

RECORD OF SWAINSON'S WARBLER
(*LIMNOTHLYPIS SWAINSONII*) IN NORTHERN
SOUTH AMERICA

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ABSTRACT.- A sighting of Swainson's Warbler (*Limnothlypis swainsonii*) in mangrove forest, east of Maracaibo, western Venezuela, on 02 February 1994, represents a new record for Venezuela and South America. This migratory warbler was not known to occur south of Honduras. *Received:* 14 October 1996, *Accepted:* 19 March 1997.

Key words: Swainson's Warbler, *Limnothlypis swainsonii*, Parulinae, distribution, Maracaibo Lake, Venezuela, South America.

UN NUEVO RECORD DEL CANARIO DE
SWAINSON (*LIMNOTHLYPIS SWAINSONII*) PARA
SURAMÉRICA

RESUMEN.- El Canario de Swainson (*Limnothlypis swainsonii*) fue observado en bosque de manglar, al Este de Maracaibo, Venezuela occidental, el 02 de Febrero de 1994, y representa un record nuevo para Venezuela y Suramérica. Esta especie migratoria no ha sido conocida al sur de Honduras. *Recibido:* 14 Octubre 1996, *Aceptado:* 19 Marzo 1997.

Palabras claves: Canario de Swainson, *Limnothlypis swainsonii*, Parulinae, distribución, Lago de Maracaibo, Venezuela, Suramérica.

On 2 February 1994, we observed Swainson's Warbler (*Limnothlypis swainsonii*) during an ornithological survey of a small

23 ha mangrove forest on the Ana María Campos Peninsula, east of Maracaibo, western Venezuela ($10^{\circ} 48' N$; $71^{\circ} 32' W$) (Fig. 1). We saw an individual for two minutes at 2 - 5 m, while it foraged 10 to 60 cm above moist ground. The site was among dead undergrowth in an area partially shaded by White Mangroves (*Laguncularia racemosa*), 7 m high.

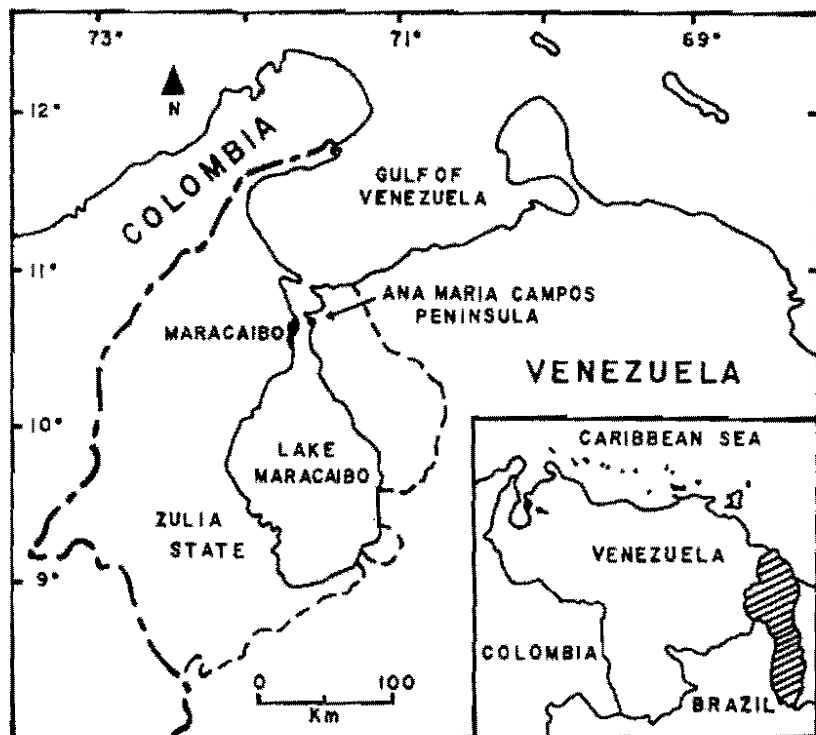


FIGURE 1. Locality of Swainson's Warbler sighting on the Ana María Campos Peninsula, eastern shore of the Straits of Maracaibo, Venezuela, South America.

Identification.- Swainson's Warbler is differentiated from other northern migratory Parulinae by its solid rusty-brown cap, white superciliary stripe, long wren-like bill, and plain, whitish underparts. The similarly colored Worm-eating Warbler (*Helminthos vermivorus*) has dark stripes on its crown; and no small resident

species are similar in color.

Boreal winter range.- Swainson's Warblers winter in the West Indies (Bahama Islands, Cuba and the Isle of Pines, Cayman and Swan Islands, Jamaica, Puerto Rico, Virgin Islands), and in Central America (Yucatan Peninsula, southern Veracruz and Chiapas, México), south to Honduras (AOU 1983, Rangel-Salazar and Vega-Rivera 1989, Graves 1996, Kirkconnell *et al.* 1996). The species is unknown in northern South America, and the adjacent Netherlands Antilles Islands (Voous 1985, Hilty and Brown 1986, Ridgely and Tudor 1989, Phelps, Jr. and de Schauensee 1994). Thus, the sighting represents a new record for Venezuela and South America.

Our observation on 2 February suggests the individual was a migrant wintering in Venezuela, because transients are expected to pass before (Sept-Nov) or after (March-April) this month (Phelps, Jr. and de Schauensee 1994). That this secretive migrant with cryptic plumage has passed so far unnoticed is plausible. Recently, Graves (1996) used tape playback techniques for censusing wintering populations of Swainson's Warblers in Jamaica, and found them more common than previously believed. In Venezuela, there are still few ornithologists and birdwatchers to see any species; and our year-long inventory was the first for this mangrove area. Although many winter sightings of Swainson's Warbler have been in mountain forest, mangroves are also used (AOU 1983, Wunderle, Jr. and Waide 1993).

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