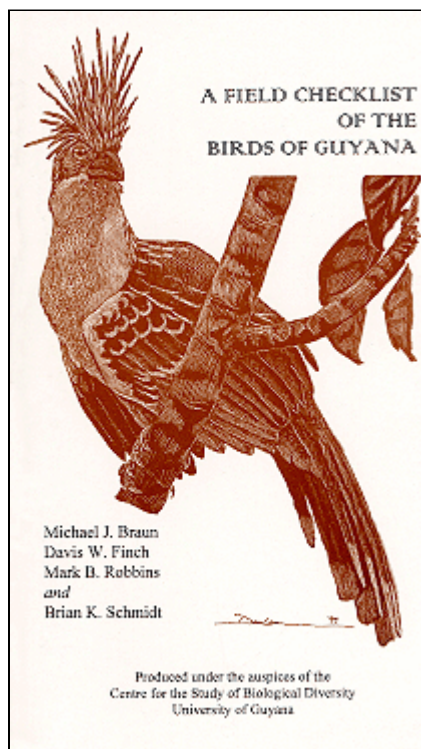


[To the Bird Checklist](#)



A Field Checklist of the Birds of Guyana

by

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INTRODUCTION

This publication presents a comprehensive list of the birds of Guyana with summary information on their habitats, biogeographical affinities, migratory behavior and abundance, in a format suitable for use in the field. It should facilitate field identification, especially when used in conjunction with an illustrated work such as *Guide to the Birds of Venezuela* (Meyer de Schauensee and Phelps 1978). It is part of a series of comprehensive lists of the flora and fauna of Guyana being developed by the Biological Diversity of the Guianas Program, Smithsonian and the Centre for the Study of Biological Diversity, University of Guyana (Boggan et al. 1997, www.nmnh.si.edu/biodiversity/bdg.htm).

The list includes 786 species that have been documented as occurring in Guyana. It builds upon the long out-of-print work of Snyder (1966), who listed 720 species. Her list is largely treated as authoritative, but 10 species are removed for lack of concrete documentation. These are *Tinamus tao*, *Butorides virescens*, *Columba fasciata*, *Crotophaga sulcirostris*, *Pharomachrus fulgidus*, *Picumnus minutissimus*, *Iodopleura pipra*, *Loxigilla noctis*, and *Gymnomystax mexicanus*. Seventy-four species are added, and an additional 2 species result from 8 taxonomic changes (3 lumps, 5 splits). Thus, more than 10% of the list is new since Snyder (1966).

Species included are those whose occurrence in the country is supported by physical evidence (specimen, photograph, sound recording, or band recovery) or written documentation of a sight record by a reliable, experienced observer (see below). The classification and nomenclature herein are based on the *Check-list of North American Birds* (American Ornithologists' Union 1998), Ridgely and Tudor (1989, 1994), Monroe and Sibley (1993), and Traylor (1979), with minor revisions judged by the authors to be justified by recent research.

DEFINITIONS

Abbreviations and symbols are used for various categories of habitat, endemism, migration and abundance. The endemism and habitat codes follow *Stotz et al.* (1996); some habitat codes are modified to reflect the authors' experience in Guyana.

HABITAT CODES

LF	Lowland forest, including both <i>terra firme</i> and seasonally flooded forest
MF	Montane forest
RI	Riverine habitats, including waters, islands, banks, waterfalls, and riparian forests
MA	Marine or salt water habitats, including coastal and pelagic waters
MU	Mudflats and coastal beaches
FW	Fresh water habitats, including lakes, conservancies, ponds, oxbows, marshes, and canals
MN	Mangrove forest
HU	Habitats altered by humans, such as gardens, towns, roadsides, agricultural lands, disturbed forests and forest edge
SV	Savanna grasslands
SC	Scrub or brush habitats, including white sand scrub, bush islands, and dense, low second growth
PA	Palm trees and forests

ENDEMISM and MIGRATION CODES (EN/MI)

GUI	Restricted to the Guianas and adjacent Venezuela and Brazil
TEP	Restricted to the tepui highlands of Venezuela, Brazil and Guyana. In Guyana, these include the Pakaraima and Merume Mountains.
AMN	Restricted to Amazonian (and Guianan) lowlands north of the Amazon
NEA	Nearctic migrant; except for shorebirds, these occur September - May and are absent in the northern summer months of June - August.
AUS	Austral migrant; typically present May - September

ABUNDANCE CODES (ABU)

C	Common; more than 20 individuals encountered daily in prime habitat and season
F	Fairly common; 5-20 individuals encountered daily in prime habitat and season
U	Uncommon; present in small numbers (fewer than 5 individuals per day); not encountered daily even in prime habitat and season
S	Scarce; only occasionally encountered in small numbers even in prime habitat and season
?	Occurs in Guyana but status unclear due to scarcity of data
E	Extirpated; no longer occurs, probably as a result of hunting (Horned Screamer)
+	Extinct (Eskimo Curlew)
L	Local; used with other abundance codes to indicate that a species' distribution in the country is patchy and that it is absent from large areas of apparently suitable habitat.
[]	Sight records only (19 species)
*	Reported for Guyana in the ornithological literature, but doubtful due to difficulty of identification or the possibility of human introduction (10 species)

DOCUMENTING NEW RECORDS

While this list contains much new information, much remains to be learned. Every effort should be made to document observations of species not on this list, as well as those marked by brackets or asterisks, or with an abundance code of "?". Copies of photographs and/or tape recordings may be sent to the first author, as may written details of sight records. These should include date, time, specific locality, observers' names and addresses, general description of size, shape and color pattern as well as specific field marks used to eliminate similar species, habitat, behavior, light conditions, optical equipment and previous experience of the observers with the species in question and its relatives.

Documenting new or unusual distributional records of birds is only the beginning. Little is known of the habitat, behavior, migration, breeding and ecology of many Neotropical birds. New and significant discoveries await any keen observer with a pair of binoculars and a field guide! We hope this publication will generate new information on the status and distribution of Guyana's birdlife and result in an increased commitment to its preservation.

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[To the Bird Checklist](#)

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[To title](#)

[Bird Checklist](#)

[Vertebrate Species of Guyana Index](#)

[Smithsonian Division of Birds](#)

