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AVIFAUNA OF LITTLE SAN SALVADOR, BAHAMAS

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During a Southampton College SeaMester cruise aboard the schooner Harvey Gamage, Dirigo Tours, I observed birds on Little San Salvador, (24° 34'N, 75° 56'W) an uninhabited island in the northern Bahamas located about 15 km east of the southern tip of Eleuthera and 20 km west of the northwestern tip of Cat Island. Little San Salvador is the namesake of San Salvador (Watling's Island) because of an extensive 270 ha interior lagoon surrounded by steep hills (el. 20 m). The privately owned island is protected as a Wild Bird Preserve under The Wild Birds (Protection) Act, 1905 (revised in 1965 and 1972 with the guidance and cooperation of the National Audubon Society). The permanent brackish lagoon is one of 21 important wetlands designated by the Bahamas National Trust (Scott and Carbonell 1986). The Trust listed no waterfowl known from this wetland.

I walked the coastline and rudimentary trails for approximately 3 hours during 3 to 4 November, 1981, recording 26 species and encountered 85 individuals (Table 1). With one exception, these are the only fall observations of birds recorded on Little San Salvador and thus contribute to our understanding of periodicity for neotropical migrants and residency of some indigenous Bahaman species.

Previous to this survey, Mary H. Clench (Anon. 1976) visited Little San Salvador briefly during 26-27 March 1979 on a Carnegie Museum Bahama Expedition and reported 9 species of birds. Attrill (1979) visited the island from 22 to 25 April 1979 and reported observing 36 species, although only 15 were cited in the paper. Alexander Sprunt IV reported that five species of seabirds nested at Little San Salvador based on field work conducted in May 1979 and 1981 (Sprunt 1984).

I wish to thank Capt. Eben Whitcomb for his unwavering hospitality ashore and aboard the Harvey Gamage, Capt. Jeff Bolster for the unique opportunity to visit small islands of the Bahamas, and C. Douglas Hardy for his field assistance, extensive knowledge of the natural history of Bahamas, and particularly his enthusiasm. I am grateful to Mary H. Clench, Judith Fenwick, and Rod Attrill through Donald Buden. I thank Howard Langridge, Peter G. Merritt, and especially Donald Buden for making many useful suggestions to earlier drafts.

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Table 1. Birds recorded on Little San Salvador, Bahamas. B = breeding confirmed, (B) = breeding unconfirmed, but probable, N = nonbreeding visitor (passing migrant, winter visitor, and vagrants). Numbers refer to number of individuals seen and "+" indicates records unstated as to numbers. Nomenclature and order follow the AOU (1983).

Species	Status	Records ^c			
		MHC 1976	RA 1979	AS 1979	RLN 1981
Wilson's Storm-Petrel, <i>Oceanites oceanicus</i>	N		+		
White-tailed Tropicbird, <i>Phaethon lepturus</i>	B		+	+	
Magnificent Frigatebird, <i>Fregata magnificens</i>	(B)				1
Great Blue Heron, <i>Ardea herodias</i>	N		1		1
Green-backed Heron, <i>Butorides striatus</i>	(B)				1
Reddish Egret, <i>Egretta rufescens</i>	N		1		
Snowy Egret, <i>E. thula</i>	(B)		+		
Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, <i>Nycticorax violaceus</i>	(B)	+			
Osprey, <i>Pandion haliaetus</i>	B		3		1
Northern Harrier, <i>Circus cyaneus</i>	B				1
Merlin, <i>Falco columbarius</i>	N				1
Blue-winged Teal, <i>Anas discors</i> ^a	N				1
American Coot, <i>Fulica americana</i> ^b	N				1
Clapper Rail, <i>Rallus longirostris</i>	(B)	+			1
Piping Plover, <i>Charadrius melodia</i>	N				1
Wilson's Plover, <i>C. wilsonia</i>	(B)				1
Black-bellied Plover, <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>	N		+		6
American Oystercatcher, <i>Haematopus palliatus</i>	(B)				2
Black-necked Stilt, <i>Himantopus mexicanus</i>	(B)		+		
Lesser Yellowlegs, <i>Tringa flavipes</i>	N		+		8
Short-billed Dowitcher, <i>Limnodromus griseus</i>	N				20
Ruddy Turnstone, <i>Arenaria interpres</i>	N				2
Laughing Gull, <i>Larus atricilla</i>	(B)		+		
Ring-billed Gull, <i>L. delawarensis</i>	N				1
Roseate Tern, <i>Sterna dougallii</i>	B			+	
Sooty Tern, <i>S. fuscata</i>	B			+	
Bridled Tern, <i>S. anaethetus</i>	B			+	
Royal Tern, <i>S. maxima</i>	(B)				7
Brown Noddy, <i>Anous stolidus</i>	B			+	
White-crowned Pigeon, <i>Columba leucocephala</i>	B		+		
Common Ground-Dove, <i>Columbina passerina</i>	(B)	+			1
Key West Quail-Dove, <i>Geotrygon chrysis</i>	(B)		+		
Burrowing Owl, <i>Athene cucularia</i>	(B)	+			1
Belted Kingfisher, <i>Megaceryx alcyon</i>	N				1
Gray Catbird, <i>Dumetella carolinensis</i>	N				1
Bahama Mockingbird, <i>Mimus gundlachi</i>	(B)	+	+		1
Thick-billed Vireo, <i>Vireo crassirostris</i>	(B)	+			
Cape May Warbler (<i>Dendroica tigrina</i>)	N				2
Palm Warbler, <i>D. palmarum</i>	N	+	+		20
Black-throated Blue Warbler, <i>D. caerulea</i> , female	N				1
Bananaquit, <i>Coereba flaveola</i>	(B)	+	+		
Black-faced Grassquit, <i>Tiaris bicolor</i>	(B)	+			

^aBand return; recovered January 1944, banded in Illinois, 30 October 1943 (Buden 1991).

^bBand return; recovered 1 November 1969, banded in South Dakota, 27 July 1966 (Buden 1991).

^cMHC = Mary H. Clench; RA = Rod Attrill; AS = Alexander Sprunt IV; RLN = Robert L. Norton.