

UU LEN NYK BAS
MIS:ENDANGERED SPECIES

JOINT U.S.-CUBAN SEARCH FOR BACHMAN'S WARBLER PROPOSED:
BY LIONEL MARTIN

HAVANA, JAN 10, REUTER - BACHMAN'S WARBLER, AN EXTREMELY RARE, FOUR AND A HALF INCH BIRD THAT HAS BEEN ON THE U.S. GOVERNMENT'S LIST OF ENDANGERED SPECIES FOR TWO DECADES, MIGHT BECOME THE OBJECT OF A JOINT SEARCH BY U.S. AND CUBAN NATURALISTS ON THIS CARIBBEAN ISLAND WHERE IT IS KNOWN TO WINTER, PAUL HAMMEL OF THE TENNESSEE DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION TOLD REUTER HERE.

THE BIRD WAS FIRST NOTED PUBLICLY BY THE REVEREND JOHN BACHMAN IN THE SOUTHEASTERN UNITED STATES IN 1832 AND WAS NAMED AFTER HIM BY AUDIBON SHORTLY THEREAFTER.

HAMMEL SAID THAT THE BIRD IS A RARITY IN THE UNITED STATES AND THAT THERE HAS NEVER BEEN A SYSTEMATIC SEARCH FOR THE BIRD DURING THE WINTER IN CUBA. HE SAID THE JOINT PROJECT WOULD SEEK BACKING FROM THE CUBAN AND U.S. GOVERNMENT, THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL FOR BIRD CONSERVATION AS WELL AS OTHER PUBLIC AND PRIVATE GROUPS.

HAMMEL, A WORLD AUTHORITY ON BACHMAN'S WARBLER, TOOK PART IN A FIVE YEAR, SEVEN THOUSAND HOUR SEARCH FOR THE BIRD BETWEEN 1975 AND 1980 WITHIN A 28,000 ACRE AREA OF SOUTHERN U.S. SWAMPS WHERE IT IS BELIEVED TO BREED AND LIVE. NO SIGHTINGS OF THE BIRD WERE MADE.

HAMMEL CAME TO CUBA TO TAKE PART IN A BIRD SIGHTING EXPEDITION HEADED BY THE CANADIAN WRITER, GRAEME GIBSON (NOTE SPELLING OF GRAEME IS CORRECT). ONE OF THE MAIN OBJECTS OF THE EXPEDITION WAS TO SPOT SOME OF THE TWENTY ONE BIRDS ENDEMIC TO CUBA.

THE TENNESSEE NATURALIST SAID THAT THE LAST CONFIRMED SIGHTING OF WACHMAN'S WARBLER BY BIRD WATCHERS TOOK PLACE IN THE NINETEEN SIXTEES IN THE SOUTHERN UNITED STATES AND THE LAST PHOTOGRAPH OF THE BIRD WAS TAKEN IN FLORIDA IN 1977.

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HISTORICAL RECORDS SHOW SIGHTINGS OF THE BIRD IN SWAMPY AREAS OF THE U.S. GULF COAST, THE SOUTH ATLANTIC COAST AND THE LAHER MISSISSIPPI VALLEY.

HAMMEL SAID THAT HE WAS TOLD BY CUBAN ORNITHOLOGIST ORLANDO TORRES THAT THE GREEN YELLOW, BLACK AND GREY BIRD WAS SEEN IN CUBA AS RECENTLY AS 1984. ANOTHER CUBAN NATURALIST, ORLANDO GARRIDO, TOLD HIM OF HIS POSSIBLE SIGHTING OF WACHMAN'S WARBLER IN 1985. THE NATURALISTS SAID THAT PAST SIGHTINGS IN CUBA WERE IN GARDENS, MOUNTAINS AS WELL AS IN COASTAL SWAMPS.

(CORRECTION -LAST PARAGRAPH ABOVE SHOULD READ ORLANDO TORRES)
==REUTER/LEM
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