

A rapid assessment of the birds of the Lely and Nassau plateaus, Suriname

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Chapter 7

A rapid assessment of the birds of the Lely and Nassau plateaus, Suriname

Iwan Derveld and Greg Love

INTRODUCTION

Suriname has over 700 recorded species of birds, making them a rich and diverse taxonomic group for the country. Many of the species found in Suriname, such as the harpy eagle and blue-cheeked parrot, are included in the IUCN Red List as near threatened species. Given the many roles that birds play in tropical ecosystems, serving for example as predators, prey and seed dispersers, it is important to promote their conservation. In addition to their conservation value, a rich and diverse bird population can also provide economic value through the promotion of bird watching tourism. To date, few bird species lists exist for the Lely and Nassau Mountains, so CI felt that a rapid assessment of the bird populations would add to a greater understanding of the overall species richness and diversity of the two study areas and facilitate the creation of concrete conservation recommendations.

METHODS AND DESCRIPTION OF STUDY SITES

For both sites, the bird team, which consisted of 2-3 people, spent 7-9 hours a day spotting birds through both visual identification and by birds' songs and calls. The team leader was Iwan Derveld, a Surinamese national with over 30 years experience in bird identification. All team members used binoculars for visual identification. The field guides "Birds of Suriname" (Haverschmidt et al. 1994) and "The Birds of Venezuela" (Hilty 2003) were used to confirm the identification of many of the species not immediately recognized by the team.

In Lely, the team primarily concentrated on two transects which ran parallel to one another from October 25-31, 2005. On the plateau are two radio towers approximately 500 meters apart. The majority (>90%) of all birds were spotted in Lely were in the cleared areas around the radio towers, as well as in the high forest between the towers and the cleared airstrip parallel to the towers. The bird team also spent half a day accompanying the fish team to spot birds along a watershed area (N04°15'08.9", W054°43'54.8") that included high and savanna forests. Another half day was used to spot birds along a 4 km path in the vicinity of the dung beetle survey area, dominated by high forest.

In Nassau, from November 2-6, 2005 the bird team concentrated efforts along concession roads on either side of BHP-Billiton's exploration base camp and the adjacent overgrown airstrip. Daily surveys along 4-5 km of these roads and along the nearby overgrown airstrip produced the majority of bird identifications (>90%). The team also accompanied the fish team for half a day along a westerly 4 km strip of stream bed adjacent to the exploration base camp.

The presence of a fairly extensive network of roads in Nassau allowed the team a greater degree of access and visibility over a larger area than in Lely. Lely did have an airstrip and radio towers, which greatly facilitated bird spotting, but these sites are very localized. All footpaths in the Lely area were relatively small and surrounded by various types of canopy, making bird spotting more difficult than the wider, longer roads in Nassau. This difference in

access may have accounted for the greater number of species identified in Nassau than Lely (see below) but further studies are needed to determine if specific species richness and diversity for both sites.

GENERAL IMPRESSIONS/RESULTS FOR EACH SITE AND OVERALL

For both sites, the bird team positively identified 108 species, 8 identified with some degree of uncertainty and five species spotted but not identified, including four species of hummingbird (Appendix 8).

In Lely the team found the following: 63 species positively identified, three possibly identified, and three species of hummingbird not positively identified. In Nassau the team found: 79 species positively identified; five possibly identified; and two species spotted, but not identified, included one species of hummingbird and a species similar in size and appearance to an oriole, but white instead of yellow and with a black head and stripe across its chest. Twenty-nine (29) species were positively identified in both sites.

Hunting seemed to be having some impact on certain species, particularly on guans, curassows, parrots and raptors, the remains of which, along with discharged shotgun shells, were found in both sites. However, the overall habitats of both sites seem to be largely intact, with some fragmentation from roads (particularly in Nassau) and other infrastructure such as the airstrip and radio towers in Lely. The species richness and diversity are believed to be typical for these habitats (though it was noted that there seemed to be few raptors), but additional consultation with other Suriname bird experts is warranted. Whether the relative lack of raptors was due to the time of year, available prey or hunting pressures (or a combination of these) was not able to be determined.

All of the species positively identified on both plateaus are fairly common for this part of Suriname. None of the species spotted in Lely and Nassau are currently listed as threatened by the IUCN Red List (Appendix 8).

CONSERVATION RECOMMENDATIONS

Both sites surveyed showed evidence of hunting, particularly of larger bird species, with no apparent regulation of the number or types of species killed. It is important to note that the actual extent and impact of hunting on bird species was beyond the scope of this survey. Additional studies on key game bird species are needed to determine the actual impact of hunting on species abundance and diversity in both areas. Banning hunting outright is neither feasible nor probably wise, given reliance of some people on bushmeat as an important dietary source of protein. However, baseline studies and improved regulation can ensure that key game species populations can be maintained at sustainable levels.

In Lely, the local airstrip work crew has to engage in hunting, with birds being a particular interest, to supplement their diet. Provision of regular protein sources for the work crew, with improved education and regulation of their hunting, should be promoted to lessen hunting pressure in the Lely area. In both Lely and Nassau, small-scale gold miners are engaging in hunting of bird and other species as well. Nassau's relatively extensive road networks are facilitating easy access to forest areas and the ability to hunt for local small-scale gold miners. Improved control over road access in Nassau and better regulation and monitoring of key species (both bird and mammal) in both areas should be employed to ensure hunting is maintained at sustainable levels and prevented for IUCN Red List or CITES species.

REFERENCES

- Haverschmidt, F. and G.F. Mees. 1994. Birds of Suriname. VACO Press. Paramaribo, Suriname.
- Hilty, S.L. 2003. Birds of Venezuela, second edition. Princeton University Press. Princeton, NJ.

Appendix 8

Bird species recorded on the Lely and Nassau plateaus during the RAP survey.

Iwan Derveld and Greg Love

Scientific Name	Common Name (English)	IUCN Red List Status	Lely (Date seen)	Nassau (Date seen)
<i>Amazona amazonica</i>	ORANGE-WINGED PARROT	LC		11/2/05
<i>Amazona ochrocephala</i>	YELLOW-CROWNED PARROT	LC		11/3/05
<i>Anthracothonax nigricollis</i>	BLACK-THROATED MANGO	LC		11/3/05
<i>Ara chloropterus</i>	RED-AND-GREEN MACAW	LC	10/26/05	
<i>Ara macao</i>	SCARLET MACAW	LC		11/5/05 (?)
<i>Ara manilata</i>	RED-BELLIED MACAW	LC		11/5/05 (?)
<i>Brotogeris chrysopterus</i>	GOLDEN-WINGED PARAKEET	LC	10/25/05	
<i>Campephilus rubricollis</i>	RED-NECKED WOODPECKER	LC	10/30/05	11/5/05 (?)
<i>Capito niger</i>	BLACK-SPOTTED BARBET	LC	10/26/05	11/2/05
<i>Caprimulgus nigrescens</i>	BLACKISH NIGHTJAR	LC	10/26/05	11/2/05
<i>Cathartes melambrotus</i>	GREATER YELLOW-HEADED VULTURE	LC	10/29/05	11/3/05
<i>Celeus elegans</i>	CHESTNUT WOODPECKER	LC		11/2/05
<i>Celeus undatus</i>	WAVED WOODPECKER	LC		11/4/05
<i>Chaetura chapmani</i> (<i>C. spinicaudus</i> ?)	CHAPMAN'S SWIFT	LC	10/26/05	
<i>Chaetura spinicaudus</i>	BAND-RUMPED SWIFT	LC		11/4/05
<i>Chlorophanes spiza</i>	GREEN HONEYCREEPER	LC	10/30/05	11/2/05
<i>Chlorostilbon mellisugus</i>	BLUE-TAILED EMERALD	LC		11/2/05
<i>Coereba flaveola</i>	BANANAQUIT	LC		11/5/05
<i>Colonia colonus</i>	LONG-TAILED TYRANT	LC		11/2/05
<i>Columba subvinacea</i>	RUDDY PIGEON	LC	10/26/05	
<i>Conopias parva</i>	YELLOW-THROATED FLYCATCHER	LC	10/29/05	11/2/05
<i>Contopus albogularis</i>	WHITE-THROATED PEWEE	LC		11/3/05
<i>Coragyps atratus</i>	BLACK VULTURE	LC		11/2/05
<i>Corapipo gutturalis</i>	WHITE-THROATED MANAKIN	LC	10/26/05	
<i>Crax alector</i>	BLACK CURASSOW	LC	10/26/05 (feathers)	11/4/05
<i>Crypturellus soui</i>	LITTLE TINAMOU	LC		11/4/05
<i>Cyanerpes caeruleus</i>	PURPLE HONEYCREEPER	LC	10/28/05	11/2/05
<i>Cyanerpes cyaneus</i>	RED-LEGGED HONEYCREEPER	LC	10/28/05	11/2/05
<i>Cyanocompsa cyanoides</i>	BLUE-BLACK GROSBEAK	LC	10/26/05	

Scientific Name	Common Name (English)	IUCN Red List Status	Lely (Date seen)	Nassau (Date seen)
<i>Cymbilaimus lineatus</i>	FASCIATED ANTSHRIKE	LC	10/31/05	11/4/05
<i>Dacnis cayana</i>	BLUE DACNIS	LC	10/30/05	11/2/05
<i>Elanoides forficatus</i>	SWALLOW-TAILED KITE	LC	10/26/05	11/2/05
<i>Euphonia cayennensis</i>	GOLDEN-SIDED EUPHONIA	LC	10/28/05	
<i>Euphonia minuta</i>	WHITE-VENTED EUPHONIA	LC		11/3/05
<i>Euphonia musica</i>	ANTILLEAN EUPHONIA	LC	10/29/05	
<i>Falco peregrinus</i>	PEREGRINE FALCON	LC		11/5/05
<i>Formicarius analis</i>	BLACK-FACED ANTTHRUSH	LC		11/6/05
<i>Galbula dea</i>	PARADISE JACAMAR	LC	10/30/05	
<i>Glyphorhynchus spirurus</i>	WEDGE-BILLED WOODCREEPER	LC	10/27/05	11/2/05
<i>Gymnophthys rufigula</i>	RUFIOUS-THROATED ANTBIRD	LC		11/6/05
<i>Haematoderus militaris</i>	CRIMSON FRUITCROW	LC	10/27/05	
<i>Harpagus bidentatus</i>	DOUBLE-TOOTHED KITE	LC		11/6/05
<i>Heliothryx aurita</i>	BLACK-EARED FAIRY	LC		11/4/05
<i>Hylocharis sapphirina</i>	RUFIOUS-THROATED SAPPHIRE	LC	10/28/05 (?)	
<i>Hypocnemoides melanopogon</i>	BLACK-CHINNED ANTBIRD	LC		11/3/05
<i>Ibycter americanus</i>	RED-THROATED CARACARA	LC	10/26/05	11/2/05
<i>Jacamerops aureus</i>	GREAT JACAMAR	LC		11/4/05
<i>Lanio fulvus</i>	FULVOUS SHRIKE-TANAGER	LC		11/4/05
<i>Legatus leucophaius</i>	PIRATIC FLYCATCHER	LC	10/26/05	
<i>Lepidothrix serena</i>	WHITE-FRONTED MANAKIN	LC		11/4/05
<i>Leptotila verreauxi</i>	WHITE-TIPPED DOVE	LC	10/26/05	11/3/05
<i>Lipaugus vociferans</i>	SCREAMING PIHA	LC	10/26/05	11/2/05
<i>Lophornis ornatus</i>	TUFTED COQUETTE	LC	10/29/05 (?)	
<i>Manacus manacus</i>	WHITE-BEARDED MANAKIN	LC	10/26/05	11/2/05
<i>Micrastur mirandollei</i>	SLATY-BACKED FOREST-FALCON	LC	10/30/05 (?)	
<i>Microcerculus bambla</i>	WING-BANDED WREN	LC	10/30/05	
<i>Mionectes oleagineus</i>	OCHRE-BELLIED FLYCATCHER	LC		11/4/05
<i>Myiodynastes maculatus</i>	STREAKED FLYCATCHER	LC		11/4/05
<i>Myiophobus fasciatus</i>	BRAN-COLOURED FLYCATCHER	LC		11/6/05
<i>Myiozetetes cayanensis</i>	RUSTY-MARGINED FLYCATCHER	LC	10/26/05	
<i>Myrmeciza ferruginea</i>	FERRUGINOUS-BACKED ANTBIRD	LC		11/4/05
<i>Myrmotherula brachyura</i>	PYGMY ANTWREN	LC		11/2/05
<i>Myrmotherula surinamensis</i>	STREAKED ANT WREN	LC	10/26/05	
<i>Nemosia pilceata</i>	HOODED TANAGER	LC	10/29/05	
<i>Nyctidromus albicollis</i>	COMMON PAURAUQUE	LC		11/5/05
<i>Odontophorus gujanensis</i>	MARBLED WOOD-QUAIL	LC		11/2/05
<i>Ortalis motmot</i>	LITTLE CHACHALACA	LC	10/28/05	11/2/05
<i>Penelope marail</i>	MARAIL GUAN	LC	10/26/05	11/3/05
<i>Percnostola leucostigma</i>	SPOT-WINGED ANTBIRD	LC	10/26/05	

Scientific Name	Common Name (English)	IUCN Red List Status	Lely (Date seen)	Nassau (Date seen)
<i>Pernostola rufifrons</i>	BLACK-HEADED ANTBIRD	LC		11/6/05
<i>Perissocephalus tricolor</i>	CAPUCHINBIRD	LC	10/26/05	11/3/05
<i>Phaeothlypis rivularis</i>	NEOTROPICAL RIVER WARBLER	LC		11/5/05
<i>Phaethornis bourcierii</i>	STRAIGHT-BILLED HERMIT	LC		11/3/05
<i>Phaethornis superciliosus</i>	LONG-TAILED HERMIT	LC		11/2/05
<i>Philydor ruficaudatus</i>	RUFIOUS-TAILED FOLIAGE-GLEANER	LC		11/3/05
<i>Piculus chrysocloros</i>	GOLDEN-GREEN WOODPECKER	LC		11/3/05
<i>Piculus flavigula</i>	YELLOW-THROATED WOODPECKER	LC		11/3/05 (?)
<i>Piculus rubiginosus</i>	GOLDEN-OLIVE WOODPECKER	LC	10/28/05	
<i>Pionopsitta caica</i>	CAICA PARROT	LC		11/5/05
<i>Pionus fuscus</i>	DUSKY PARROT	LC	10/26/05	11/3/05
<i>Pionus menstruus</i>	BLUE-HEADED PARROT	LC	10/28/05	11/2/05
<i>Pipra erythrocephala</i>	GOLDEN-HEADED MANAKIN	LC	10/27/05	11/2/05
<i>Poliophtila plumbea</i>	TROPICAL GNATCATCHER	LC		11/3/05
<i>Procnias alba</i>	WHITE BELLBIRD	LC		11/2/05
<i>Progne tapera</i>	BROWN-CHESTED MARTIN	LC	10/26/05	
<i>Psarocolius viridis</i>	GREEN OROPENDOLA	LC		11/2/05
<i>Psophia crepitans</i>	GREY-WINGED TRUMPETER	LC	10/25/05	11/5/05
<i>Pyrrhura picta</i>	PAINTED PARAKEET	LC	10/30/05	11/6/05
<i>Querula purpurata</i>	PURPLE-THROATED FRUITCROW	LC	10/28/05	
<i>Ramphastos tucanus</i>	RED-BILLED TOUCAN	LC		11/3/05
<i>Ramphastos vitellinus</i>	CHANNEL-BILLED TOUCAN	LC	10/26/05	11/3/05
<i>Ramphocelus carbo</i>	SILVER-BEAKED TANAGER	LC		11/6/05
<i>Rhytipterna simplex</i>	GREYISH MOURNER	LC	10/26/05	
<i>Sarcoramphus papa</i>	KING VULTURE	LC	10/31/05	11/2/05
<i>Selenidera culik</i>	GUIANAN TOUCANET	LC	10/26/05	11/4/05
<i>Tachybaptus dominicus</i>	LEAST GREBE	LC	8/31/05 (Pre-RAP trip)	
<i>Tachyphonus cristatus</i>	FLAME-CRESTED TANAGER	LC		11/3/05 (?)
<i>Tachyphonus luctuosus</i>	WHITE-SHOULDERED TANAGER	LC	10/29/05	
<i>Tachyphonus surinamus</i>	FULVOUS-CRESTED TANAGER	LC	10/30/05	11/2/05
<i>Tangara chilensis</i>	PARADISE TANAGER	LC	10/26/05	11/4/05
<i>Tangara gyrola</i>	BAY-HEADED TANAGER	LC	10/26/05	
<i>Tangara punctata</i>	SPOTTED TANAGER	LC	10/26/05	
<i>Tangara velia</i>	OPAL-RUMPED TANAGER	LC	10/29/05	
<i>Thalurania furcata</i>	FORK-TAILED WOODNYMPH	LC		11/5/05
<i>Thamnophilus murinus</i>	MOUSE-COLOURED ANTSHRIKE	LC	10/26/05	11/2/05
<i>Thryothorus coraya</i>	CORAYA WREN	LC		11/5/05
<i>Tityra cayana</i>	BLACK-TAILED TITYRA	LC	10/29/05	
<i>Trogon collaris</i>	COLLARED TROGON	LC		11/2/05

Scientific Name	Common Name (English)	IUCN Red List Status	Lely (Date seen)	Nassau (Date seen)
<i>Trogon rufus</i>	BLACK-THROATED TROGON	LC		11/3/05
<i>Trogon violaceus</i>	VIOLACEOUS TROGON	LC	10/29/05	
<i>Turdus albicollis</i>	WHITE-NECKED THRUSH	LC	10/29/05	11/2/05
<i>Tyrannus melancholicus</i>	TROPICAL KINGBIRD	LC	10/26/05	
<i>Vireolanius leucotis</i>	SLATY-CAPPED SHRIKE-VIREO	LC	10/26/05	
<i>Xipholena punicea</i>	POMPADOUR COTINGA	LC	10/26/05	11/5/05
<i>Xiphorhynchus pardalotus</i>	CHESTNUT-RUMPED WOODCREEPER	LC		11/3/05
<i>Xiphorhynchus guttatus</i>	BUFF-THROATED WOODCREEPER	LC	10/27/05	11/3/05
Total Number of Species			67	86

? – Species not definitively identified by field team