

Range extension for, and description of the juvenile of, Bicoloured Antvireo *Dysithamnus occidentalis punctitectus* in Ecuador

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En marzo de 2004 llevamos a cabo una expedición a la falda occidental de la Cordillera del Cóndor, específicamente a la region denominada San Carlos de Limón y San Pedro de Apondios, provincia de Morona-Santiago, sur-oriente de Ecuador, durante la cual registramos un individuo juvenil de *Dysithamnus occidentalis* y observamos el comportamiento de forrajeo de adultos de la misma especie en un bosque montano primario. Estos registros son los primeros de esta especie en la región de la Cordillera del Cóndor que corresponde a Ecuador y representan la extensión del rango de distribución 120 km al sur-oeste del Volcán Sumaco, provincia de Morona-Santiago, la última localidad donde se había registrado a esta especie. La descripción del plumaje del juvenil de *Dysithamnus occidentalis* era previamente desconocida hasta este reporte.

Bicoloured Antvireo *Dysithamnus occidentalis* is a rare bird with a scattered distribution from south-west Colombia to east Ecuador^{1,4,5}, and has recently been discovered in north-east Peru (D. Lane pers. comm.). The species' populations are apparently small and isolated, and there is some variation in morphological and vocal characters between populations². Consequently, the species' taxonomy is unclear. Pacific-slope populations in Colombia belong to nominate *occidentalis*, which is known from four localities and five specimens, including the type, collected at El Cocal at 1,200 m^{1,7}. In Ecuador, *D. o. punctitectus* is distributed east of the Andes, but a female presumed to be of nominate *occidentalis* was observed and tape-recorded on the west slope, at Reserva Cerro Golondrina (2,200 m), Carchi province². The five specimens from Oyacachi, Baeza and Volcán Sumaco, in the Ecuadorian east Andes, collected in the 1920s, are all adult *punctitectus* and are deposited at the American Museum of Natural History, New York (AMNH) and Natural History Museum, Tring (BMNH)^{1,7}. Recently, *punctitectus* has also been collected 180 km south-east of Volcán Sumaco on the río Abanico (1,500 m), in the region of Volcán Sangay, Morona-Santiago province². These specimens, an adult male and female, are deposited at Museo Ecuatoriano de Ciencias Naturales (MECN 7037, 7038), Quito.

Here we report the presence of *D. occidentalis punctitectus* on the west slope of the Cordillera del Cóndor, extending the species' range 120 km south-east of the most recently discovered Ecuadorian locality, on the opposite side of the río Zamora, Morona-Santiago province. This record is the second from this region since its discovery in Peru (D. Lane pers. comm.). In Ecuador, Bicoloured Antvireo was observed in a pristine montane forest in the foothills of the Cordillera del Cóndor, at 1,600–1,900 m. On 3–20 March 2004, we undertook avian surveys in that part of the Cordillera del

Cóndor at 03°14'S 78°20'W, at c.1,700 m, belonging to the district of San Carlos del Limón and the Shuar Community San Pedro de Apondios. The study area comprises primary forest selectively logged by local farmers in recent years. The resultant cleared areas possess a dense, 3–4 m-high understorey at forest borders and some early-successional vegetation. We also noted some natural light gaps within the forest.

Description of juvenile male Bicoloured Antvireo

A specimen, inferred from range as belonging to the subspecies *punctitectus* and currently deposited at MECN (8211), was mist-netted on 8 March within dense 2–3 m-high understorey inside riparian forest. It weighed 21.2 g. Mensural data from this specimen were compared with the adults deposited at MECN (Table 1). Wing chord was measured from the bend of the closed wing to the end of the longest primary, the culmen (1) from the tip of the bill to the forehead, and alternatively culmen (3) as from the tip of the bill to the distal part of the nostril, the longest rectrix from the body to the tip, and tarsus from the rear middle of the intertarsal joint to the distal edge of the last complete scale or the end of tarsal bone³. The specimen exhibited some body moult but none in the primaries. Age was determined by skull ossification and presence of bursa. Skull ossification was estimated as 40% and the whitish bursa measured 4.5 mm in diameter. The bird was a male having inconspicuous whitish testes of 1.9 mm. Soft-part colours (noted prior to preparation) were as follows: irides dark grey, tarsus dark grey and bill mainly black with a yellowish gape. Stomach content consisted of the remains of insects, but specific identification proved impossible.

Although the specimen was sexed as a male, it more closely resembled a female in plumage characters. It has a dark brown, almost rufescent, crown and forehead, and greyish nape. The

Table 1. Mensural data for specimens of Bicoloured Antvireo *Dysithamnus occidentalis* at the Museo Ecuatoriano de Ciencias Naturales (MECN), Quito, Ecuador.

MECN catalogue number	Sex	Age	Wing chord (mm)	Culmen 1 (mm)	Culmen 3 (mm)	Tarsus (mm)	Tail (mm)
7037	male	adult	73	18.2	11.5	23.5	57.6
7038	female	adult	70	17	10.3	23.6	59.9
8211	male	juvenile	71	17	10.5	23.7	60.6

upperparts, mantle and tail are primarily sooty grey with some rufous-brown feathering. The head-sides are dark grey with unstreaked throat-sides. The throat, breast and upper belly are uniform slate grey, slightly darker on the breast, but the flanks and lower belly are chestnut. Two distinct lines of round whitish terminal spots are present on the median and greater wing-coverts, and a conspicuous white patch on the innermost lesser wing-coverts. The fringes of the primaries and secondaries, as well as of the marginal-coverts, are chestnut. There is no concealed dorsal patch (*contra* Ridgely & Tudor⁵ and Ridgely & Greenfield⁴), as in adults at MECN, which also lack such a character. In contrast to the adult female deposited at MECN, the new specimen lacks chestnut coloration on the upperparts and the fine whitish striations on the throat, breast and underparts.

Field observations

On 10 March at c.17h30 and at an elevation of 1,850 m, JN briefly observed two parties of Bicoloured Antvireos. The first comprised a male, female and at least one additional, unsexed individual. The birds foraged rapidly 2–5 m above ground in the undergrowth, inspecting dead leaves and twigs within stands of vegetation interspersed by treefalls and open undergrowth. They were generally quiet, but vocalisations were described as a soft *puh-puh, puh*, as well as a faster rolling *tcheuw-uw-uw-uw, tcheuw-uw-uw-uw*. The first call is reminiscent of the natural vocalisations described by Whitney⁷ and, subsequently, by M. Lysinger in Ridgely & Greenfield⁴ as a short uninflected whistled note, given by birds in the Sumaco region. The second observation by JN of Bicoloured Antvireo was of a pair of adults foraging with an undergrowth mixed-species flock containing Pearled Treerunner *Margarornis squamiger*, Sepia-brown Wren *Cinnycerthia olivascens* and Russet-crowned Warbler *Basileuterus coronatus*. This observation differs from previous foraging behaviour, described by Whitney⁷, who observed the species primarily in pairs or alone, but did not reject the potential for participation in mixed-species flocks, as known for congeners.

In the same area we collected, and tape-recorded the natural vocalisations, of White-streaked Antvireo *Dysithamnus leucostictus*, representing the first records on the west side of

the Cordillera del Cóndor in Ecuador (the first records in this region are from Comainas⁶). The specimens are an adult male and juvenile male, which (much as the Bicoloured Antvireo described above) resembled a female in plumage characters. These specimens are smaller than Bicoloured Antvireo and, in contrast to the latter, exhibit whitish streaks on the head-sides and body. The presence of both species at the same locality and elevation is apparently indicative of the good forest state at this locality.

References

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