

OBSERVATIONS OF THE WOOD SANDPIPER AND LITTLE EGRET IN BARBADOS

MARTIN FROST
Featherbed Lane
St. John, Barbados

On the morning of 28 November 1992, I observed a Wood Sandpiper (*Tringa glareola*) in the artificial swamp at Mangrove, St. Philip, Barbados. At 20 cm, it was marginally smaller than the 2 juvenile Ruffs (*Philomachus pugnax*) and Stilt Sandpipers (*Calidris himantopus*) feeding nearby, but slightly larger than the White-rumped Sandpiper (*C. fuscicollis*). Greater (*Tringa melanoleuca*) and Lesser (*T. flavipes*) yellowlegs were also present.

Through the telescope, the most striking feature of the Wood Sandpiper was the broad white superciliary stripe, which stretched to the nape. The upperparts were dark brown, heavily spotted with white, as compared with the paler (i.e., gray-brown) upperparts of the Lesser Yellowlegs. At rest, the Wood Sandpiper's wings did not extend beyond the tail, unlike the Lesser Yellowlegs, whose wings extend past the tail. The underparts were white with a dusky brown wash on the throat and upper chest. Its leg color was pale yellow, intermediate between the orange yellow of the yellowlegs and the green-yellow of the Stilt Sandpiper. At close range, a thin white eye-ring was visible. The short bill was straight and black. In flight, it revealed its white rump and brown-barred tail, and the white outer primary shaft was also visible. The bird called with a high-pitched "chi-chi-pee" as it took flight, which was fast and direct.

The only other known record of the Wood Sandpiper in Barbados is a specimen collected in October 1955 (Bond 1959, 1965). This arctic species normally winters from the Mediterranean region south to southern Africa, Ceylon, the Malay Peninsula, East Indies, and Australia (American Ornithologists' Union 1983). However, it has also been recorded from Barbados (Amos and Wingate 1983).

On the morning of 1 January 1993, I observed a slightly larger white egret feeding among Snowy Egrets (*Egretta thula*) and an immature Little Blue Heron (*E. caerulea*) at the same artificial swamp at Mangrove. The black legs of the unidentified bird were much thicker than those of the Snowy Egret, which were posteriorly yellowish-green. Closer observation through the telescope showed several distinctive characteristics when compared with the Snowy Egrets. First, the unidentified heron's cere was grayish and not bright yellow. Second, as it waded, its lemon-yellow, not bright yellow, feet were noted. In addition, the black bill was

slightly thicker and longer than that of the other herons.' The bird stood more upright than the Snowy Egrets and was definitely a more active feeder than the other egrets present.

This bird was identified as a Little Egret (*Egretta garzetta*) and is the second record for Barbados. This Old World species principally winters in Southeast Asia and the African and Australian regions. A specimen of the Little Egret was collected from Barbados in April 1954 (Bond 1966), whereas West Indian records include St. Lucia (Norton 1985, 1986) and Martinique (Bond 1966). Other New World records include Newfoundland (American Ornithologists' Union 1983), Quebec (American Ornithologists' Union 1983), Bermuda (Norton 1985), Trinidad (Bond 1966), and Surinam (American Ornithologists' Union 1983). I suspect the Little Egret was present in Barbados since November 1992, but was overlooked among the Snowy Egrets.

The identifications of both species have been confirmed by Edward Massiah and Captain Maurice Hutt, both of whom have seen these species in Europe. Both the Wood Sandpiper and Little Egret were still present at Mangrove on 25 January 1993.

LITERATURE CITED

- American Ornithologists' Union. 1983. Check-list of North American birds, 6th edition. Allen Press, Inc., Lawrence, Kansas.
- Amos, E.J.R., and D.B. Wingate. 1983. First record of the Wood Sandpiper *Tringa glareola*, from Bermuda. *Am. Birds* 37:115-116.
- Bond, J. 1959. Fourth supplement to the Checklist of Birds of the West Indies (1956). *Acad. Nat. Sci. Philadelphia*.
- Bond, J. 1965. Tenth supplement to the Checklist of Birds of the West Indies (1956). *Acad. Nat. Sci. Philadelphia*.
- Bond, J. 1966. Eleventh supplement to the Checklist of Birds of the West Indies (1956). *Acad. Nat. Sci. Philadelphia*.
- Norton, R.L. 1985. West Indies region. *Am. Birds* 39:214-215.
- Norton, R.L. 1986. West Indies region. *Am. Birds* 40:338-340.