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## Birds of the Dominican Republic and Haiti

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# Books

**BIRDS OF THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC AND HAITI.** By Steven Latta, Christopher Rimmer, Allan Keith, James Wiley, Herbert Raffaele, Kent McFarland, and Eladio Fernandez. Illustrated by Barry Kent MacKay, Tracy Pedersen, and Kristin Williams. 2006. Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ. 258 pp. \$35.00.

This is a wonderful addition to the literature on West Indian birds and a must-have book for anyone headed for Hispaniola or interested in the distribution and abundance of that island's birds. It is both attractive and detailed. The attractiveness comes from the use of rearrangements of the field-guide style plates from the West Indian bird guide by Raffaele *et al.* (1998) including several corrections to the original plates, where the wrong subspecies had been depicted. In addition, all 31 island endemic species appear on plates showing them in their natural environments. The detail comes from incorporating information presented in the checklist by Keith *et al.* (2003) and numerous recent records from the ever-increasing number of birders on that island. Species accounts include the usual material that aids in identification and distribution, and also have information on status, nesting and many other attributes. Nearly all the accounts have maps showing the bird's distribution on Hispaniola and all provide local names for both the Dominican Republic and Haiti.

The plates dealing with transient and winter resident North American birds are complete enough that the experienced birder probably does not need another field guide while visiting Hispaniola. The information on the status of migrants and vagrants is detailed and as up to date as possible. Anyone banding within Hispaniola would find these distributional details useful, although I am sure that there are many new discoveries to be made with regard to the status of migrants and winter residents on that island. If you are banding, though, you should bring along your other references to aid in ageing and sexing migrants and wintering residents, as this book does not go into that much detail on each species. This guide can tell you which migrants are possible in different locations, allowing you to do some

appropriate copying rather than carrying the giant black book along in your luggage.

Hispaniola is an exciting island for an ornithologist, with a surprising number of unusual endemics scattered across habitats ranging from desert scrub to pine forest. The Dominican Republic is safe and ready for increasing tourism based on birds, which this book should encourage. The Dominican Republic is not without its environmental problems, but unlike neighboring Haiti, the Dominican Republic has habitat remaining in designated national parks, birds living in these habitats and an increasing number of residents who care about protecting nature. To aid in the development of a local conservation infrastructure in the Dominican Republic, Grupo Leon Jimenez was able to fund a Spanish-language version of this book (*Aves de la Republica Dominicana y Haiti*), while the World Bank, National Aviary and two Haitian banks funded the French edition (*Les oiseaux d'Haiti et de la République Dominicaine*). Without the development of internal support for conservation among island populations, it is difficult to do much, and perhaps it is too late for doing much conservation in Haiti. Ideally, though, this wonderful book will encourage new progress in the conservation of Hispaniola and its birds.

## LITERATURE CITED

- Keith, A. R., J. W. Wiley, S. C. Latta and J. A. Ottenwalder. 2003. The birds of Hispaniola: Haiti and the Dominican Republic. British Ornithologists' Union, Tring, UK.
- Raffaele, H., J. Wiley, O. Garrido, A. Keith and J. Raffaele. 1998. A guide to the birds of the West Indies. Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ.

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