *gundlachi* on the basis of Garrido's (1973) analysis of the distribution of the Cuban forms of this species.

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## A recent record of the endangered St Lucia Wren *Troglodytes aedon mesoleucus*

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The St Lucia Wren *Troglodytes aedon mesoleucus* is listed as critically endangered and possibly extinct by the ICBP Red Data Book (1981) and Bond (1978). Although formerly more widespread on St Lucia, the wren has been restricted since the 1930's to the region between Le Marquis and Grand Anse