

# Sixteen bird species new for Colombia

Paul Salaman, Nick Bayly, Robert Burrige, Mark Grantham, Mark Gurney, Alonso Quevedo, Luis Eduardo Urueña, & Thomas Donegan

**Abstract:** We document 16 bird species (*Anas platyrhynchos*, *Anas strepera*, *Phalacrocorax auritus*, *Limnodromus scolopaceus*, *Stercorarius pomarinus*, *Stercorarius longicaudus*, *Larus fuscus*, *Columbina cruziana*, *Chalcostigma stanleyi*, *Empidonax minimus*, *Vireo griseus*, *Anthus rubescens*, *Passerculus sandwichensis*, *Vermivora ruficapilla*, *Limnolythys swainsonii* and *Dives warszewiczi*) and one bird subspecies (*Oxyura j. jamaicensis*) new to Colombia. These comprise three species whose presence in the country or wider region has been considered unconfirmed owing to lack of evidence (e.g. Hilty & Brown 1986, Remsen *et al.* 2008), one introduced species and nine species found to date on San Andrés island. Records of two US banded and recovered *Aix sponsa* in Colombia are not valid. Notes on escaped and possibly introduced species are presented.

Taxonomic order and nomenclature follows Salaman *et al.* (2008).

## **Mallard** *Anas platyrhynchos*

Fjeldsa & Krabbe (1990) considered this species to be common throughout the Andes and naturalized in the Falkland Islands, but there are no published Colombia records of which we are aware. 35 individuals were observed and photographed by Thomas Donegan and Blanca Huertas in Parque Timiza, south-west Bogotá (4°36'30"N, 74°09'09"W) on 3 and 7 January 2008. Birds frequently came to humans for food but also were observed feeding on grasses. Individuals with both wild-like plumage and extensive leucisms were observed, perhaps suggesting a captive origin (sometimes referred to as subspecies 'domesticus'). No individuals had rings on the leg or clipped wings. Also present were a Muscovy Duck (*Cairina moschata*) and four apparent Muscovy Duck x Mallard hybrids. No Mallards were observed at Parque Timiza in a series of other visits between March 2001 and January 2006, when no other Anatidae were present at the site.

Other records of Mallard come from nearby Parque Simón Bolívar, Central Bogotá (4°39'25"N, 74°05'43"W), e.g. where 8 individuals were present and photographed on 8 February 2008 by Daniel Toro (<http://danxblog.blogspot.com/>). 60 individuals were reported in censuses around Colombia in the 2005 Aquatic Bird Census but no further details are available (ProAves & RNOA 2005). A single individual was observed at vereda El Páramo, Villamaría, Caldas (5°00'N, 75°20'W, 3420-4050 m elevation) on 27 December 2004 (ProAves data). Elsewhere in South America, the species is reported at times in large numbers (but unconfirmed) in Venezuela (Restall *et al.* 2006) and there is a sight record from Bonaire (Voous 1985), leading Remsen *et al.* (2008) to treat the species as hypothetical for South America. In the Caribbean, introduced birds or vagrants have been recorded throughout most of the Greater Antilles (Raffaele *et al.* 1998). Free-flying individuals have also been observed in lakes in

southern Chile (Jorge A. Tomasevic in litt. 2008) and Curitiba, Brazil (J. Roper in litt. 2008), in the latter case also hybridising with Muscovy Duck. These photographic records confirm the status of the Mallard as an introduced species in South America.

Johnsgard (1960) noted that hybrids between Mallard and Muscovy Duck, whilst not uncommon, have reduced fertility. Such hybridisation should not therefore affect the establishment of the Mallard in Colombia or elsewhere. Similar establishments of the Mallard have occurred in many countries (Lever 2005). Conservationists should monitor this introduction in light of the propensity of the Mallard to hybridise with other ducks, sometimes threatening native species (Simberloff 1996). It is not known whether the flocks observed were introduced locally or are wanderers from introduced populations in Central America and the Caribbean.

Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos* at Parque Timiza, Bogotá, January 2008. Photograph by T. Donegan.



An immature Gadwall photographed on San Andrés by Fundación ProAves [www.proaves.org](http://www.proaves.org)



## **Gadwall** *Anas strepera*

An immature was captured, measured, banded (H01151), below Pepper Hill at San Andrés (12°31'19"N, 81°42'55"W) on 30 October 2005 by Paul Salaman, Nick Bayly, Mark Grantham, and photographed by Alonso Quevedo. The species' broad white speculum is diagnostic. Gadwall is widespread in the Palearctic and Nearctic, wintering throughout Mexico south to Guatemala

(Howell & Webb 1995, Raffaele *et al.* 1998), with records in the Bahamas, Cuba, Jamaica, Hispaniola, Guadeloupe and Saint Lucia (Raffaele *et al.* 1998). This is the first record for San Andrés and Colombia.

#### **Ruddy Duck** *Oxyura j. jamaicensis*

One adult female was observed by Paul Salaman and Robert Burridge for over an hour by telescope at Represa Agua Dulce, on Isla Providencia (13°20'35"N, 81°23'13"W) on October 22, 2001. Resident Andean populations in South America including Colombia, *O. j. ferruginea*, are sometimes treated as a separate species ("Andean Duck") from *O. j. jamaicensis* although most recent authors have treated them as conspecific (e.g. McCracken & Sorensen 2005, Remsen *et al.* 2008). The nominate subspecies breeds in the USA south to Mexico and the Greater Antilles, wintering further South to Honduras, with vagrants to the Cayman Islands and Lesser Antilles (Howell & Webb 1995, Raffaele *et al.* 1998). This is the first record of the nominate subspecies of which we are aware for San Andrés and Colombia.

#### **Double-crested Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax auritus*

An immature was observed and identified by telescope, standing and feeding in the freshwater Represa Agua Dulce, Isla Providencia (13°20'35"N, 81°23'13"W) on October 22, 2001 by Paul Salaman and Robert Burridge. Double-crested Cormorant breeds in the USA south to northern Mexico, Cuba and the Bahamas (Raffaele *et al.* 1998), with vagrants reaching most of the rest of the Greater and northern Lesser Antilles and the Yucatán peninsula (Raffaele *et al.* 1998, Howell & Webb 1995). The species has also been recorded in Aruba, Bonaire and Curaçao (Restall *et al.* 2006). Its occurrence in San Andrés is therefore not unexpected.

#### **Long-billed Dowitcher** *Limnodromus scolopaceus*

Remarkably, an adult winter Long-billed Dowitcher was caught together with an adult winter Short-billed Dowitcher *Limnodromus griseus* in a freshwater pond beside the town of San Luis, Isla de San Andrés (12°31'19"N 81°42'55"W). Together in the hand enabled excellent side-by-side comparison of these two very similar species by Paul Salaman, Nick Bayly, Mark Grantham, Juan Carlos Verhelst and photographed by Alonso Quevedo. The two species are known to migrate together (Restall *et al.* 2006). The set of photographs taken show clearly all the features of *L. scolopaceus* (Lee & Birch 2006).

The status of Dowitcher species in South America has been controversial for many years. Short-billed is considered the more common of the two species in South America (Hilty & Brown 1986). Various unpublished photographs and other records of Long-billed Dowitcher exist, from throughout the Caribbean (Raffaele *et al.* 1998), in the Netherlands Antilles (Voous 1983, 1985) and French Guiana (A. Renaudier: per Remsen *et al.* 2008). In Central America, it winters south at least to El Salvador (Howell & Webb 1995). Specimens were purportedly collected in Colombia (Hellmayr and Conover 1948, Naranjo 1991), Peru (Schulenberg *et al.* 2007) and Ecuador (Ridgely & Greenfield 2001). However, none of the South American records were considered by Remsen *et al.* (2008) to have fully excluded the possibility the individual being of *L. griseus* and Raffaele *et al.* (1998) considered its status 'uncertain' in the Caribbean.

Long-billed Dowitcher (left) and Short-billed Dowitcher (right).  
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Long-billed Dowitcher (left) and Short-billed Dowitcher (right).  
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Long-billed Dowitcher (back) and Short-billed Dowitcher (front).  
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#### **Pomarine Skua** *Stercorarius pomarinus*

Observed resting on the water on 31 May 2004 in Bahía de Cispatá, Golfo de Morrosquillo, near Punta Bolívar, Department of Córdoba (09°24'N, 75°47'W, sea level) by Paul Salaman. Photos of the individual show this is clearly an immature Pomarine Skua. The species was previously regarded as "hypothetical" in Colombia by Hilty & Brown (1986) as a result of sight records on at least ten dates in the Caribbean and Pacific coasts of Colombia. It is considered "regular" and "frequent" on the Atlantic (French Guiana) and Pacific (Ecuador) coasts of

northern South America (Restall *et al.* 2006) and an “uncommon migrant” throughout the Caribbean (Raffaele *et al.* 1998). Photographic confirmation of this species in Colombia is therefore long overdue.

Pomarine Skua in Bahía de Cispatá by Paul Salaman.



**Long-tailed Skua *Stercorarius longicaudus***

One immature individual was observed for several minutes foraging along the seafront at Boca Grande, Cartagena, department of Bolivar (10°24'08"N, 75°33'28"W) by Paul Salaman early in the morning of 14 September 1991. Unfortunately there is no photographic material relating to this sighting. Long-tailed Skua is considered “rare” in northern South America and “very rare” in the Caribbean, with records in Venezuela, Ecuador and French Guiana (Restall *et al.* 2006) and throughout the West Indies (Raffaele *et al.* 1998).

**Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus***

One was observed and photographed on 13 February 2008 beside Santuario de Fauna y Flora Los Flamencos (11°25'38.28"N,

73°05'23.47"W), Department of Guajir by an EcoTurs Colombia birding tour including Frank Lambert, Luis Eduardo Uruea, Mark Gurney, Russell Graham, Robert Mansfield and Tempe Mansfield. Presumably the same individual was present until 13 March 2008 at least (Barry Walker in litt. 2008). This species identity was established thanks to Alvaro Jaramillo, Peter Burke and Floyd Hayes, particularly considering the possibility of Kelp Gull *L. dominicanus*. The bird clearly shows a long-winged, long rather slim body, with a relatively long narrow bill without much expansion at the gonys. The primaries are fresh with bold white tips with the primary feather spacing suggesting it is still in molt, which points to a bird in a Northern Hemisphere molt cycle. The size of the white primary tips, streaking on the head and dark bill smudge towards the tip of the bill, suggests this bird is probably a young winter adult, possibly in its 4<sup>th</sup> year. This is the first record for Colombia.

Lesser black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus* with Laughing Gulls *Leucophaeus atricilla* and Royal Terns *Thalasseus maximus*. Photograph by Mark Gurney.



Croaking Ground-Dove at Playa del Morro by Paul Salaman



**Croaking Ground-Dove *Columbina cruziana***

Individuals and small groups of Croaking Ground-Dove *Columbina cruziana* were commonly observed feeding near the beach at Playa del Morro, near Tumaco, Department of Nario (1°49'44"N, 78°44'02"W) on June 29, 2005. Photograph by Paul Salaman. Hilty & Brown (1986) regarded this species as “hypothetical” for Colombia owing to a lack of specimen or photographic records and Restall *et al.* (2006) also report only sight records from Colombia. It is present in Ecuador north to the border with Colombia. Although *C. cruziana* has been observed

on several occasions in Nariño, we are not aware of any published photographs from Colombia.

**Blue-mantled Thornbill** *Chalcostigma stanleyi*

A specimen in the Natural History Museum, Tring, UK (BMNH 2002.3.756) accessioned in 1819 is labelled “Colombia” and likely comes from the south of the country. The species is otherwise known from Ecuador, where it is considered uncommon and local in páramo habitats (Restall *et al.* 2006). This species is of similar status to Imperial Snipe *Gallinago imperialis* and Bogota Sunangel *Heliangelus zusii*, known in Colombia only from ‘Bogotá’ or ‘Colombia’ skins. The skin was discovered by Paul Salaman, Robert Prÿs-Jones and Nigel Cleere during work by Project BioMap ([www.biomap.net](http://www.biomap.net)).

Blue-mantled Thornbill *Chalcostigma stanleyi* specimen at BMNH



**Least Flycatcher** *Empidonax minimus*

One juvenile was captured, banded (A32160), measured and examined at Red Crab, San Andrés (12.30’12”N; 81.43’02”W) early on the morning of 31 October 2005. Its identification was confirmed by Nick Bayly, Mark Grantham, and Paul Salaman using Pyle (1997) and other guides. This Nearctic migrant winters in Central America south to Costa Rica (Howell & Webb 1995). It has been recorded as a vagrant in the Cayman Islands but not elsewhere in the Caribbean (Raffaele *et al.* 1998). There are no previous South American records of which we are aware.

**White-eyed Vireo** *Vireo griseus*

Many individuals have been banded and photographed during ProAves’ ringing scheme on San Andrés island at several localities: at Orange Hill (12°33’50”N; 81°43’05”W) (two on 3 December 2003: Olga Neto; one on 26 April 2004: Kervy Smith); Pepper Hill (12°32’07”N; 81°43’07”W) (one on 5 March 2004: Ana María Castaño); Smith Channel (12°30’N; 81°43’W) (one on 8 March 2004; one on 12 April 2004 and one on 15 April 2004: Ana María Castaño, Kervy Smith, José Castaño); Big Pond

(12°32’57”N; 81°43’09”W) (one on 25 May 2004 (adult), 27 October 2005 (juvenile) and 1 November 2005 (juvenile): Shary Rodríguez, Andrea Pacheco, Paul Salaman & Alonso Quevedo); Red Crab (12.30’12”N; 81.43’02”W) (one on 22 October 2006: Marcela Salguero and Gustavo Suárez); and Estación ‘Aquí Es Más Allá’ (12°30’N; 81°43’W) (two on 2 December 2006). The species breeds in south-eastern USA and northern Mexico, wintering south to Nicaragua with records south to Panama and across much of the Caribbean (Howell & Webb 1995, Raffaele *et al.* 1998), thus its appearance in San Andrés is expected. The species appears to be a regular winter visitor to the island.

White-eyed Vireo *Vireo griseus* on San Andres; juvenile (left) and adult (right).



**American Pipit** *Anthus rubescens*

Three individuals were observed foraging on turf on Johnny Key, just north of San Andrés island (12°35’56”N; 81°41’26”W) by Robert Burrige on 29 October 2001 following a major fall of migrants on the island. This generally Nearctic species winters throughout Mexico, with stragglers reaching the Caribbean (the Bahamas, San Salvador and Jamaica) and Central America including Belize and Guatemala (Howell & Webb 1995, Raffaele *et al.* 1998). It is previously reported from San Andrés and Providencia (Raffaele *et al.* 1998) but no details of the relevant records have been published.

**Savannah Sparrow** *Passerculus sandwichensis*

A single individual was observed on Johnny Key just north of San Andrés island (12°35'56"N; 81°41'26"W) by Robert Burridge on 29 October 2001. The species breeds in the USA and montane parts of Mexico, wintering throughout Mexico and in the Greater Antilles (Raffaele *et al.* 1998). Vagrancy is well-known, with recent records in Honduras, El Salvador and the Western Palearctic but none in South America (Remsen *et al.* 2008).

**Nashville Warbler** *Vermivora ruficapilla*

A juvenile female Nashville Warbler was captured, banded and photographed by Nick Bayly, Mark Grantham, Alonso Quevedo and Paul Salaman on San Andrés (12°30'N; 81°43'W) on 30 October 2005 and identified using Pyle (1997). The bird was then recaptured on two subsequent occasions, the last being on the 1<sup>st</sup> November 2005 when a second individual was also captured and banded. Nashville Warbler breeds in the USA and winters south to Guatemala, with vagrants reported in Honduras and Costa Rica (Howell & Webb 1995, Rafaele *et al.* 1998). It is a rare winter visitor to northern Bahamas and Cayman islands and considered a vagrant to the southern Bahamas, Cuba, Jamaica, Hispaniola and Puerto Rico (Rafaele *et al.* 1998) but there are no previous San Andrés or South American records.

Immature Nashville Warbler on San Andrés. Photo by Fundación ProAves [www.proaves.org](http://www.proaves.org)



**Swainson's Warbler** *Limnothlypis swainsonii*

This species is regularly encountered during the non-breeding period on San Andrés (12°30'N; 81°43'W). Mist-netted, banded and photographed individuals on San Andrés by Andrea Pacheco, Nick Bayly, Mark Grantham, Alonso Quevedo and Paul Salaman on 17 February 2005 and 21 October 2005. The species breeds in the USA and winters in the Yucatán peninsula, Belize, Cuba and Jamaica, occurring as a vagrant on Hispaniola and the Virgin Islands (Raffaele *et al.* 1998). The only record in South American mainland is a sight record from Maracaibo, Zulia, Venezuela (Casler & Esté 1996).

**Scrub Blackbird** *Dives warszewiczii*

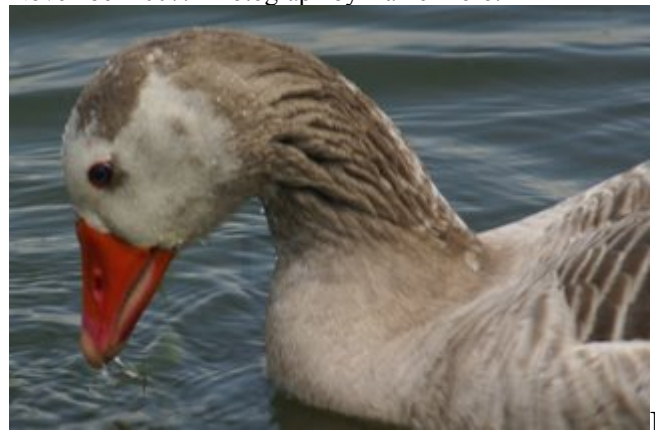
The species has been recorded by Paul Salaman around clearings and cultivated areas in the Pacific lowlands and foothills of Nariño, particularly below the town of Junín (1°21'N, 78°08'W, 300-900 meters) on the Tumaco to Pasto highway from February 1997. It is possible that the species has recently colonized the area, now that significant areas of the region are deforested. The

nominate subspecies is known from the lowlands of Peru and Ecuador up to just south of the border with Colombia (Jaramillo & Burke 1999). Restall *et al.* (2006) noted that the species is “spreading north due to deforestation and irrigation, and will probably soon reach south-west Colombia”, a prediction now fulfilled.

Swainson's Warbler on San Andrés on 17 February 2005. Photo by Fundación ProAves [www.proaves.org](http://www.proaves.org)



Greylag Goose *Anser anser* at Parque Simón Bolívar, Bogotá, November 2007. Photograph by Daniel Toro.



**Escaped Species**

A feral population of *c.*10 individuals of the Greylag Goose *Anser anser* has been resident in Parque Simón Bolívar, central Bogotá (4°39'25"N, 74°05'43"W) since at least March 2001 (Thomas Donegan obs.) and in the Botanical Gardens since at least 1992 (Ordoñez 1992), with observations by many observers until at least 10 November 2007 (Daniel Toro photograph). The population includes a number of leucistic individuals, suggesting a captive origin (individuals of such origin sometimes being referred to as subspecies ‘domesticus’). Fjeldsa & Kabbe (1990) considered the species to be found in most of the Andes and established in the Falkland Islands. Given the relatively small number of individuals (cf. Mallard), the status of Greylag Goose as an “introduced species” requires further evaluation. A photograph is published to document its presence in Colombia.

Other bird species of which escaped individuals are sometimes observed in Colombia that we do not treat as part of the national list on account of not being shown to have established sustainable populations include: Black Swan *Cygnus atratus*, Golden Pheasant *Chrysolophus pictus*, Lady Amherst's Pheasant *Chrysolophus amherstiae*, Silver Pheasant *Lophura nycthemera*, Peacock *Pavo cristatus*, Chicken / Red Junglefowl *Gallus gallus* and Helmeted Guineafowl *Numida meleagris*. Other introduced and possibly introduced species of which details have been published elsewhere are listed in Salaman *et al.* (2008).

#### Note concerning Wood Duck *Aix sponsa*

Two individuals with U.S. bands reportedly recovered in Colombia (band no, 0675-54025: shot on 2 January 1982 at a locality near Popano, Bolívar, 10°25'N, 75°15'W; band no. 0935-79512 shot at La Culebra, Córdoba, 09°05'N, 75°45'W) were referred to in Salaman *et al.* (2007). Communications with U.S. Patuxent Wildlife Research Center confirmed each of these to be Blue-winged Teals *Anas discors*, both erroneously logged on the relevant databases (J. Leachman in litt. 2008).

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**Address for correspondence:** Fundación ProAves, Cra 20 #36-61, Bogotá, Colombia. Email: fundacion @ proaves.org

**Corrigendum (15 May 2008).** **Mallard:** Project Biomap reports a specimen considered of domestic origin collected by J. Durán at Laguna La Ovejera, El Cerrito, dept. Valle in 1957. (Instituto Vallecaucano de Investigaciones no. 00099) and reported in Bogotá since 1992 (E. Z. Ordoñez: Guía de la Aves en el Jardín Botánico). **Pomarine Skua:** Although overlooked in the literature, Project BioMap reports four Colombian specimens (AMNH 407892 collected by R.C. Murphy in 1941, 91 miles west of Buenaventura, Valle del Cauca; AMNH 407891 from an unknown locality in Chocó also collected by R.C. Murphy in 1941; Universidad del Atlántico, no. 111 collected in 1994 by L.M. Moreno at Puebloviejo, Tasajera Vivió, Magdalena; and Universidad del Valle no. 6369, collected in 2001 by F. Estela at Vereda Amaya, Bahía Cispatá, Municipio San Antero, Córdoba: Estela *et al.* 2004 *Boletín de Investigaciones Marinas y Costeras* 33: 243-248). **Long-tailed Skua:** There is also an observation of this species from Malpelo (Pitman *et al.* 1995: *Colonial Waterbirds* 18(1): 113-119) and a specimen reported from PNN Gorgona (Ortiz von Halle 1990: *Caldasia* 16:209-214). **Croaking Ground-Dove:** In addition to the records mentioned above, among the other many observations of this species referred to in the paper include two "Bogotá" specimens (USNM 496771, LSU 160979) and four more recent specimens (ICN 30062 collected in 1985 by K. von Sneidern at Amarales, El Charco, Nariño; MMGA no. v90007 collected in PNN Gorgona (02°58'N 78°11'W) by R. Franke; and ICN 34251 and 34260 collected in 2002 at Isla El Morro, Tumaco, Nariño by Juan Carlos de las Casas). Some of these specimens were discussed by B. Ortiz-von Halle (1990).

<b>Nombre Común en Español</b> ----- <b>Nombre Común en Inglés</b>	<b>Nombre de la especie (Latín)</b>	<b>Subespecie (Latín)</b>	<b>Vall.-Car.</b>	<b>Pacífico</b>	<b>Andes</b>	<b>Amazo.</b>	<b>Orinoco</b>	<b>Cobertura</b>	<b>Reservas ProAves</b>	<b>Estado</b>	<b>Alt</b>							
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