

Stuart T. Danforth



Stuart T. Danforth was born in 1900, and graduated from Rutgers in 1921. Soon thereafter he traveled to Puerto Rico to visit his father, Ralph E. Danforth, who was professor of biology at the College of Agriculture at Mayaguez. While there, he commenced observations on the birds of the Cartagena Lagoon. Supplemented by more intensive work in 1923-1924, this constituted the field work of his doctoral thesis, for which the degree was granted by Cornell University in 1925.

After a year as instructor in biology at Temple University, he succeeded his father at Mayaguez, teaching zoology and entomology there until his premature death in 1938. He continued constant studies and collection of birds and insects, especially Coleoptera (beetles). He also studied the food of birds, not only in Puerto Rico, but also in Hispaniola, Cuba, Jamaica, and the Lesser Antilles, especially in those area areas and islands most difficult to reach. His vacations were always thus occupied, except when he visited the US to work in libraries and museums in connection with his finds.

"The ultimate aim of ornithology, to my mind, is to make use of birds to the limit of their capacity as servants of man. I believe that eventually we will know so well how to encourage and protect birds that they will be practically one hundred percent efficient in protecting our forests and crops from insect pests, and that poisonous sprays and other protective measures will be unnecessary in the vast majority of cases." From this statement, one can possibly understand how it happened that he published no entomological papers, although the large number of "Danforth" and "AMC (Agriculture and Mechanical College)" records in "Insectae Boriquensis" testify to the extent of his insect collections in Puerto Rico and his generosity in making them available for publication in other people's compilations. Although Danforth published many papers on the birds of the Lesser Antilles, the culmination of all his ornithological studies in the West Indies was the publication in 1936 of the illustrated "Los Pajaros de Puerto Rico," a handbook supposedly for school children, but actually including all the information available.

His collection of bird skins was presented to Cornell, while the remainder of his extensive collection was given to the United States National Museum (now the Smithsonian).

Name of Bird		<i>Dendroica discolor</i>				
Locality		P.R., Bequero				
Observer		STUART T. DANFORTH				
Year	1932					
First seen	Number seen	Next seen	Became common	Last seen	Common of year	Breeds
Aug. 17	1	Sept. 21			P.R.	no
Form B-801		9-2281 GPO				

Stuart T. Danforth Migration Card

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BPP Office Volunteer, Bob Hartman contributed this biography to our newsletter, thank you Bob!