

## Noteworthy bird records from the southern Chocó of Colombia

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The Chocó–Darién ecoregion complex extends from southern Panama to north-west Ecuador, and from the ridge of the Colombian Western Andes to the Pacific Ocean, and is one of the most biodiverse areas in the planet (Hernández-Camacho *et al.* 1992, Dinerstein *et al.* 1995). The Chocó is a centre of endemism for many taxonomic groups (Orejuela 1987), and the lowland forests between the southern Serranía del Baudó in Colombia and Esmeraldas province, Ecuador, comprise one of the most significant Endemic Bird Areas in South America (Stattersfield *et al.* 1998).

However, ornithological knowledge of the Colombian Chocó is still meagre, as many of its *c.*800 species (Stiles 1993, Rangel *et al.* 2004) have been recorded at only a few localities, mostly in the piedmont of the Western Andes, along the few roads connecting the Pacific coast to the interior: e.g. the Anchicayá Valley (Hilty 1997), La Planada (Orejuela 1987), the Pasto–Tumaco road (Salaman 1994) and the Río Nambí Nature Reserve (Strewe 1999). Another important inventory is that of Rodríguez (1982) for Katios National Park, in the northern Chocó. Lowland forest and mangrove have been poorly surveyed, except for the classic inventory by

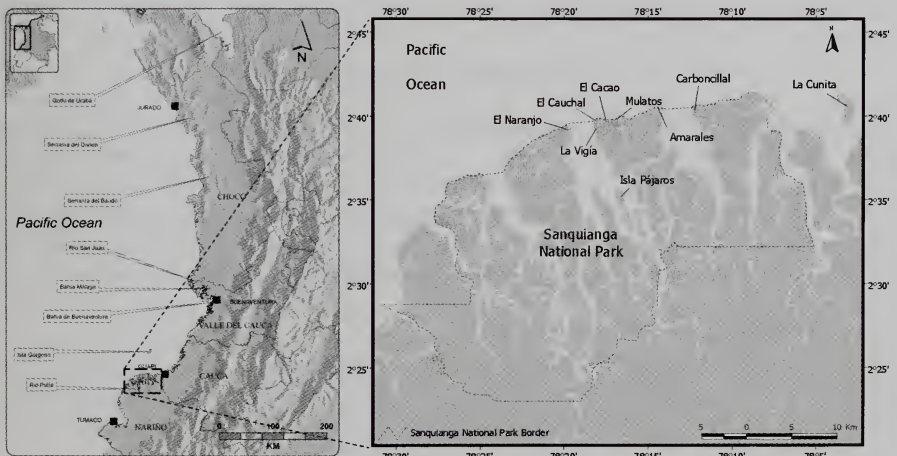


Figure 1. Map and location of the study site.

Olivares (1957a,b, 1958) of Guapi (Cauca), and a few notes on birds of mudflats and mangrove (e.g. Pearson-Ralph & Chaplin 1973, Naranjo *et al.* 1998, Morales & León 2000).

Since 1989, Asociación Calidris has been investigating coastal ecosystems in the Colombian Pacific, and since 1999 much of this work has focused on Sanquianga National Park, including bird surveys (Johnston *et al.* 2000), life-history studies (Johnston 2000, Ruiz 2004, Casas 2005, Cifuentes 2005, Johnston *et al.* 2005), shorebird population monitoring (Asociación Calidris 2003), and since 2000, an environmental education strategy centred on migratory species (Peña *et al.* 2004). We have recorded 143 species of birds in the coastal environments of Sanquianga and adjacent areas, 32 of which are of interest geographically: two represent second records for Colombia, 12 are first records for the Pacific coast of the country, 16 range extensions within the Colombian Pacific and two are new localities for Neotropical migrants.

### Study site

Sanquianga National Park is on the north coast of dpto. Nariño, at 02°40'–02°22'N, 78°02'–78°05'W (Fig. 1), and is an Important Bird Area (Franco-Maya & Bravo 2005). Most of the 80,000 ha comprise the estuaries of the Sanquianga delta, whose shores are covered by the largest and best-preserved mangrove in Colombia (Garcés & Zerda 1994). At least eight settlements, mostly depending on fisheries and forestry lie within the park and possess a population of *c.*10,000 (MA-UAESPNN 1998). Within the park's buffer zone are several sandbars, islets and mudflats, some of them of considerable size, and covered by grasses, small wetlands with some emergent vegetation and a few trees (e.g. *Hibiscus tiliaceus*). One of the largest islets, La Cunita, represents one of the most important shorebird roost sites and feeding areas in Colombia (Naranjo *et al.* 2006).

### Species accounts

Previous distributional data are primarily taken from Hilty & Brown (1986), or Ridgely & Greenfield (2001) for Ecuador. For many records we possess photographic evidence that is available at [www.calidris.org.co/Sanquianga](http://www.calidris.org.co/Sanquianga) paper. Some specimens have been deposited in the Universidad del Valle (UV), Cali, and Instituto de Ciencias Naturales (ICN), Bogotá collections. A complete list of those species recorded in Sanquianga's coastal environments is available on request.

#### **CINNAMON TEAL** *Anas cyanoptera*

Three observed in small tidal ponds between Mulatos and La Vigía on 23 July 2000 (RJG), and RJG, CRG and YCS video-taped two in La Cunita and El Cauchal on 24 October 2003. Previously recorded on the Pacific coast of Colombia at Juradó. Our records represent a 500 km southerly range extension.

**BARE-THROATED TIGER HERON** *Tigrisoma mexicanum*

Found regularly at Carboncillal in April 1999 and in the mangrove of Amarales in April–July 2004. Not reported in Ecuador, but a few records in northern Peru (Valqui & Walker 1999) and in Colombia it also occurs in the lower Atrato and the Gulf of Urabá, and the río Sinú delta on the Caribbean coast (Estela & López-Victoria 2005). Our record represents a 600 km southerly range extension.

**BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT HERON** *Nycticorax nycticorax*

On 30 June and 14 July 2000, singles were at Amarales and La Vigía, respectively (RJG). In September–October 2003, CRG observed ten adults at La Cunita and on 15 May 2004 YCS & CRG recorded an adult in the mangrove at Carboncillal. Recorded virtually throughout Colombia, but ours are the first confirmed observations for the Pacific coast and a 245 km northerly range extension from the mangroves of the Ecuadorian coast, where it is common between Esmeraldas and El Oro.

**WHITE IBIS** *Eudocimus albus*

On 21 May 2004, we filmed a flock of 16 flying over Isla Pájaros. Despite the lack of previous records in the area, the species' presence was not unexpected given that it occurs on the eastern Pacific coast of Panama and the northern Ecuadorian coast (140 km to the south). In Colombia, it occurs on the Caribbean coast and east to the Andes, up to 500 m.

**GREATER FLAMINGO** *Phoenicopterus ruber*

The first confirmed record for the Colombian Pacific coast is of a bird video-taped at La Cunita on 31 July and 7 September 2003. However, National Park staff informed us of an individual at El Naranjo in 1998. These birds had probably escaped from captivity, given that the species is traded illegally in Colombia (Roda *et al.* 2003), whilst the nearest breeding population is on Galápagos. Nonetheless, the good plumage condition of the La Cunita bird might suggest a wild bird. Possibly the 1998 bird was a Chilean Flamingo *P. chilensis*, a species common on the Ecuadorian coast, but the La Cunita bird was clearly a Greater Flamingo based on size, bill shape and body coloration.

**COLLARED FOREST FALCON** *Micrastur semitorquatus*

A dead individual, found at El Cacao on 22 May 1999 (RJG), was preserved as a specimen (UV 6296). On the Pacific coast of Colombia it was known from as far south as the mouth of the río Munchique and in La Planada reserve in the Andes of Nariño (Salaman 1994), as well as in the Magdalena Valley and the northern Caribbean coast. In Ecuador it occurs throughout the Pacific lowlands. The first record in the coastal Chocó of Colombia and a 120 km southerly and 150 km westerly range extension.

**GREY-NECKED WOOD RAIL** *Aramides cajanea*

Frequently seen and heard in 2003 in mangroves within the park (CRG, RJG). Recorded throughout lowland Colombia, but on the Pacific coast known only from the Panamanian border region to the Baudó mountains (300 km to the north. No records from the Ecuadorian Pacific coast.

**AMERICAN GOLDEN PLOVER** *Pluvialis dominica*

The first record in the Sanquianga area involved one in breeding plumage on 28 July 2000 (RJG). On 5 November 2003, CRG photographed two in winter plumage in La Vigía. Recorded on the Pacific coast of Colombia only at Buenaventura (170 km to the north), as well as from the Caribbean (Naranjo 1979, Estela & López-Victoria 2005), and at localities east to the Andes in north-west Meta, Tuparro National Park in eastern Vichada, and Leticia (Hilty & Brown 1986). No records from coastal Ecuador (Ridgely & Greenfield 2001), although Canevari *et al.* (2001) mentioned that it is an occasional visitor to both coasts of northern South America.

**COLLARED PLOVER** *Charadrius collaris*

Recorded in March–June 2004 at Mulatos (CRG). Known to be a permanent (breeding) resident at a variety of wetlands in the Cauca, Magdalena and Patía valleys, but also recorded as a migrant in the eastern Llanos and Amazonia (Canevari *et al.* 2001). Ours is the first confirmed record for the Pacific coast of northern South America.

**AMERICAN OYSTERCATCHER** *Haematopus palliatus*

On 12 June and 14 July 2000, one observed between Mulatos and Amarales (FAE, RJG, LFC). In 2003–04, small numbers were seen at La Cunita, where a nest with three eggs was found on 17 June 2004; the first confirmed breeding record for the Colombian Pacific. Recorded at few localities on both coasts (only Buenaventura in the Pacific, 170 km to the north) and found nesting in the Caribbean on the Guajira Peninsula (Díaz & Botero 1988). Its presence in Ecuador is presumed for the whole coast, but has been confirmed only in the Gulf of Guayaquil.

**MARbled GODWIT** *Limosa fedoa*

In September–December 2003, one was photographed on the mudflats between El Cauchal and La Vigía (CRG, RJG). In Colombia, the only confirmed records are from two localities on the Caribbean coast (Naranjo 1979). Two old records from Ecuador, from Guayas and El Oro in the early 20th century.

**UPLAND SANDPIPER** *Bartramia longicauda*

One in the grasslands at El Cauchal on 17 October 2003 (CRG). Recorded at a number of wetlands in the interior of Colombia, and at two localities on the Caribbean coast. In Ecuador, it has been reported only from Andean and Amazonian localities.



**SURFBIRD** *Aphriza virgata*

One with Ruddy Turnstones *Arenaria interpres* at Mulatos on 12 September 2003 (Ruiz 2004). Other sight records are also from the Pacific coast, namely Isla Gorgona (Ortiz-von Halle 1990), Tumaco (Salaman 1995) and Bahía Solano (Kelsey 1999); the only specimen from Colombia was taken by LGN at Punta Soldado, Buenaventura Bay, in January 1993. Its presence has been suggested for the entire Ecuadorian coast, particularly north of Guayas.

**WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPER** *Calidris fuscicollis*

In September–October 2003, several groups were observed on sandy beaches and in pastures between Mulatos and El Cauchal (CRG). In Colombia, known from a few localities on the Caribbean coast (Naranjo 1979) and in Amazonia; ours is the first record on the Pacific coast of northern South America. Identification was based on the all-white uppertail and the long wings extending beyond the tail.

**BAIRD'S SANDPIPER** *Calidris bairdii*

One in a pasture very close to the sandy beach of El Cauchal in October–November 2003 (Ruiz 2004). In Colombia, known from several localities on the Caribbean coast (Naranjo 1979, Estela & López-Victoria 2005), Puracé National Park, the Popayán plateau (Negret 1995) and upper Cauca Valley (LGN pers. obs.). The first record on the Pacific coast of northern South America. Like *C. fuscicollis* the wingtips extend beyond the tail, but *C. bairdii* differs in having a dark centre to the rump.

**DUNLIN** *Calidris alpina*

On 19–25 September 2003, one was on a tidal flat at El Cauchal, feeding with Short-billed Dowitchers *Limnodromus griseus* and Sanderlings *Calidris alba* (CRG). Separated from other *Calidris* by its larger size and rather long, droop-tipped bill. Several recent observations in coastal Ecuador, but this is only the second record for Colombia after that by Salaman (1995) at Isla Bocagrande, near Tumaco, in September 1994.

**STILT SANDPIPER** *Calidris himantopus*

Two at La Cunita on 30 September 2003 (RJG, CEH). Previous Colombian records include one locality in the Caribbean, one on the northern Pacific coast (500 km to the north) and the río Arauca, east of the Andes. Two localities in Ecuador: east of Guayas and Ecuasal ponds.

**BUFF-BREASTED SANDPIPER** *Tryngites subruficollis*

Three roosting on a mudflat at El Cauchal on 25 September 2003, and an immature trapped and photographed at La Cunita on 15 October 2003 (CRG, RJG, CEH). Previous Colombian records are from three localities on the Caribbean coast, the Andes of Popayán (Negret 1995), and the eastern Llanos in dpto. Meta; in Ecuador, it has been recorded only at Andean and Amazonian localities.

**HERRING GULL** *Larus argentatus*

On 22 May 2004, we found a first-summer at La Cunita; the bird was incapable of flight and was collected (ICN 35426). Only occasional in north-west South America, being extremely rare in Ecuador, with only a few sight records for Colombia, at three localities on the Caribbean coast (Naranjo 1979) and two in the Pacific (Buenaventura and Málaga Bay; Naranjo & Franke-Ante 1995).

**BLACK SKIMMER** *Rynchops niger*

One on a mudflat at La Vigía on 14 May 2004 (CRG, YCS). Recorded regularly in Colombia on the Caribbean coast, in the Cauca and Magdalena valleys, and east to the Andes in the Orinoco basin and Amazonia. On the Pacific coast recorded only from Málaga Bay (180 km to the north), by LGN.

**PALLID DOVE** *Leptotila pallida*

Regularly recorded (July 1999–June 2004) between Mulatos and La Vigía, at El Cacao. Known from the west slope of the Andes below 700 m, from the río San Juan south to Nariño, and the Pacific lowlands of Ecuador.

**YELLOW-BILLED CUCKO** *Coccyzus americanus*

A single near Carboncillal on 26 February 1999 (RJG). In Colombia known mostly from the Andes, but also recorded from the piedmont of the Orinoco, Amazonia and the northern Pacific coast; no records from the Pacific lowlands of Ecuador. Our record represents a 400 km southerly range extension.

**VIOLET-BELLIED HUMMINGBIRD** *Damophila julie*

On 14 July 2000 a single was mist-netted at Amarales (RJG), and another was observed on 14 December 2003 at Mulatos (CRG, CEH). Common throughout the Caribbean lowlands of Colombia and the Magdalena Valley, with a few records from the northern Chocó. In Ecuador it is widespread throughout the Pacific lowlands. Our records represent a 400 km southerly and 150 km northerly range extension along the northern South American Pacific coast.

**WHITE-VENTED PLUMELETEER** *Chalybura buffoni*

The first record for the southern lowlands of the Colombian Pacific comes from the mangroves of Sanquianga National Park on 15 July 2000 (RJG). Known in the Chocó region from the Urabá Gulf south to the Anchicayá Valley (150 km to the north-east) in Colombia, and from south of Guayaquil in Ecuador (630 km south).

**GOLDEN-OLIVE WOODPECKER** *Piculus rubiginosus*

The first record for the Chocó lowlands of Colombia involved one at the edge of a mangrove at El Naranjo on 14 July 2000 (RJG). Widespread and common throughout the Colombian Andes above 900 m, and in Ecuador occurs throughout the Pacific lowlands.

**CRIMSON-CRESTED WOODPECKER** *Campephilus melanoleucos*

Observed regularly in 1999–2003 in mature mangroves with tall trees. Found throughout most of Colombia, except the south-west, in dptos. Cauca and Nariño. No records from the Pacific lowlands of Ecuador.

**DOUBLE-BANDED GREYTAIL** *Xenerpestes minlosi*

On 4 May 1999, this species was found at Carboncillal (RJG), extending its range in the Colombian Chocó from the headwaters of the río San Juan in dptos. Chocó and Valle del Cauca (180 km to the north). Records in western Ecuador (240 km to the south) come from Pichincha and Imbabura provinces, at 400–500 m.

**SHORT-TAILED FIELD TYRANT** *Muscigralla brevicauda*

On 7 June 2000, one was mist-netted in *Uniola pittieri* grassland at El Naranjo (FAE, RJG). This flycatcher's range extends from the xeric habitats of Esmeraldas, in Ecuador, to northern Chile. The only previous record for Colombia was from Isla Gorgona (Ortiz-von Halle 1990), making ours the second Colombian and first mainland record.

**EASTERN KINGBIRD** *Tyrannus tyrannus*

An adult male was mist-netted on 26 March 2004 at Mulatos by YCS and CRG. Found throughout most of Colombia, but ours is the first record from the Pacific lowlands. In Ecuador, recorded from the foothills of the Pichincha at c.500 m.

**BROWN-CHESTED MARTIN** *Progne tapera*

Groups of 2–8 were frequently seen on coasts in April–May 2000 and 2003. Known to occur on the Pacific coast from southern Ecuador to northern Peru, but in Colombia it had been previously recorded only on the Caribbean coast, in the Magdalena Valley and east of the Andes.

**TROPICAL MOCKINGBIRD** *Mimus gilvus*

Frequently seen at Mulatos and El Naranjo in 2003–04, though we never found more than two at a given locality. On 13 April 2004, we found a nest with three eggs, in the stump of a dead palm at Mulatos. Widespread in Colombia, on the Caribbean coast, in the Andes and in the eastern Llanos. In Ecuador it occurs in the highlands of Imbabura and western Napo, at 1,900–2,600 m.

**PROTHONOTARY WARBLER** *Protonotaria citrea*

The only published record for the Colombian Pacific is from Nuquí. Recorded in mangroves at Ensenada de Utría National Park, in the bays of Cupica and Jurubidá in February–March and November–December 1996 (LFC), and in mangrove at El Naranjo on 20 March 2004 (CRG). Two records for the Pacific coast of Ecuador, in Esmeraldas. Our records suggest it occurs at very low densities on the Colombian Pacific coast.

## Concluding remarks

Sanquianga National Park is an important stopover for several migrant shorebirds (Naranjo *et al.* 2006), and its strategic location led to its recent designation as an Important Bird Area (Franco-Maya & Bravo 2005). However, the area's importance goes beyond the provision of a safe haven for shorebirds, as its vast mangrove forests harbour populations of several Chocó endemics, e.g. White-whiskered Hermit *Phaethornis yaruqui*, Pallid Dove, Rose-faced Parrot *Gypopsitta pulcra*, Double-banded Greytail, Black-tipped Cotinga *Carpodectes hopkei* and Flame-rumped Tanager *Ramphocelus flammigerus*, nationally threatened species such as Cinnamon Teal, Brown Wood Rail *Aramides wolfi* and Guayaquil Woodpecker *Campephilus gayaquilensis* (Renjifo *et al.* 2002), and the globally threatened Buff-breasted Sandpiper (BirdLife International 2000).

Although our observations were restricted to the coastal habitats of Sanquianga, the existence of vast inland forests in the protected area suggests that it could also contain healthy populations of other endemic and/or threatened species, including Rufous-headed Chachalaca *Ortalis erythroptera*, Orange-fronted Barbet *Capito squamatus*, Spot-crowned Barbet *Capito quinticolor*, Chocó Woodpecker *Veniliornis chocoensis*, Rufous-crowned Antpitta *Pittasoma rufopileatum* and Ochraceous Attila *Attila torridus*. Unfortunately, these are threatened by extremely high deforestation rates (Etter *et al.* 2006).

Habitat disturbance probably explains the geographic expansion of several species from higher elevations in the western Andes or from xeric habitats of coastal Ecuador (Ortiz-von Halle 1990), such as Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis* and Tropical Mockingbird. Other apparent range extensions, e.g. that of Short-tailed Field Tyrant, might reflect seasonal movements from the arid zone of coastal Ecuador, as already suggested by Chapman (1927) and Ortiz-von Halle (1990). Recently, other species of similar credentials have been recorded in coastal Nariño, for instance Peruvian Meadowlark *Sturnella bellicosa* (Johnston *et al.* 2006). Most of the new records presented here amply illustrate the limited knowledge of the birds in coastal areas of Colombia, especially mangrove, which are often dismissed as being relatively poor habitats for birds (Naranjo 1997), but as demonstrated by recent studies on the Caribbean coast (Estela & López-Victoria 2005) represent critical habitat for many resident and migrant species (Naranjo *et al.* 2006). Further ornithological work to better document the diversity and distribution of coastal and lowland species in the Pacific is required.

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## Ornithological notes from southern Bolivia

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The avifauna of the southern Bolivian departments of Chuquisaca and Tarija is relatively poorly known (Fjeldså & Mayer 1996), a fact reflected in the huge increase in the number of species listed for these geopolitical units between the 1980s (Remsén & Traylor 1989) and 2003 (Hennessey *et al.* 2003). Very few sites have been adequately surveyed, suggesting that much remains to be discovered about the ornithology of this region.

During visits in 2003–06 to these departments, as well as to neighbouring southern dpto. Santa Cruz, we made several interesting observations, including the first documented Bolivian records of Coscoroba Swan *Coscoroba coscoroba* and the nominate race of Silvery Grebe *Podiceps occipitalis*, details of which are presented here. We also report the second and third documented records of Black-headed Duck *Heteronetta atricapilla*, and three new species for dpto. Chuquisaca, all from the Montes Chapeados region. Lastly, we gathered data that help to clarify the status of Quebracho Crested-tinamou *Eudromia formosa*, a scarce *Chaco* endemic (Short 1975).

We present identifiable field photographs in support of three of these sightings. Taxonomy and nomenclature follow Remsén *et al.* (2007).

### Survey sites

The following is a numbered list of Bolivian locality names mentioned herein and mapped in Fig. 1. Coordinates were taken using a Garmin GPS 60, except where stated. Localities are listed from north to south.