

STUDIES ON THE FAUNA OF CURAÇAO AND OTHER  
CARIBBEAN ISLANDS: No. 26.

AN UNDESCRIBED RACE OF *COEREBA FLAVEOLA*  
FROM BONAIRE

by

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In the course of the preparation of the book on "De Vogels van de Nederlandse Antillen" ("*Birds of the Netherlands Antilles*"), which will be published very soon (obtainable through Martinus Nijhoff, The Hague, and Boekhandel Salas, Curaçao). it became apparent that the bananaquits (*Coereba flaveola*) from Bonaire required a new subspecific name. Full details on the occurrence of *Coereba flaveola* in the group of Netherlands Leeward Islands (Aruba, Curaçao, and Bonaire) will be found in my forthcoming monograph on the birds of these islands, in the 7th volume of these *Studies*, as well as in the above mentioned book.

***Coereba flaveola bonairensis*, new subspecies**

Differs from *Coereba flaveola uropygialis* from Curaçao and Aruba by having the white on the throat much more extended, forming a large, wedge-shaped patch of white, which runs from the yellow of the upper breast to the chin and leaves only a very small basal part of the chin black. The upper parts tend to be more sooty black, less tinged with grey.

Type: ♂, 9.XI.1951, Slagbaai Plantation, Bonaire. — Zoological Museum Amsterdam nr. 11089; coll. Voous.

Range: Islands of Bonaire and Klein Bonaire.

Discussion: The bananaquits from Aruba, Curaçao, and Bonaire represent an easily recognizable group of populations, which are readily distinguished from the nearby continental races by the black of chin and throat being uniform with the ear coverts and the remaining black parts of the head. Birds from the mainland of South America have the chin and the throat a light grey, which sharply contrasts with the black of the lores and ear coverts. In addition these birds lack the brightly coloured and swollen fleshy edges to the mouth, which is so characteristic a feature of the species' Caribbean populations. Bananaquits from Aruba, Curaçao, and Bonaire have furthermore a white wing-spot, formed by the base of the primaries; it is usually clearly visible, but varies considerably in size, being on an average least developed in birds from Bonaire. I have not had the opportunity of closely examining specimens from the Venezuelan islands to the east of Bonaire — the species is absent in the Aves Islands — but those which I saw in the splendid PHELPS Collection in Caracas (Venezuela) confirmed the generally accepted resemblance of these insular populations to the continental Venezuelan populations of the race *luteola*, rather than to those from the Netherlands Leeward Islands (see: W. H. PHELPS, Sr. & W. H. PHELPS, Jr., "Lista de las aves de Venezuela con su distribución", 2, *Bol. Soc. Venez. Cienc. Nat.* 12 (75), 1950, p. 273-276).

When specimens from the islands of Aruba, Curaçao, and Bonaire were compared it appeared that specimens from Curaçao — which is the type locality of *Coereba flaveola wropygialis* BERLEPSCH (*Journ. f. Orn.* 40, 1892, p. 77) — have a small white patch of variable extent between the black of the throat and the yellow of the breast. Aruba specimens do not generally differ from those from Curaçao, except that the white throat patch is on an average slightly larger, though always leaving the upper throat and the chin black. This white patch is still larger and definitely triangular in shape in birds from Bonaire, in which practically the whole of the throat is white, leaving only on the chin a small patch of black. This was a rather regular character in the series of 15 specimens examined, only one of the birds being indistinguishable from the maximum extreme in the Curaçao series.

The probability of Bonaire bananaquits representing a population which is distinct from those of Curaçao and Aruba on account of the extension of the white throat patch had been previously also noticed by HELLMAYR (*Publ. Field Mus. Nat. Hist.* 347, Zool. Ser. 13,8, 1935, p. 301), who stated, however, to have seen exceptions to this rule and therefore did not pay further attention to it.

It was, furthermore, necessary to compare the birds from Aruba, Curaçao, and Bonaire with those from Santa Lucia and Martinique in the southern Lesser Antilles (*martinica*). Specimens were lent from the American Museum of Natural History (New York) through the courtesy of Dr D. AMADON, to whom the author renders his sincerest thanks. Four specimens from Santa Lucia and two from Martinique have been examined. These have a broad patch of white on the throat and, thus, show a particular resemblance to *bonaivensis*, but the patch is narrower, more linear, less triangular in shape than in birds from Bonaire. Besides, the white throat line is laterally sharply bordered with sooty black, not with greyish, as in *bonaivensis*. Additional differences of *martinica* are: darker, slightly more greenish-yellow colour of the under parts, darker and more olivaceous colour of the flanks and smaller and darker olive-yellow rump patch.

Measurements: Differences in dimensions between specimens from Aruba, Curaçao, and Bonaire do not seem to be noteworthy. A summary of measurements in mm follows (bill measured from forehead):

Aruba —	♂	wing	57.5 – 62.5	average	(4)	61.2
		tail	36 – 44	„	(5)	40.5
		bill	15 – 16.5	„	(5)	16.0
	♀	wing	56.5			
		tail	37.5			
		bill	15.5			
Curaçao —	♂	wing	56 – 65	average	(11)	61.7
		tail	36 – 47	„	(11)	41.7
		bill	15 – 17	„	(12)	16.2
	♀	wing	57.5 – 62.5	average	(4)	59.0
		tail	36 – 43.5	„	(4)	38.6
		bill	15.5 – 16	„	(5)	15.9
Bonaire and Klein Bonaire	♂	wing	58 – 66	average	(7)	63.6
		tail	40 – 46	„	(7)	44.1
		bill	15 – 18	„	(7)	16.5
	♀	wing	57.5 – 60	average	(4)	58.9
		tail	40.5 – 43	„	(4)	41.9
		bill	15 – 16	„	(4)	15.4

Specimens examined:

Aruba (*uropygialis*): Amsterdam Museum 6, Leiden Museum 8.

Curaçao (*uropygialis*): Amsterdam Museum 20, Leiden Museum 2.

Bonaire (*bonairensis*): Amsterdam Museum 10, Leiden Museum 2.

Klein Bonaire (*bonairensis*): Amsterdam Museum 3.