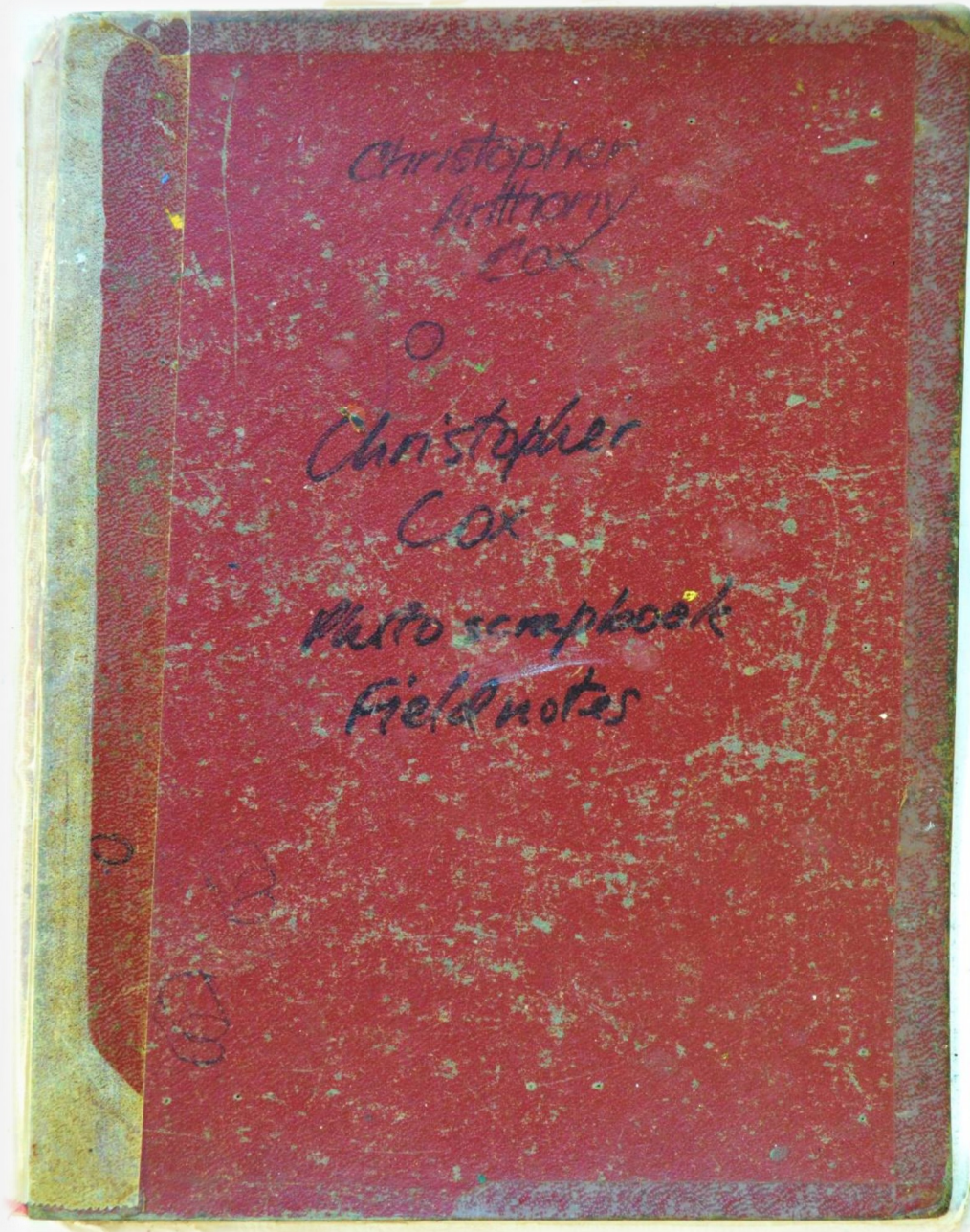




the art of

Christopher Cox

the art scrapbook story



My art time capsule

This is one of my art scrapbooks that contains sketches from the field, ideas for paintings, along with snippets of reference material that I used for future art compositions. This is my oldest book dating back to around 1986, so a time capsule...a treasure of memories.

I took to drawing and painting wildlife in my mid-teens which became a calling and a lead-in to my professional career in environmental management when I joined the Saint Lucia Forestry Division in 1985. The sketches and photos in this scrapbook chronicles my traverses over the early years of 'beating bush' in remote and beautiful locations across the island, whether part of my work or just exploring. My first job with the Forestry Division (later upgraded to 'department') was as a tour guide on the Central Rainforest Trail, and later as a land (survey) demarcation officer.

The work kept me mostly in the field, giving ample opportunity to be creatively inspired by the wildlife and outstanding landscapes all around. I would often carry a small notebook into the field, into which I would sketch what I saw, then tear the sheets out and paste into the scrapbook, to conjure into art later on. In addition to the sketches are photos I took with my very first camera, a Pentax K1000 that I purchased in Washington DC on the first work mission of my career, a one-month migratory bird workshop hosted by the US Fish and Wildlife Service during May 1986. This notebook was not initially intended to be an artbook but rather to be used for surveying work in my role as a demarcation officer; I give a short insight into this at the end of this presentation.

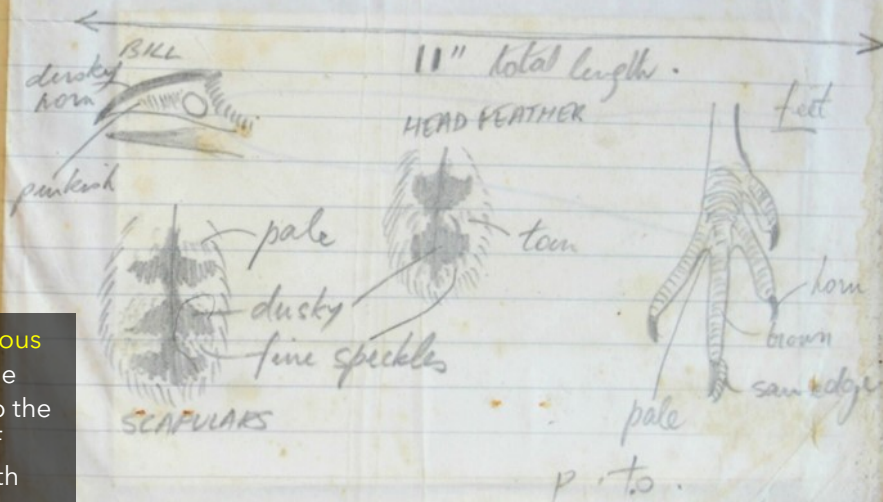
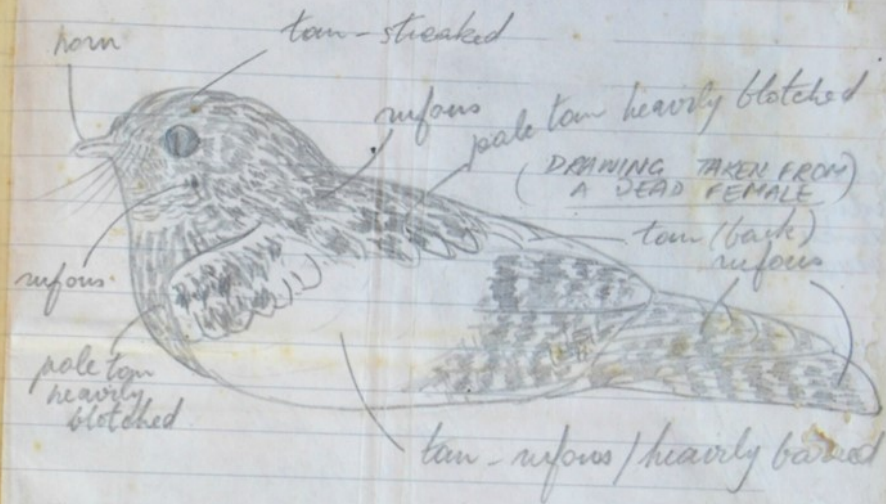
Many of these sketches were done and photos taken while accompanied by colleagues or hiking buddies either at work, or when we were out as members of the St. Lucia Naturalists Society. Lyndon John, Donald Anthony, Anslem Gittens, Julio St. Omer, Adams Toussaint, Cindy Jn Baptiste were among those who were most often in company.

I remain indebted to Paul Butler who hired me to join the Forestry Division, who at the time was the conservation advisor and Gabriel "Coco" Charles the Forest Supervisor (the Division head, later the Chief Forestry Officer) who supported me in my work at the start of my career. I am immensely thankful to Heather Floissac and Jane Tipson who provided the gallery spaces to expose my work in those early days at the Artsibit Gallery and the Snooty Agouti respectively.

Enjoy! Do have a look at my website at www.chriscoxoriginals.com and my Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/chriscoxoriginals/>. Please like and share!



RUFIOUS NIGHTJAR ♀
(CAPRIMULGUS RUFUS) dead specimen



Mathias, one of the forestry workers who lived at Desbarras brought this dead female **Rufous Nightjar** to the office (I think it was back in 1986). This bird is strictly nocturnal. Among the Caribbean islands, the Rufous Nightjar is found only on Saint Lucia where it is restricted to the dry northeast coastal woodlands and perhaps the rugged terrain in the remote heights of Anse la Raye. This bird is also found in Trinidad, parts of Central America through to South America.



(UPPERSIDE)





These **Zenaida Doves** were nesting in a large flamboyant tree in George V Park known as "The Gardens" where the Forestry Division was located.

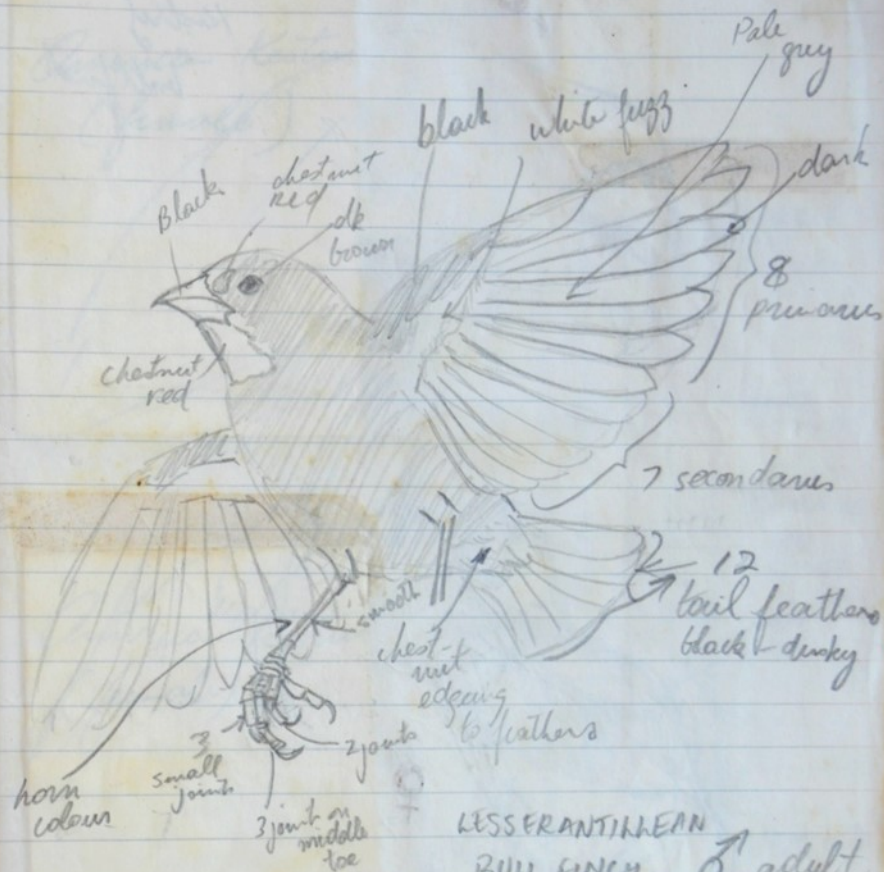
ZENaida DOVE



A juvenile Zenaida Dove held by Forestry Department colleague Gloria Mortley. This was likely sometime between 1986 and 1987.



LESSER ANTILLEAN
BULLFINCH
♂



LESSER ANTILLEAN
BULLFINCH ♂ adult.

dead specimen

Length 4" w. span 7"



dead
bird



American Kestrel ♀
Villa Apartments

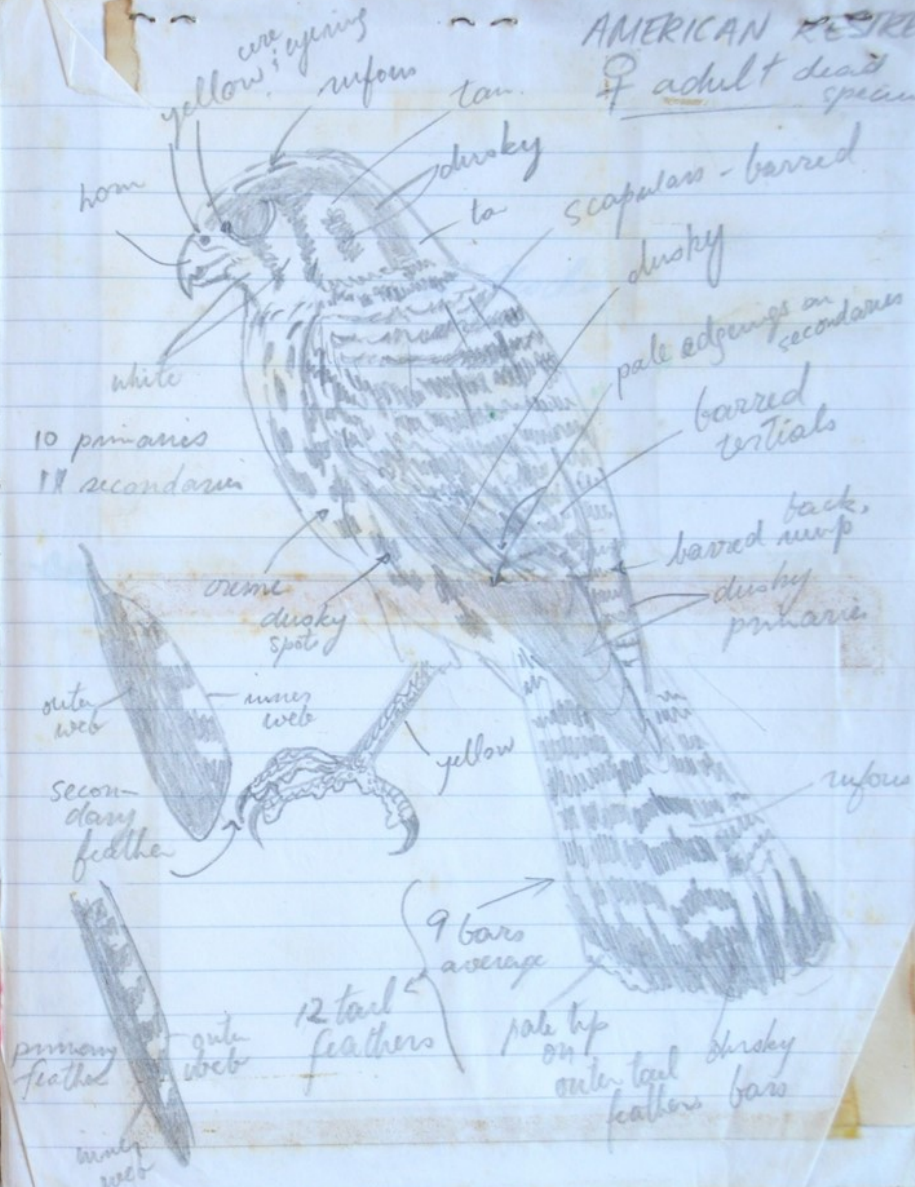
20 July 1997

stretch
before
flight

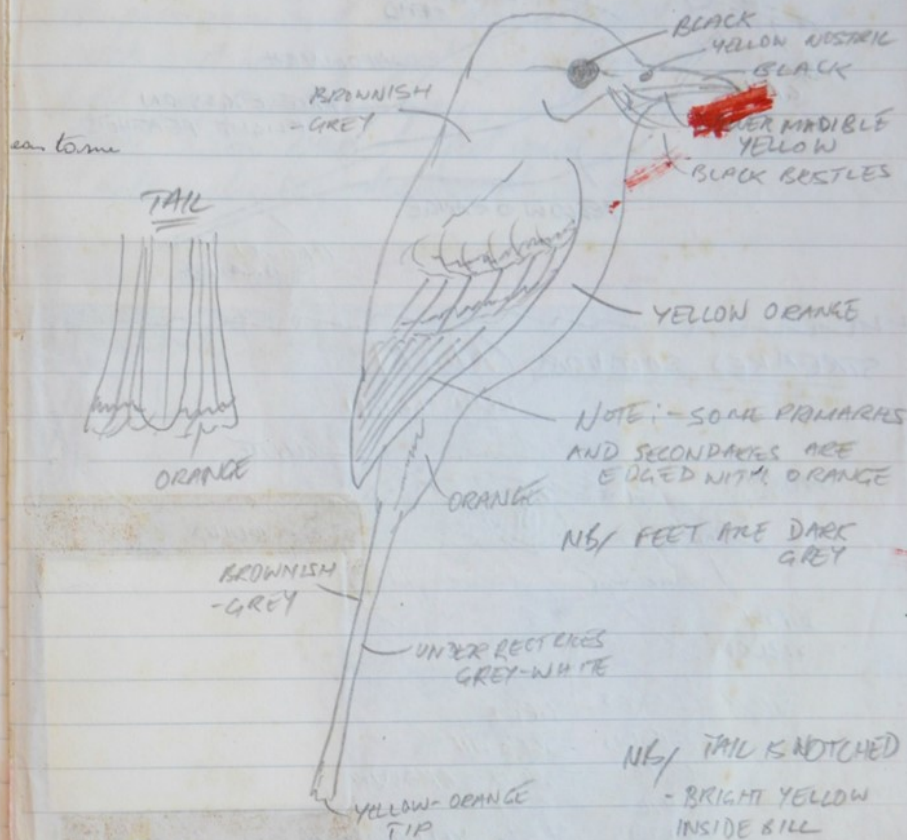


The top left photo is of a male **American Kestrel**. The two other pictures are of a female kestrel that encountered some difficulty and was rescued by Lyndon John, my longtime friend, wildlife enthusiast and fellow colleague at the Forestry Department. He was the one holding the bird here. I think this was sometime between 1992 and 1993.

AMERICAN KESTREL
♀ adult + dead specimen



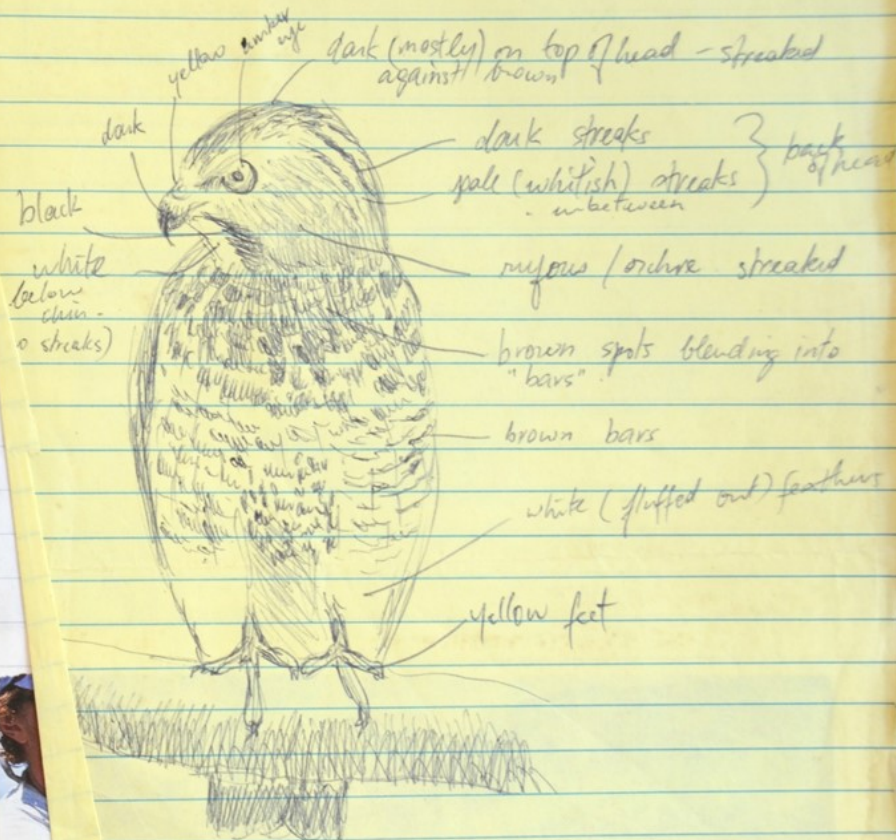
LESSER ANTILLEAN PENE (Adult) chy
apricot
midge



I recall I retrieving this female kestrel just after being hit by a passing vehicle on the Castries - Vieux Fort Highway.



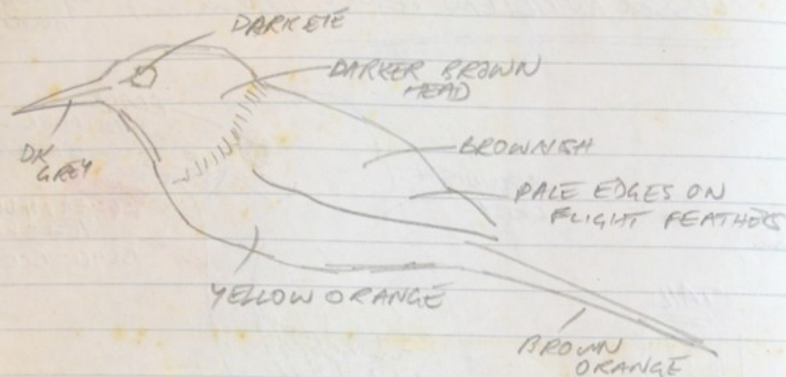
BROADWINGED HAWK - LaToc Castries Sept 6th 1992
(Adult)



I sketched this on the verandah of my parent's house at LaToc, 1992

Another rescue bird helped along by Lyndon John (in picture). This is a young Broad-winged Hawk...likely sometime in 1993.

ST. LUCIA ORIOLE (IMM)



STREAKED SALVATOR (Adult)



NB/ LORES - GREY
 EYELD - BROWN
 EYE - RED - BROWN
 TAIL - GREY
 FEET - GREY - YELLOWISH ON SOLES / UNDERNEATH
 CLAWS - GREY



FIELD DESCRIPTION OF THE CARIBBEAN ELANIA - 6"

Upper parts are olive brown with greyish tint, darker on wings; two coverts and most of the primaries and secondaries edged with white; neck and head greyish; underparts mainly light grey; rectrices grey; bill dark brown, lighter near base. Feet and eyes black - Bill is slightly decurved.

BROWN-NECKED ELANIA



↑ Immature



← adult

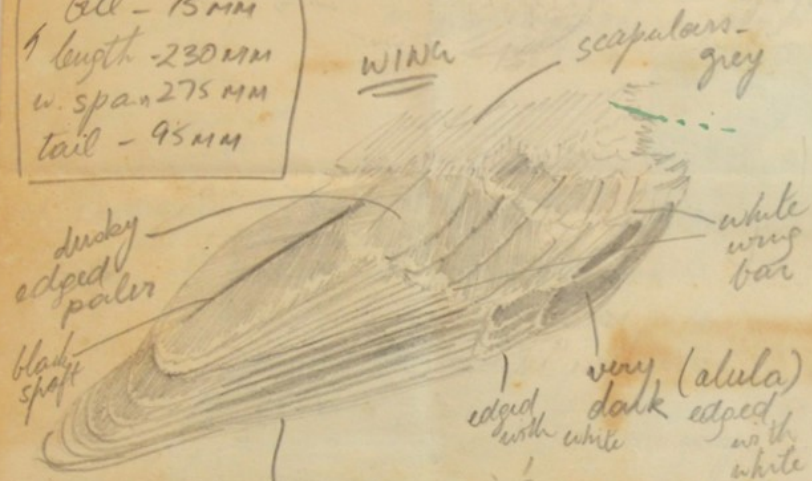


← immature

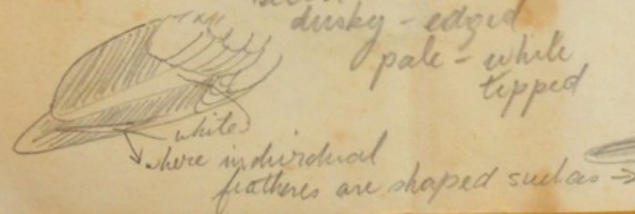
TROPICAL MOCKINGBIRD DEAD SPECIMEN (adult)



bill - 15 mm
length - 230 mm
w. span - 275 mm
tail - 95 mm



all primaries & secondaries are dusky-edged pale-white tipped



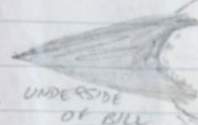
Note

GREY KINGBIRD

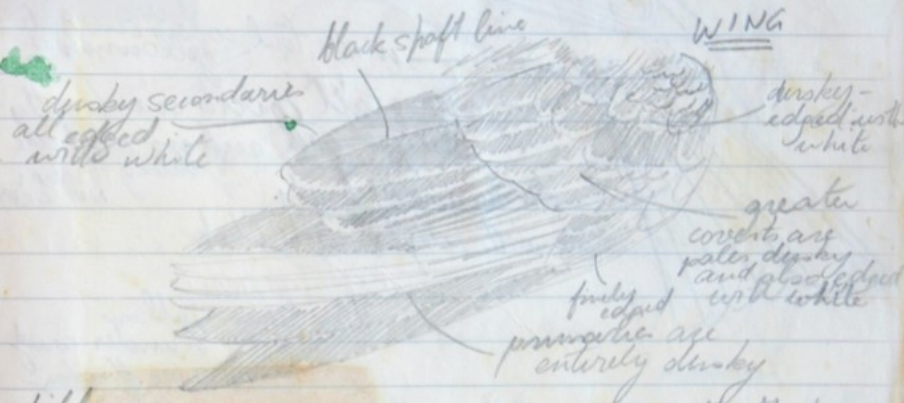
LIVE SPECIMEN (adult)
grey (brown)
HEAD



NB, BRIGHT ORANGE IS WELL HIDDEN IN CROWN



NOTE WHISKERS ABOVE BASE OF BILL

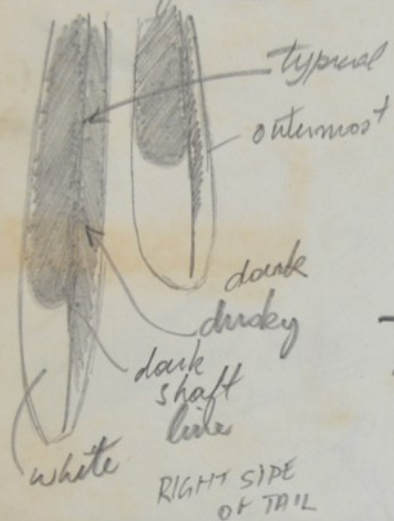


bill - 30 mm
length - 220 mm
w. span - 320 mm
tail - 60 mm

NB, wing is distinctly brownish P. J. O.

12 tail feathers

NOTE: - area of white decreases towards the middle feather



- two middle feathers are entirely dusky
- the second innermost feathers are pale dusky at the tip

- under the tail the dusky is much paler



11 Primaries + Secondaries

NOTE: - all feathers are edged with white



showing up grey (stroke) where ruffled and under wing

- some creamish areas on under tail coverts

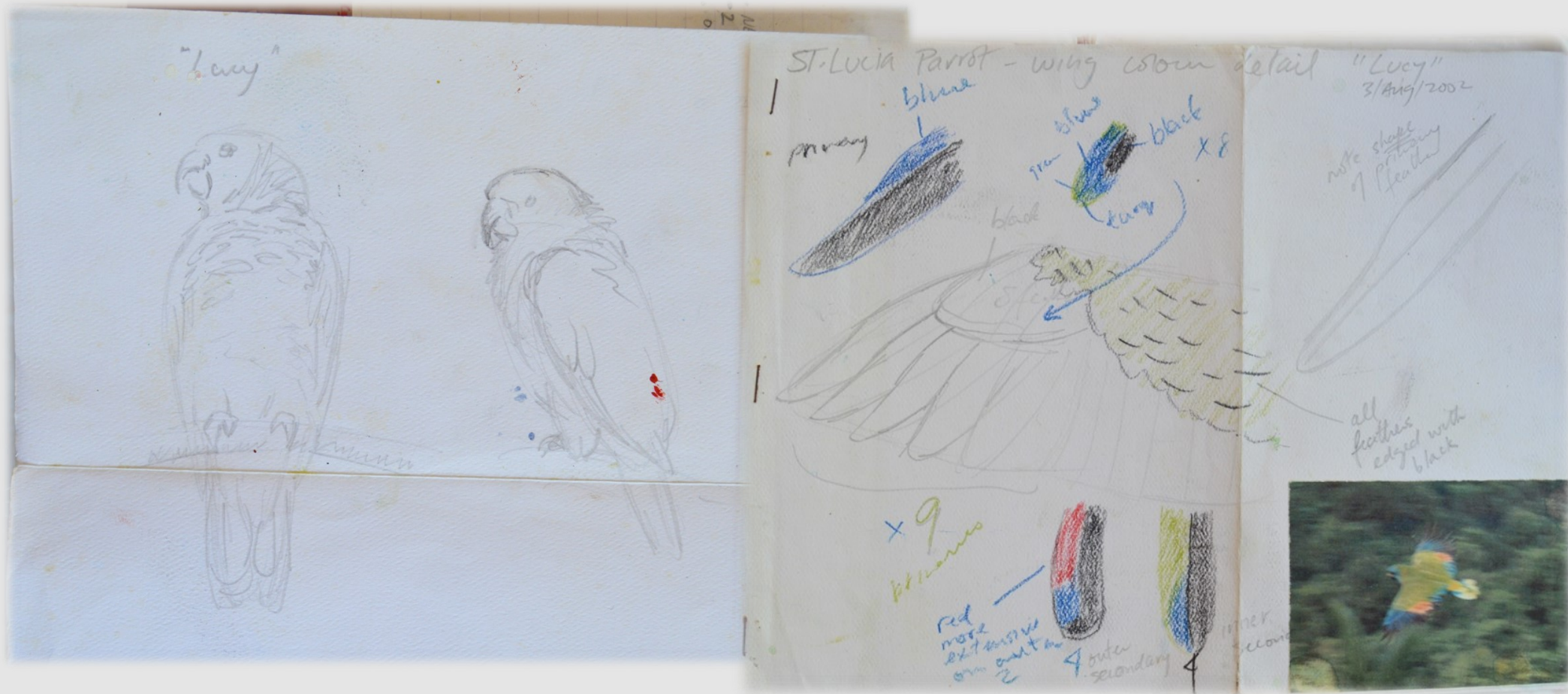


MANGROVE CUCKOO



These pictures were taken from the verandah of my parent's house at LaToc, mid to late 1980s.

COX
102



This sketch is of 'Lucy', one of the two **St. Lucia Parrots** that were bred at the Jersey Zoo in the UK and returned to Saint Lucia in the late 1980s. Lucy and brother Oswald were housed at the Union Zoo on the grounds of the Forestry Department.

The photo of the parrot in flight was from Donald Anthony, the then Wildlife Officer.

ST. LUCIA PARROT



St. Lucia's National Bird



wing colours
as described
by Bonfouth

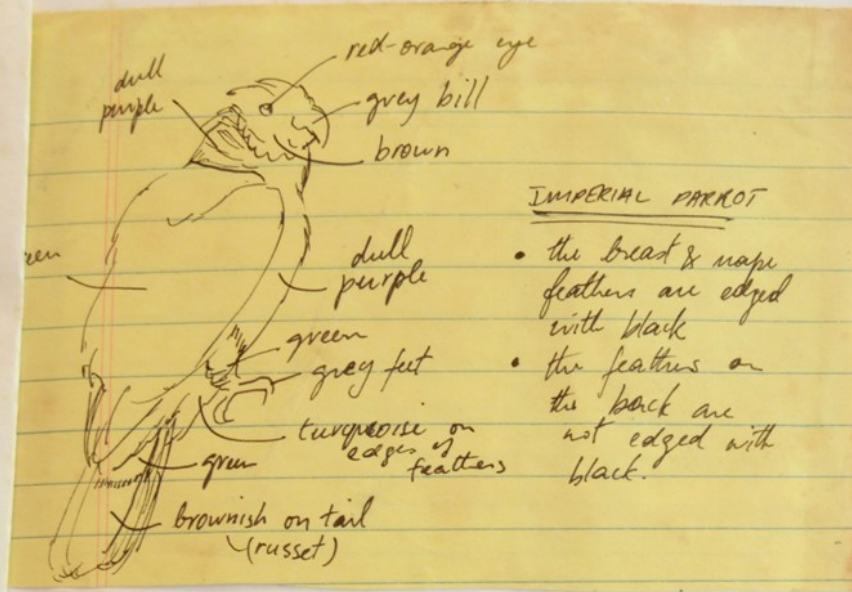
St. Vincent & The Grenadines



This beautiful postcard depicting a **St. Vincent Parrot** was sent by Paul Butler who was at the time working with the Forestry Department of St Vincent & the Grenadines. I foolishly glued the postcard into my book...now can't read what he wrote or who it was addressed to, although I am sure it was to Gabriel Charles who then gave it to me to use as an art reference.

none as fast as
Core, the keep it back.

Another sketch of the wing detail. I took the photo on the top right; think this was Oswald

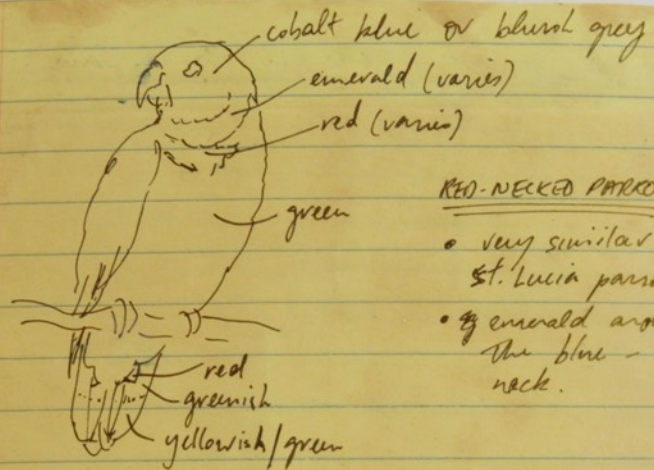


IMPERIAL PARROT

Sisserou (*Amazonia imperialis*)



The **Imperial Parrot** of Dominica. I took these photos of the captive bird they kept in the Botanical Gardens where the Forestry Division was located. It was in 1992 I think.



RED-NECKED PARROTS

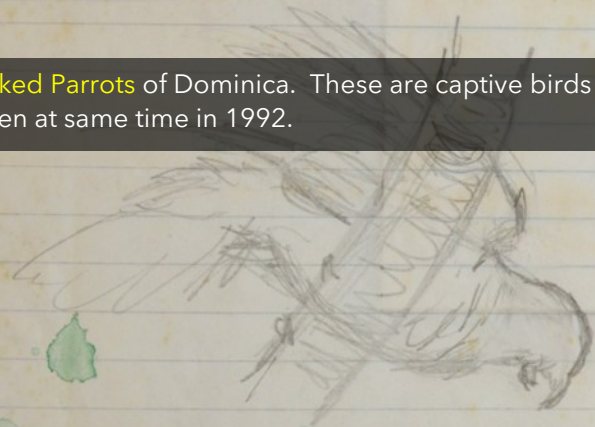
- very similar to St. Lucia parrot
- emerald around the blue - on neck.

RED-NECKED PARROTS

(200 in Botanical Gardens Dominica)



Red-necked Parrots of Dominica. These are captive birds in the Botanical Gardens; pics taken at same time in 1992.



BLACK-WHISKERED WIREO



CARIB GRACKLE



I think these photos were taken during a hike along the northeast coast in the vicinity of Cas-en-Bas, sometime around 1986. Whenever we came across a nest (in easy reach) I took a photo of the eggs. At the time I was working on a chart illustrating the eggs of our local species...never completed the project though.

SOOTY TERN - photos on Maria Island.



Photos taken on Maria Major (one of two islets off the southeast coast of Saint Lucia) during the nesting season where the islands become covered with thousands of nesting seabirds as well as **Scaly-naped Pigeons** (known locally as 'ramier'), Zenaida and **Eared Doves** and various heron species.

- NEST BUILT AROUND THE 1ST WEEK IN MAY.
- 2 EGGS OBSERVED ONE WEEK AND A HALF LATER
- ONLY THE FEMALE INCUBATES



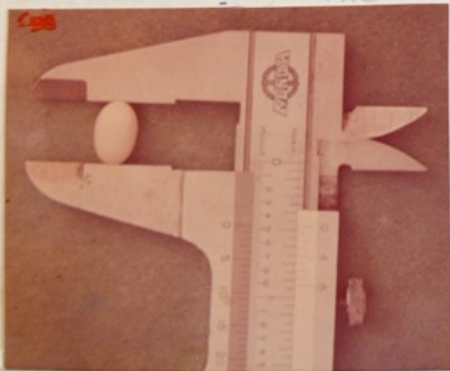
NEST OF LESSER
ANTILLEAN W'BLER

LOCATED ABOUT
6' OFF THE
GROUND IN
A SOURSOP TREE
(HOME, LA TOL)

SMALL CUP OF NEATLY
WOVEN FINE STRAW, COTON,
1.75" ACROSS APPROX. MOSSES

- NEST WAS APPARENTLY RAIDED BEFORE
EGGS WERE HATCHED

- I OBSERVED AT ANOTHER W'BLER NEST A GRACKLE
EATING THE CONTENTS OF THE NEST



Thrasher
tossing
leaves &
twigs

White-breasted Thrasher
Birds Observed with chick
July 21, 1997 @ Trou Paroisse



bulky/
dusky
underside



orange gape
chick on ground
dusky brown
plumage



chick



Loose
twigs

cup tightly wove
with fine roots
and twigs

Nest typically 1-1.5 m
off ground in small
sapling

I sketched this in the field when I accompanied Lyndon John, who at the time was carrying out research on the **White-breasted Thrasher**, an endangered bird found only on Saint Lucia and Martinique.

EXTINCT BIRDS - photographed at
Smithsonian Institute 1994



Semper's Warbler

GRAND CAYMAN THRUSH



I undertook a project to create a poster of extinct birds of the Caribbean in collaboration with the Caribbean Conservation Association (now defunct) and the US Fish and Wildlife Service. On a work mission to Washington DC in 1994 I was granted access to the Smithsonian Institution's avian collections to photograph mounted specimens collected in the 1700s and 1800s before they became extinct in the wild. Such a sobering reflection!

The bird on the left is the **Semper's Warbler**, found only on Saint Lucia and believed to be extinct in the wild since by the first half of the 1900s. The theory is that habitat loss and predation by introduced rats and mongoose led to their demise. The **Grand Cayman Thrush** above is believed to have become extinct in the 1930s or 1940s.

CUBAN MACAW

1994



JAMAICAN PARRAQUE

1994



The **Cuban Macaw** is believed to have become extinct somewhere in the late 1800s. The **Jamaican Parakeet** is listed by IUCN as critically endangered but has not been reported in the wild in recent years as far as I am aware.

BRACE'S HUMMINGBIRD



JAMAICAN PETREL



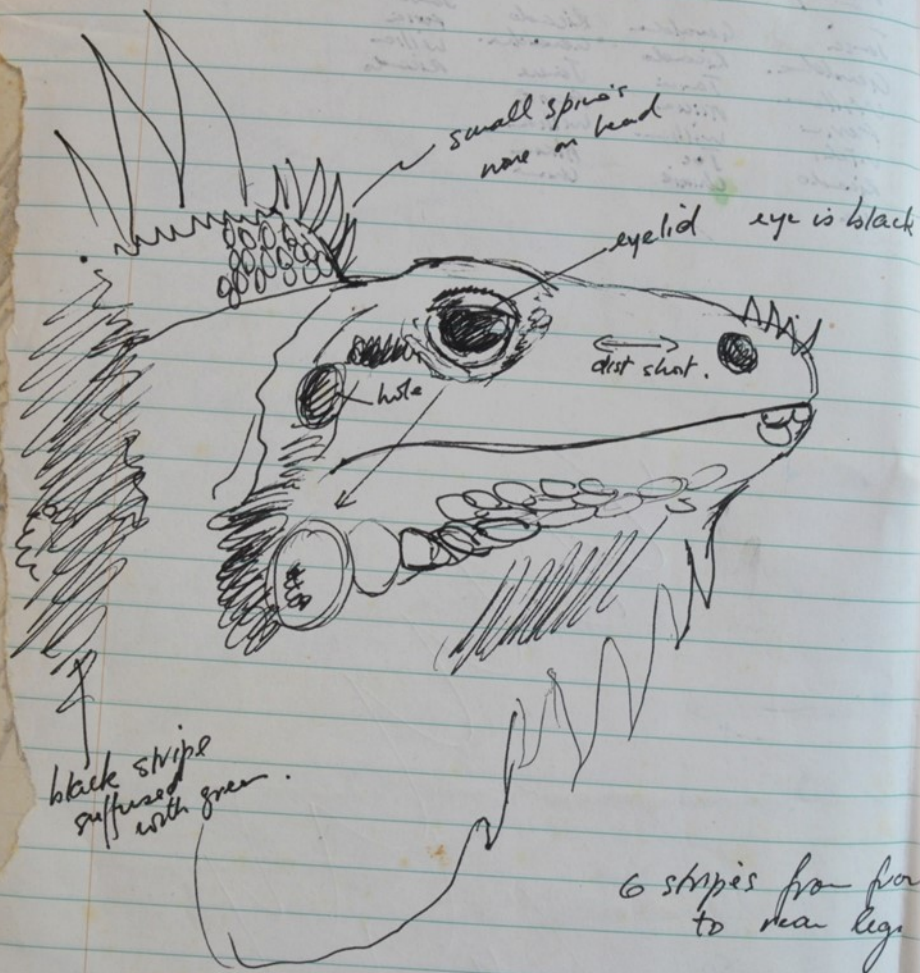
The **Brace's Hummingbird** was endemic to the Bahamas, specifically New Providence, and is known only from this single specimen that was collected in 1877. The **Jamaican Petrel** was known from specimens recorded and collected up until the late 1800s.



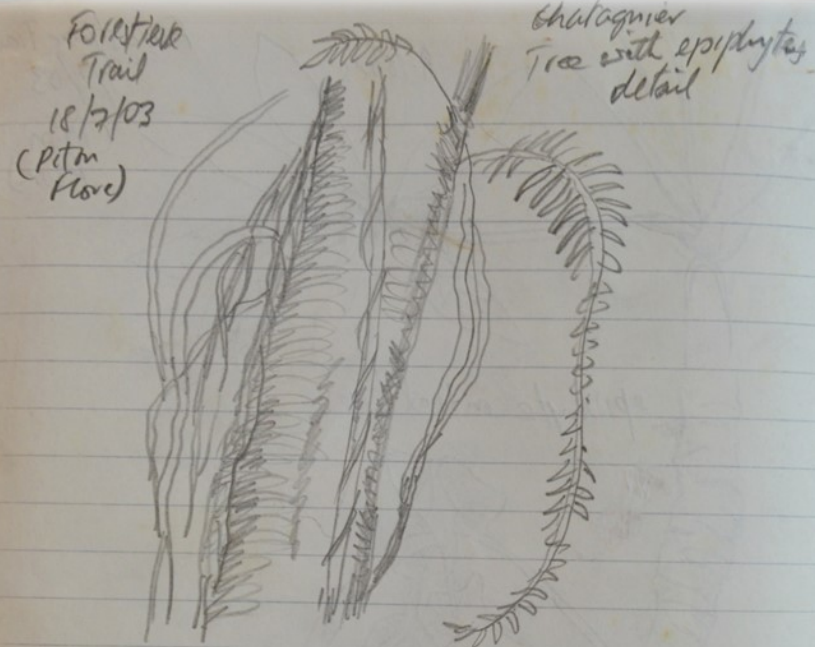
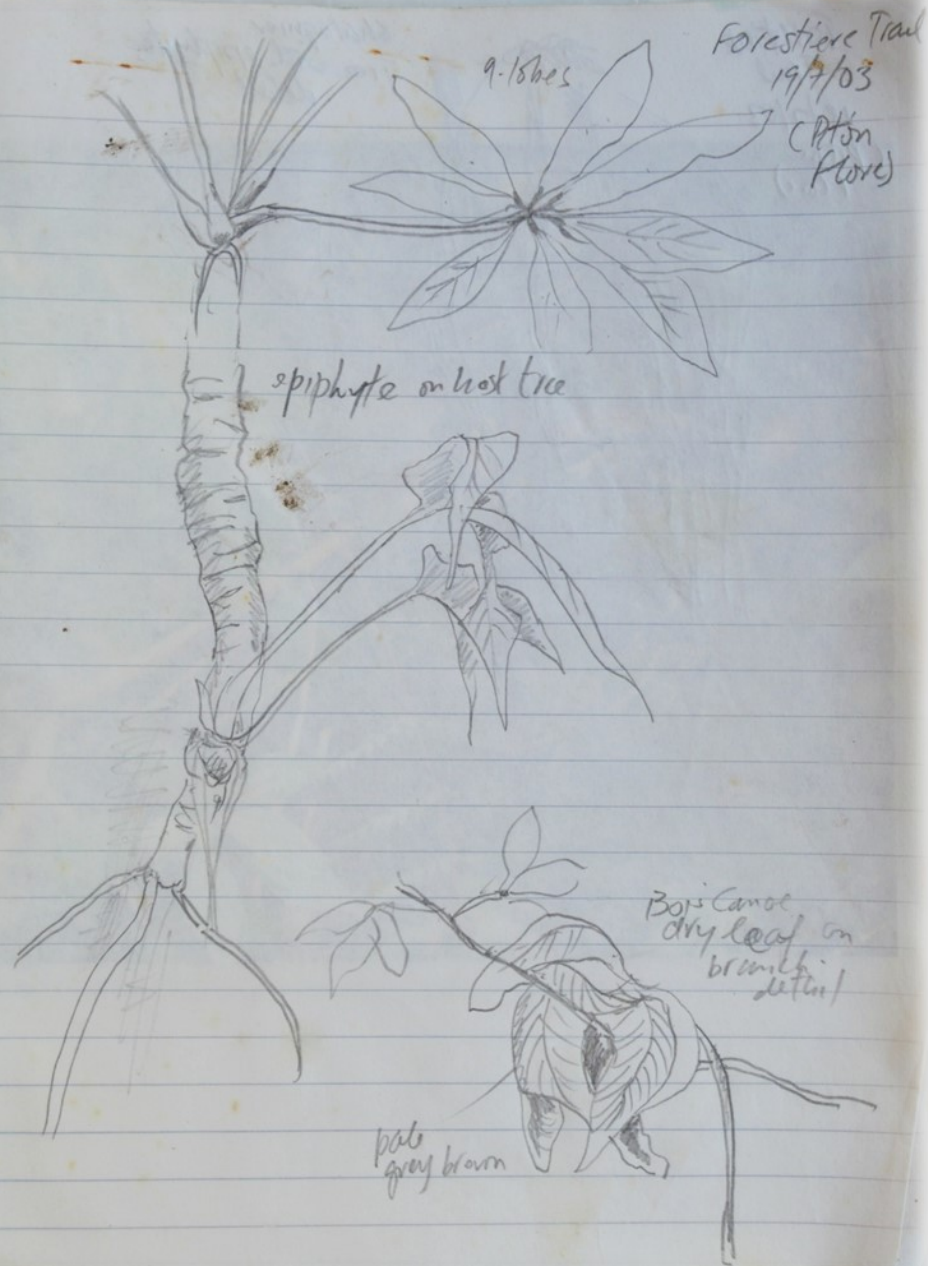
RUDDY TURNSTONES (winter plumage)



SPOTTED SANDPIPER
(Bird of Orange Swamp)



I sketched this from the large male iguana that was kept at the Union Zoo. There is emerging scientific evidence to suggest that the iguana found on Saint Lucia may in fact be unique to the island and found nowhere else on the planet.



Examples of the interesting vegetation in the rainforest. I find the epiphytes like these particularly interesting as they lend such a great visual architecture to the art compositions. I have more illustrations and reference images in the other scrapbooks.

What was to have been a survey notebook...

I started with the Forestry Division as a tour guide on the Central Rainforest Trail that wound its way from Mahaut in the eastern mountains to Edmond Forest in the west. I did the tour three days per week with hotel tour groups. During the other days when not in the field, I did illustrations for posters, newspaper articles and other environmental education literature. Fellow artist Alywn St. Omer also did tremendous work illustrating environmental education material for the Division. After six months, I was assigned a new job as a Demarcation Officer working with the Crown Lands Unit that was part of the Forestry Division.

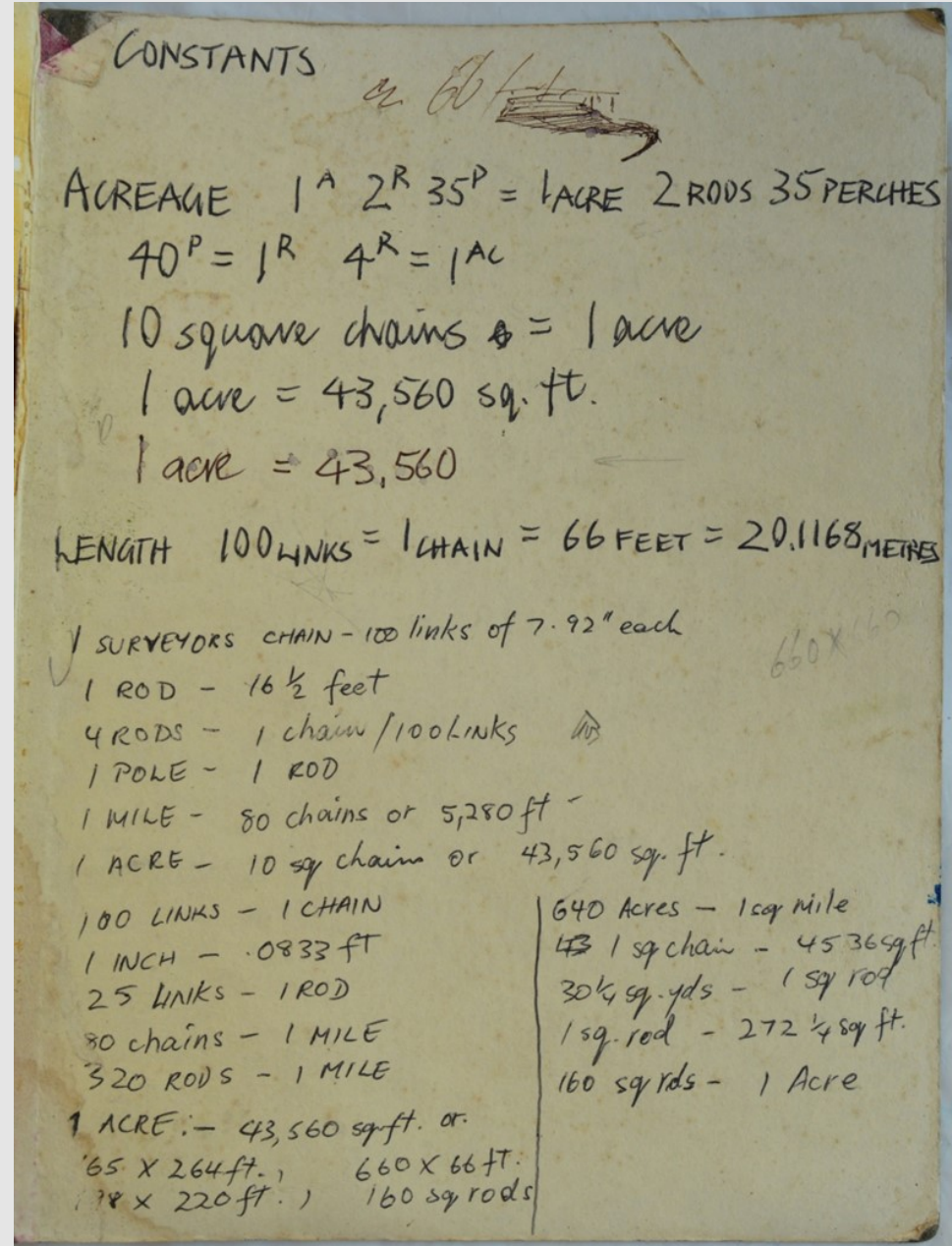
Through a basic land surveying process using simple surveying tools, the work entailed 'demarcating', or raising boundary lines of Crown (government) Land holdings across the island. This was done under an extensive national land registration and titling programme (LRTP) whereby all land parcels were to be mapped with assigned titles of ownership. Prior to this programme, which commenced in the mid-1980s, a large proportion of lands, particularly those under joint family ownership were undemarcated without clear title, thereby presenting challenges in the conduct of land transactions, gaining access to credit, among others issues, contributing to conflictive disputes and generally impeding land resource use and development. As mandated for private land holders, the government was also responsible for demarcating and registering all its land holdings.

At that time, the Canadian government was providing assistance under a Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) project with the Government of Saint Lucia to develop the capacity of the forestry department in management of the island's forest resources which entailed completing a comprehensive inventory of the forest resources, including defining the boundaries of the forest reserves. This was done under the leadership of Robert 'Bob' Harris, a licensed land surveyor from Ontario, Canada. He trained a crew of young officers including myself to undertake survey work of forest reserve boundaries and Crown lands.

I spent a year and a half before going off to university (in 1987) doing this LRTP demarcation work for lands in the northern part of the island, locating boundary lines that were buried under decades-old tangles of forests in the 'heights' of the island, often in very unforgiving terrain (but with much success if I do say so myself...haha). But it gave me so much art inspiration in those long hours in the bush and what you see in the scrapbook!

So, what is the significance of all this? The image on the right is of the inside back cover of the scrapbook into which Bob Harris wrote land survey conversion measures (top of the page) from old measurement units into modern unit measurements that were required to present the survey traverses when submitting to the LRTP project team, that eventually became compiled within new LRTP maps and lodged with the Lands and Surveys Department. Many of the survey plans that we worked with to try to locate Crown lands, particularly for lands in the interior, had been surveyed way back in the late 1800s into the early 1900s and were part of what old 'map compilations' with the ancient measurement units as written here - that is my hand writing is in the lower half with a full suite of conversions.

Needless to say, this book was never used as a field book, as we used standard survey field books into which I entered the field survey traverse data.



Christopher
Anthony
Cox

Christopher
Cox

Photo scrapbook
Field notes

To view my work visit:
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<https://www.facebook.com/chriscoxoriginals/>