

**Observations of the host plants of *Coereba flaveola* (Bananaquit) on Springfield Plantation, Dominica W.I.**

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**Introduction**

Upon arriving at the Springfield Plantation I was overwhelmed by the immensity of wildlife. However, the small bird known as the bananaquit mostly intrigued me. It is one of the most common and widely distributed bird in the Caribbean (Evans 1990). I decided to observe the birds eating habits through the day and try to determine which plants it prefers to forage on. I observed during a five-day period in late May at the plantation and took notes on the weather, habitat, and activities of the birds.

**Habitat Description of Observing Area**

Large royal palms and coconut trees dominate the landscape. Due to cultivation by gardeners, the undergrowth is sparse. Habitat also includes mango trees, pineapples, a sweet orange tree, a Barbados cherry bush, several papayas, and bananas. Bordering the observation site is a riparian habitat with dense rushes and grasses. Also included in the periphery of the habitat are cecropias, bamboos, and many heliconias. The riparian habitat leads into a dense tropical rainforest. Many of the flora in the area are characteristic of a cultivated landscape (Lack p. 8)

**Hypothesis**

The bananaquit will feed on different plants according to the time of day observed.

**Methods and Materials**

In order to determine what plants the bananaquit fed on, I decided to observe for one hour at different times of the day from a designated observation point and record what plants the bananaquit fed on. I took notes in my notebook and used binoculars to identify the bananaquit by coloration. I used the Field Guide to Birds of the Eastern Caribbean by Peter Evans in order to help me further identify the birds. I chose to observe the birds from the back porch of the Stream House because it offered the best view. However, I did also make additional observations near the Guest House during meals and at other times of the day. I started observing the bananaquit as early as 6:30 a.m. and as late as 6:00 p.m. I chose to scatter my observation periods throughout the day during a period of five days. I did most of my observations in the early to mid morning and from midafternoon to early evening. According to Dr. Arnold most feeding activity takes place during these hours.

Schedule of observation

Location: Back porch of the Stream House

Morning

7-8

8-9

### **Conclusion**

According to my observations, the bananaquit feeds on different plants according to the time of day thereby supporting my hypothesis.

### **Future research**

As far as I know, my initial observation of the bananaquit's feeding behavior on plants is the first of its kind at SCEPTRE. There are many more opportunities for study.

-Repeat observations

-Observe in different habitats such as near the riparian zone or near the dense rainforest

-Observe one or several of plants the bananaquit frequents and count how many times the bananaquit visits.

### **Works Cited**

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