

NEW BIRD RECORDS FROM FARALLONES DEL CITARÁ, COLOMBIAN WESTERN CORDILLERA

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Abstract

The north part of the Colombian western cordillera has been poorly explored by ornithologists during recent decades. In this paper we report a preliminary list of birds from Farallones del Citará, including several noteworthy records as the endemics: Chestnut-bellied Flowerpiercer (*Diglossa gloriosissima*), Dusky Starfrontlet (*Coeligena orina*), also the second record of the Chesnut-naped Antpitta (*Grallaria nuchalis*) from the Colombian Western Cordillera.

Keywords: Colombian Western Cordillera, Endemic birds, new records, Farallones del Citará

Resumen

La parte norte de la Cordillera Occidental de Colombia ha sido pobremente explorada por ornitólogos durante las últimas décadas. En este artículo reportamos una lista preliminar de las aves de los Farallones del Citará, incluyendo registros novedosos de varias aves amenazadas como *Diglossa gloriosissima* y *Coeligena orina*, también el segundo registro de *Grallaria nuchalis* para la Cordillera Occidentales de Colombia.

Palabras clave: Aves endémicas, Cordillera Occidental de Colombia, Farallones del Citará, nuevos registros

Introduction

The north sector of the Colombian western cordillera remains as one of the most unexplored places for birds. Especially high altitudes above 2500 m.a.s.l have received little

attention during several decades. Recent publications have shown interesting findings and noteworthy records for both east and west slopes of this cordillera (Cuervo *et al.* 2003, Krabbe *et al.* in press). This slow pace of exploration is mainly due to social

conflict in the zone in recent years, leaving important Mountain ranges as the Páramo de Frontino and Páramo de Caramanta poorly studied; these mountains harbor several endemic, endangered species of birds and therefore are an important focus for conservation (Chapman 1917, Hilty & Brown 1986, Renjifo *et al.* 2002). Carriker for example, explored Páramo de Frontino during 1951 and collected the Dusky Starfrontlet (*Coeligena orina*) described by Wetmore in 1953 and rediscovered almost 50 years later by Krabbe *et al.* (2005) in the same zone. Beside those mountains there are another less known, isolated, with important remnants of conserved forest above 2000 m.a.s.l. A good example is the Farallones del Citará, an impressive high mountain range reaching 3900 m.a.s.l with paramune and rocky outcrops vegetation, never explored in short or in detail for any ornithologist. Here we report the findings of a short expedition to this place in 2004, providing a preliminary list of birds of the zone and some interesting sightings.

Methods

During 21-24 August 2004 we carried out a small expedition to Farallones del Citará (Fig. 1) seeking for *Buarremon spp* brush finches and other birds. We first camped two days at 3300 m.a.s.l, on a steeped ridge with paramune vegetation and elfin forest (Fig. 2). Vegetation at this point seems to be exposed to continuous winds, and rain. The second camp was 800 m below; there the vegetation was dense, with a 10-12 m canopy. Life zones correspond to bmh.MA at the first camp and bmh.MB to the second one (Espinal 1992, Krabbe *et al.* 2005).

The records were made using 12x2 m and 6x2 m mistnets (06:00-17:00 h) for capturing birds, we also made observations using 8x40 and 10x50 binoculars from dawn to dusk. Finally we tape recorded daily as much as the wind allowed us using a Marantz and Sennheiser microphone. We checked several field guides and a paper in order to affirm our records, mainly Cuervo *et al.* (2003), Hilty & Brown (1986), and Fjeldså & Krabbe (1990).

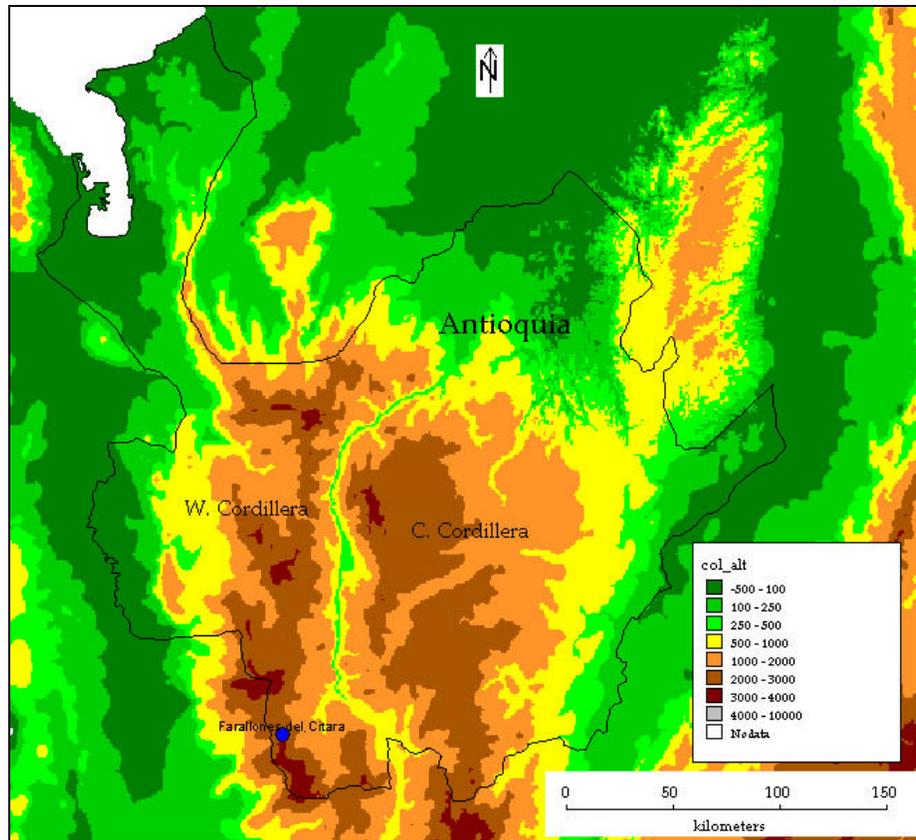


Figure 1. Map of the study site, at the SW of Antioquia department, Colombian Western Cordillera.



Figure 2. Elfin forest and rocky outcrops at the 3300 m.a.s.l camp.

Results

Scaly-naped Parrot (*Amazona mercenaria*)

We listened, observed and tape recorded a group of individuals of this parrot flying over the limit of the arboreal vegetation. Previous sightings of this species come from north of the Valle department, and at the west of Antioquia. This is the first record of *A. mercenaria* in the SW of Antioquia department, and represents a 79 Km range extension.

White-throated Screech-Owl (*Megascops albogularis*)

We tape recorded an individual once at night below paramune vegetation at 2800 m.a.s.l (Fig. 3). This species is distributed in the south of the Colombian Western Cordillera, with a single record in the Cauca department. This sighting represents a 300 Km range extension to the north.

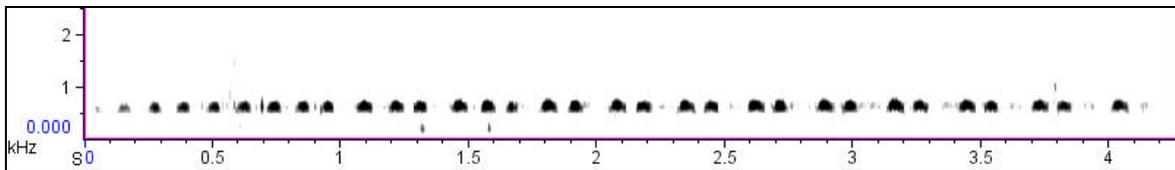


Figure 3. Sonogram of the White-throated Screech-Owl (*Megascops albogularis*) from Farallones del Citará, Colombian W Cordillera.

Dusky Starfrontlet (*Coeligena orina*)

This species was recently recognized as valid after almost 50 years of uncertainty (Krabbe et al. 2005). We sighted the Dusky Starfrontlet daily on elfin forest and paramune grass. The species was conspicuous into middle strata of the forest, even a male was attracted by “pishing” several times. Although we just captured two males and a female during our survey, we suggested that this hummingbird could be common

at this place based on our observations and also because we explored a minimum of the area available for the species.

Glowing Puffleg (*Eriocnemis vestita*)

This species is known in the Colombian Western Cordillera from Frontino and Paramillo natural parks. We captured 10 individuals (6 males, 4 females) in open paramune habitat (Fig. 4). This sight represents a 79 Km range extension to the south.



Figure 4. Male of the Glowing Puffleg (*Eriocnemis vestita*) captured at 3300 m.a.s.l. A very common Hummingbird at this site.

Pearled Treeruner (*Margarornis squamiger*)

We saw an individual associated to a mixed flock (containing *Diglossa gloriosissima*, *Myioborus ornatus*, *Basileuterus coronatus*), at the interior of forest, below paramo. The distribution of this bird is scattered in the Colombian Western Cordillera, with previous published records from Frontino and Jardín in Antioquia (Cuervo *et al.* 2003), and Muchique (Valle del Cauca). The sighting represents a c.a 36.7 Km S from the nearest known locality.

Chesnut-naped Antpitta (*Grallaria nuchalis*)

We sighted this species almost daily and tape recorded several individuals inside montane forest and elfin forest. This is the second published record from Colombian Western Cordillera (Cuervo *et al.* 2003). The vocalizations of this population resemble *G. nuchalis ruficeps* from Cordillera Central and Oriental, and distinct from *G. nuchalis ruficeps* from Ecuador (Fig. 5).

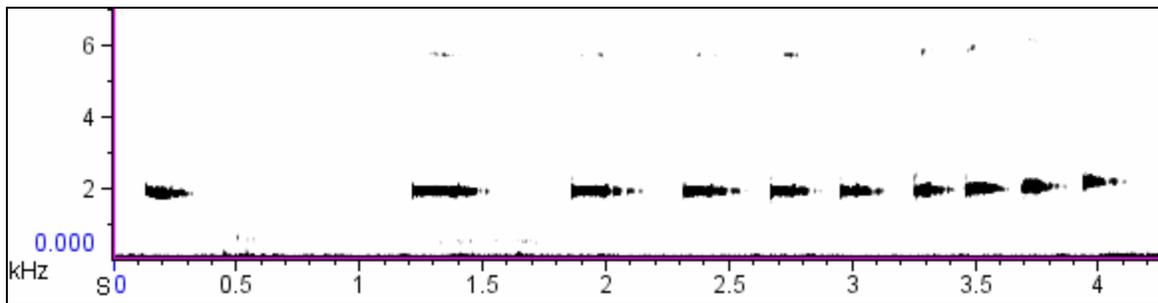


Figure 5. Sonogram of the Chestnut-naped Antpitta (*Grallaria nuchalis*) from Colombian Western Cordillera.

Rufous Antpitta (*Grallaria rufula*)

This species was observed several times foraging close to a small trail below elfin forest at 2900 m.a.s.l, and tape recorded it several times (Fig. 6). This patchily distributed

species had been previously reported north and south of the Colombian Western Cordillera in Frontino, and also in Valle del Cauca (Hilty & Brown 1986), this sighting represent a c.a 79 Km range extension from the nearest known locality.

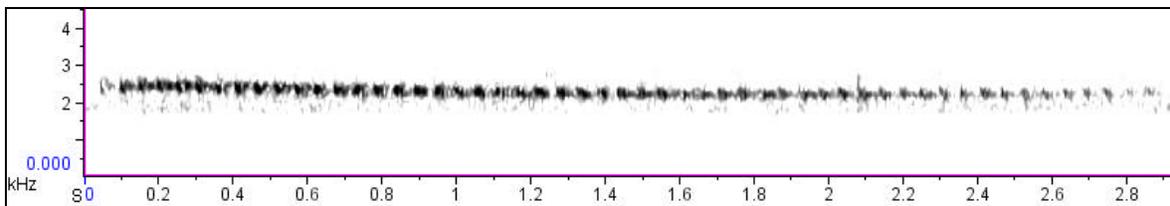


Figure 6. Sonogram of the Rufous Antpitta (*Grallaria rufula*) from Colombian Western Cordillera.

Chestnut bellied Flower-piercer (*Diglossa gloriosissima*)

This species remained unrecorded for almost 41 years. In 2004 a local birder (G. Suárez) captured and collected an individual at Jardín, Antioquia (33.9 Km NW from Citará), however this record has not been published yet. We captured and sighted several individuals (at least

five), mainly in elfin forest and paramune vegetation (see Pulgarín-R. et al. 2006 for pictures). Two birds were collected and deposited at the Instituto de Ciencias Naturales, Universidad Nacional de Colombia, sede Bogotá (ICN 35038) and Museo Universitario of the University of Antioquia Bird skin Collection (MUA-AVP 0511). These sightings represent a hope for the conservation of this

endangered species, taking in account that the species is only known from four localities and it is categorized as Endangered (EN) (Renjifo *et al.* 2002).

Black-chinned Mountain-Tanager
(*Anisognathus notabilis*)

An individual was observed foraging below paramune vegetation, close to the edge. This species is known from W slope of the middle portion of the Colombian Western Cordillera, therefore this represent the first published record for the E slope and a 32 Km range extension to the north.

Golden-crowned Tanager
(*Iridosornis rufivertex*)

Several times we observed and heard some individuals, foraging at the edge of dwarf vegetation. An individual was captured in the páramo (Fig. 7). This species has been only reported to the extreme north of the Colombian Western Cordillera and in scattered localities to the south. This record represents a 79 Km range extension to the south from the nearest locality.



Figure 7. Golden-crowned Tanager (*Iridosornis rufivertex caeruleoventris*), captured at the edge of elfin forest at 3300 m.a.s.l.

Final remarks

Although this is just a very preliminary view of the avifauna of the Farallones del Citará, we consider that the new information presented here, including the list (Table 1), could aware about the urgent necessity of exploring more isolated areas in the Colombian Western Cordillera. A new survey to the Farallones del Citará have to be made in order to assess more rigorously the status of the endangered birds here reported, also several interesting

patches of dwarf rocky vegetation could hold interesting birds in this specific place.

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Table 1. List of the species registered at the Farallones del Citará, Colombian
Western Cordillera.

Family	Specie/Taxa	Evidence
CRACIDAE	<i>Ortalis colombiana</i> *	V, E
ODONTHOPHORIDAE	<i>Odontophorus hyperythrus</i>	E, V
PSITTACIDAE	<i>Amazona mercenaria</i>	V, E, G
STRIGIDAE	<i>Megascops albogularis</i>	G, E
APODIDAE	<i>Chaetura sp.</i>	V
TROCHILIDAE	<i>Coeligena orina</i> *	V, E, C
	<i>Eriocnemis vestita</i>	V, E, C
	<i>Metallura tyrianthina</i>	V, E
FURNARIDAE	<i>Synallaxis unirufa</i>	V
	<i>Margarornis squamiger</i>	V
	<i>Premnoplex brunnescens</i>	E
	<i>Pseudocolaptes boissoneaui</i>	V, E
FORMICARIIDAE	<i>Grallaria ruficapilla</i>	E
	<i>Grallaria nuchalis</i>	E, G
	<i>Grallaria rufula</i>	V, E, G
RHINOCRYPTIDAE	<i>Scytalopus sp.</i>	E
TYRANNIDAE	<i>Mecocerculus leucophrys</i>	V
	<i>Pyrrhomyas cinnamomea</i>	E, V
	<i>Ochthoeca diadema</i>	C, V

COTINGIDAE	<i>Pipreola riefferi</i>	E
CORVIDAE	<i>Cyanocorax yncas</i>	E
HIRUNDINIDAE	<i>Pygochelidon cyanoleuca</i>	V, E
TROGLODYTIDAE	<i>Cinnycerthia spp.</i>	G
	<i>Troglodites solstitialis</i>	E
	<i>Henicorhina leucoprphys</i>	E, V
TURDIDAE	<i>Myadestes ralloides</i>	V, E
	<i>Turdus fuscater</i>	E
THRAUPIDAE	<i>Hemispingus atropileus</i>	C
	<i>Buthraupis montana</i>	V, E, G
	<i>Anisognathus lachrymosus</i>	V, E
	<i>Anisognathus notabilis</i>	V
	<i>Chlorornis riefferii</i>	V
	<i>Iridosornis rufivertex</i>	V, E, C
	<i>Tangara vassori</i>	V, E
PARULIDAE	<i>Diglossa gloriosissima*</i>	V, C
	<i>Diglossa cyanea</i>	V, E
PARULIDAE	<i>Myoborus ornatus</i>	V, E
	<i>Basileuterus coronatus</i>	E, V
ICTERIDAE	<i>Psarocolius angustifrons</i>	E, V
EMBERIZIDAE	<i>Zonotrichia capensis</i>	E
	<i>Atlapetes schistaceus</i>	V, E, G
CARDINALIDAE	<i>Saltator albicollis</i>	E

* Endemic birds of Colombia.

V: observed, C: captured, G: tape recorded.