
**Rough notes and memoranda
relating to the natural history
of the Bermudas**

Hurdis John L

Title: Rough notes and memoranda relating to the natural history of the Bermudas

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Rough Notes and Memoranda

RELATING TO THE

Natural History of the Bermudas

BY THE LATE

JOHN L. HURDIS

FORMERLY

Controller of Customs and Navigation Laws in those Islands

EDITED BY HIS DAUGHTER

H. J. HURDIS

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—
1897.

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TO THE MEMORY OF
MY FATHER'S OLD FRIEND
THE LATE
COLONEL H. M. DRUMMOND-HAY
FORMERLY OF THE 42ND HIGHLANDERS
(THE CAPTAIN DRUMMOND SO FREQUENTLY MENTIONED IN THESE NOTES)
I DEDICATE THIS LITTLE WORK.

P R E F A C E.

IN giving these Notes to the public, I think it right to state that some of them have already appeared in a little work, entitled, "The Naturalist in Bermuda," by the late John Mathew Jones, published in 1859; Mr. Jones having first visited Bermuda in 1854.

Although my father landed in the Bermudas in October, 1840, it was not until September, 1846, that he really commenced his Notes on the natural history of the islands; the responsibilities of his office being very onerous during those first six years, he was then prevented. But in 1846, circumstances having changed, he was more at liberty to follow his own inclinations than hitherto.

The late Mr. Hunt Marriott, then an officer in the same department, being, like my father, imbued with a taste for natural science, observing that he thought it was a pity so little was known of the natural history of the islands, my father proposed an effort should be made to work it out; whereupon Mr. Marriott at once offered his assistance, saying he would do his best in collecting and describing the various forms of insect life, if my father would take the birds; and so far as my father individually was concerned, he continued it up to the period of his departure from Bermuda, in May, 1855.

The Notes now date back many years; but I can only hope that, like old wine, they may not prove to the natur-

alist the less palatable for age, more especially to those who may be now residing in Bermuda.

Many of those mentioned have long since gone to their rest, while the few that remain are known by other designations.

To the late Colonel H. M. Drummond-Hay (the Captain Drummond, whose name so often appears), my best thanks are due, as his kind encouragement and aid induced me to publish this little volume.

H. J. HURDIS.

SOUTHAMPTON,

January, 1897.

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E R R A T A .

- Page 6, line 2, *for* " Buffet " *read* " Buffel."
- " 8, " 12, " " virescons " *read* " virescens."
- " 10, " 4, 5, " " Mariloides " *read* " Marilyides."
- " 15, " 15, " " Fury " *read* " Ferry."
- " 16, " 5, *from bottom, for* " Simrus " *read* " Seirus."
- " 16, " 4, " " " " " cencis " " " censis."
- " 27, " 10, *for* " King " *read* " Ring."
- " 29, " 13, *from bottom, for* " Belled " *read* " Belted."
- " 44, " 6, *for* " King " *read* " Ring."
- " 151, " 10, " " Buffet " *read* " Buffel."
- " 153, " 15, " " Phaeton " *read* " Phæton."
- " " " 15, *from bottom, for* " Phaeton " *read* " Phæton," *and for*
" Athereus " *read* " Æthereus."
- " 154, " 2, *for* " Phaeton " *read* " Phæton."
- " " " 3, " " Phaeton Athereus " *read* " Phæton Æthereus."
- " " " 14, *from bottom, for* " Phaeton " *read* " Phæton."
- " 184, " 8, *for* " tinia " *read* " tinica."
- " 243, " 10, *for* " Brass " *read* " Barss."
- " 252, " 3, *from bottom, for* " Eagle " *read* " Horned."
- " 268, " 8, " " " " " heing " " " been."
- " 308, " 9, " " " " " Shinz's " " " Schinz's."
- " 310, " 10, *for* " Buffet " *read* " Buffel."
- " 313, " 10, " " these " " " those."
- " 370, " 12, " " Innipha manihot " *read* " Manihot janipha."

PRELIMINARY REMARKS
ON THE PECULIAR AND HIGHLY INTERESTING CHARACTER
OF THE
ORNITHOLOGY OF THE BERMUDAS.

THE wonderful formation of this group of islands in the waters of the Atlantic, the distance which separates it from the shores of North America and the West Indies, and the existence, in so remote a spot, of various forms of animal life—*feræ naturæ*—are alone sufficient to excite astonishment in the mind of an observant naturalist; but, when he finds that ocean speck to be visited by birds of many *genera*, and oftentimes with unerring regularity of season; that others, in their periodical migrations from one region of the earth to another, pass over this miniature abode—sometimes in vast numbers—without heeding it; and others, again, appear to be driven there under accidental circumstances, his mind becomes aroused to the study of these phenomena, in order to understand clearly these mysteries of nature.

On looking round it will be found that seven species of birds¹ are resident throughout the year; these we shall term native birds. They consist of the Blue-bird, Cat-bird,

¹ Since increased to *nine*, by the introduction of the Virginian Quail and the domestic Sparrow of Europe.

Cardinal Grosbeak, American Crow, White-eyed Greenlet, Ground-dove, and common Gallinule or Moorhen. If you add to these four sea birds, which frequent the coast in the summer season, viz., the Common Tropic-bird, Common and Roseate Terns, and Dusky Shearwater, we shall have eleven species, all common to North America, known to breed in the Bermudas.

Beyond this, not a feather will be found, except during the season of migration—a negative fact which has cost no small amount of toil and industry to establish.

The remaining one hundred and twenty-eight birds included in the ornithology of the islands are chiefly migratory—the accidental visitors being few in number. Here, we meet with the Vulture and Falcon Tribes, the Owl, Caprimulgus, Swift, Swallow, and Fly-catchers; with Warblers, Thrushes, Larks, and Finches; with the Rice Bunting, Oriole, Shrike, Waxwing, Kingfisher, Woodpecker, Cuckoo, Dove, Gallinule, and Rail; with Plover and Snipe, Herons, Bitterns, Ducks, Pelicans, Gulls, Petrels, and Grebes—all of them being birds of North America.

Three European birds have also been met with, which are said to be unknown to the American continent. In addition to this large number of birds—proved by specimens actually brought in—eight others are known to the ornithology of these islands, although no examples rewarded the exertions of resident ornithologists to obtain them, and the occurrence of four other birds is recorded on the reliable testimony of highly respectable individuals.

The ornithology of the Bermuda group will thus be found to extend to one hundred and fifty-one different birds, the whole number of which—whether native, migratory, or accidental—has, at one period or another—water-birds perhaps excepted—passed on the wing over the broad expanse of sea which separates those islands from