

First documented record of the Sapphire Quail-Dove *Geotrygon saphirina* Bonaparte, 1855, in Brazil, an overlooked specimen from the Klages expedition to Amazonia

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ABSTRACT: We report the long overlooked first record of Sapphire Quail-Dove *Geotrygon saphirina* in Brazil, a male specimen collected at São Paulo de Olivença, Amazonas state, in March 1923, by Samuel M. Klages. This is the first and only documented record for the country, pre-dating a sight record from Benjamin Constant, in extreme western Brazil, in April 1966.

KEY-WORDS: Columbidae, *Geotrygon saphirina*, Samuel Klages.

Between the publication of Peters (1937) and the mid-1990s, the Sapphire Quail-Dove *Geotrygon saphirina* Bonaparte, 1855, and the Indigo-crowned (Purple) Quail-Dove *G. purpurata* (Salvin, 1878) were generally retained as a single species (e.g. Baptista *et al.* 1997), but since the early 2000s their allopatric distributions, different morphology (Gibbs *et al.* 2001, Ridgely & Greenfield 2001) and, most recently, vocalizations (Donegan & Salaman 2012) have been used to promote *purpurata* to specific status, a position since favoured by most taxonomic committees and checklists (e.g. del Hoyo & Collar 2014, Remsen *et al.* 2015), though not by Dickinson & Remsen (2013). Whereas *G. purpurata* is confined to a comparatively small and highly deforested range west of the Andes, in western Colombia and north-west Ecuador, and is treated as Endangered by BirdLife International (2015), *G. saphirina* is considerably more widespread, being found throughout a considerable portion of upper Amazonia, from eastern Ecuador and probably extreme southeast Colombia, south to southeast Peru, where it is represented by another, weakly marked, subspecies in the Marcapata Valley, *G. s. rothschildi* (Stolzmann,

1926), as well as west into westernmost Brazil (Gibbs *et al.* 2001). Nevertheless, the presence of *G. saphirina* in the last-named country has hitherto uniquely rested on an undocumented claim by Willis (1987), who reported observing a single individual on the forest floor, attracted by an imitation of its voice, in the environs of Benjamin Constant (04°22'58"S, 70°1'51"W), Amazonas state, on 17 April 1966. To our knowledge there have been no subsequent records in Brazilian territory and the species is currently maintained on the secondary list of Brazilian birds (CBRO 2014) for which material documentation is lacking.

In May 2015, during a search for online specimen data pertaining to *G. saphirina sensu lato*, via VertNet (<http://portal.vertnet.org/>), GMK's attention was drawn to a specimen held in the Carnegie Museum of Natural History (CMNH), Pittsburgh, USA, pertaining to *G. s. saphirina* (Figure 1). Subsequent correspondence with the Collection Manager at CMNH, Stephen Rogers, revealed that CMNH 95975, a male Sapphire Quail-Dove was collected at São Paulo de Olivença (c. 03°27'N, 68°48'W), Amazonas state, western Brazil, on 22 March 1923, by the American collector, Samuel M. Klages. No

other details are presented on the label (Figure 1). São Paulo de Olivença lies on the right (south) bank of the Solimões (Amazon), c. 200 km downstream of Benjamin Constant, and Klages collected specimens within the environs of this settlement on at least 5, 8, 21 and 28 February, 3, 7, 10, 19 and 22 March, and 5-7, 9-10, 12-13, 17 and 20 April 1923 (Todd 1925a, b, 1927, 1931, 1937), although it is not known more precisely where Klages collected during his time there.

It is only known that prior to working São Paulo de Olivença, Klages had collected for several months on the

Rio Purus. By June 1923, he was collecting at Tonantins, on the left bank of the Solimões, c. 150 km downriver of São Paulo de Olivença (Paynter & Traylor 1991). Klages, who died in comparative penury in 1957, was one of the most extraordinary collectors of South American birds in the first third of the 20th century, with the bulk of his material being sent to Tring (subsequently purchased by the American Museum of Natural History, New York), Munich and CMNH, where it was extensively studied and published upon by Count Berlepsch, E. Hartert, C. E. Hellmayr, G. K. Cherrie, but above all by W. E. C. Todd, who described many new taxa based on Klages' material. Klages obtained the largest collection of Neotropical birds housed at CMNH (Parkes 1995). Departing the USA in 1891 (at the age of 26), he collected in Venezuela between 1898 and 1902, as well as in 1909-10, in Trinidad & Tobago in 1912-13, French Guiana in 1917-18, and in Brazilian Amazonia between 1918 and 1927 (Phelps 1945, Beolens & Watkins 2003, Paynter & Traylor 1991). The list of 2744 specimens (deposited at seven museums) collected by Klages at São Paulo de Olivença (accessible via VertNet) includes no biogeographically questionable species, thus we have no reason to suspect that the specimen of *G. saphirina* was obtained elsewhere and erroneously listed for this locality. In addition to the *G. saphirina*, Klages collected other rare or poorly-known taxa around São Paulo de Olivença including Red-billed Ground Cuckoo *Neomorphus pucheranii* ($n = 2$ specimens), Orange-fronted Plushcrown *Metopothrix aurantiaca* ($n = 8$), Striated Antthrush *Chamaeza nobilis* ($n = 4$) and Purple-throated Cotinga *Porphyrolaema porphyrolaema* ($n = 1$), as well as rarely-recorded boreal migrants such as Grey-cheeked Thrush *Catharus minimus* ($n = 2$) and Bobolink *Dolichonyx oryzivorus* ($n = 5$), but all of these could be anticipated at this locality.

Klages' record of *G. saphirina*, belatedly recognized for its full significance here, pre-dates that of Willis by 43 years and becomes the first and only documented record for Brazilian territory, although the species might be expected to occur at other localities in westernmost Brazil, especially south of the Solimões and along the frontier with Peru. Intra-tropical movements are well documented in Ruddy Quail-Dove *G. montana* (Stouffer & Bierregaard 1997) and have been hypothesised for Violaceous Quail-Dove *G. violacea* (Lees *et al.* 2013), so the possibility that *G. saphirina* is only an occasional visitor to the western Brazilian Amazon, rather than a low-density resident, exists. That the species has not been found at the comparatively well-inventoried Palmari Lodge, on the lower Rio Javari southwest of Tabatinga, or by recent collecting expeditions to the same general region by the Museu Goeldi, but that both Brazilian reports stem from the same season (late March-mid April) lends highly circumstantial weight to this hypothesis.

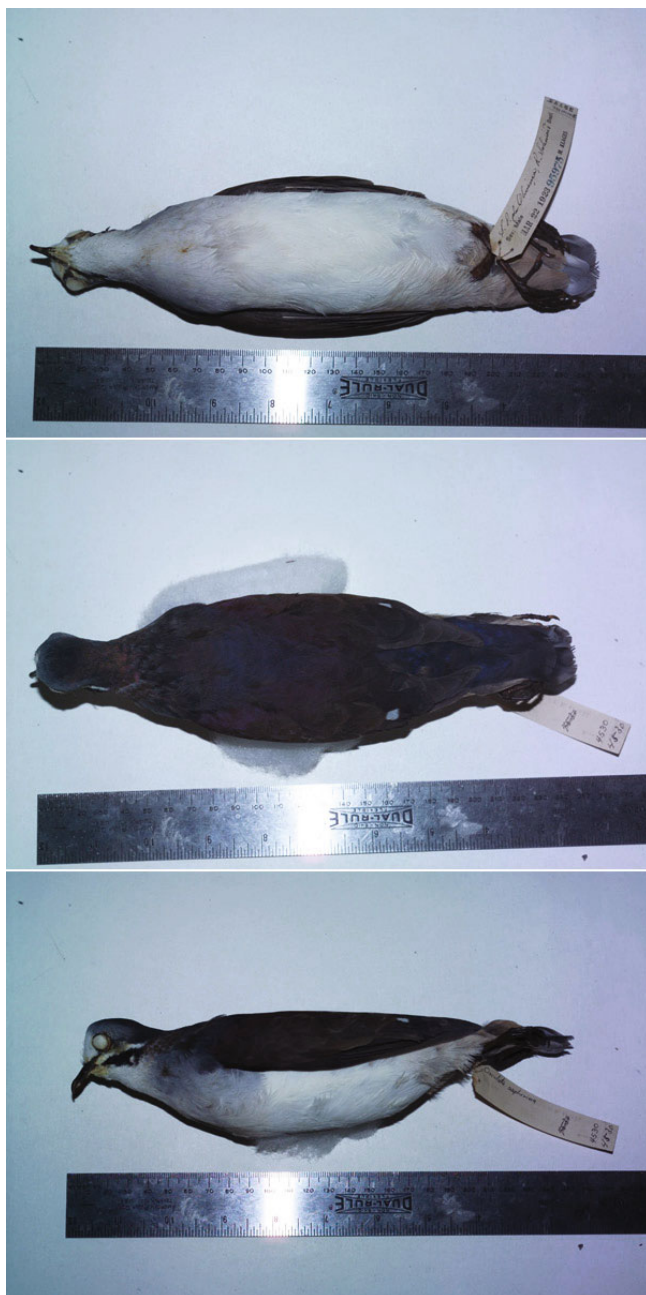


FIGURE 1. Ventral, dorsal and lateral views of a male specimen of the Sapphire Quail-Dove *Geotrygon saphirina* collected at São Paulo de Olivença, Amazonas, March 1923, by Samuel M. Klages, held at the Carnegie Museum of Natural History (CMNH 95975), Pittsburgh, USA (© Stephen P. Rogers, Carnegie Museum of Natural History).

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