

Taxonomic Round-up



New perspectives concerning the genus *Formicivora*

Doctoral work by Luiz Gonzaga, including a cladistic analysis, indicates that the *Formicivora* genus, as presently constituted, is not monophyletic. *F. iheringi* should be excluded, probably to reside in a monotypic genus *Neorhopias*, and *Stymphalornis acutirostris* should be included in *Formicivora*. Cladistic analysis also confirms the suggestion made by other workers that the genus *Myrmotherula* is not monophyletic.

- Gonzaga, L. P. (2001) Análise filogenética do Gênero *Formicivora* Swainson 1825 (Aves: Passeriformes, Thamnophilidae) baseada em caracteres morfológicos e vocais.

Resumo de tese. *Atualidades Ornitológicas* 102: 2.

Ongoing work suggests Cuban Black-hawk is a species...

The results of ongoing work into the taxonomic status of the Cuban Black-hawk *Buteogallus anthracinus gundlachii* were presented as a paper at the Society of Caribbean Ornithology in Cuba in July 2001, and suggest, on the basis of vocalisations, feeding ecology, habitat preferences and size differences, that *gundlachii* warrants specific recognition.

- Wiley, J. W. & Garrido, O. H. (2001) Status and biology of the Cuban Black-hawk, *Buteogallus anthracinus gundlachii*. *El Pitirre* 14: 143–144.

Aulacorhynchus toucanets in Middle America

Following recent analysis of geographic patterns of variation in morphological differences in Central American *Aulacorhynchus* toucanets, the authors of a recent study recommend that henceforward four species are recognised: *A. wagleri* in west Mexico, *A. prasinus* in east Mexico and north Central America, *A. caeruleogularis* in Costa Rica and west Panama, and *A. cognatus* in eastern Panama, with several additional species-level forms in South America (*A. lautus*, *A. albiivitta* and *A. nigrogularis*). The most recently published review of these toucanets (Short & Horne in *Handbook of the birds of the world*) considers all of these forms

to be subspecies of *A. prasinus*, the Emerald Toucanet.

- Navarro S., A. G., Peterson, A. T., Lopez-Medrano, E. & Benítez-Díaz, H. (2001) Species limits in Mesoamerican *Aulacorhynchus* toucanets. *Wilson Bull.* 113: 363–372.

A long-standing mystery solved

The prodigious Islers and their co-workers have recently resolved the source of the discrepancy between the 1930s findings of John Zimmer and Melvin Carriker concerning the taxonomy of the Chestnut-tailed Antbird *Myrmeciza hemimelaena* in Andean Peru. Zimmer described *M. h. castanea* from the foothills of San Martín, but Carriker was unable to discern any differences between additional specimens, taken at the same elevation in an adjoining valley, from the nominate form. In fact, as the Islers and their co-authors demonstrate, both were correct: two cryptic sister taxa occur syntopically in this region of Peru. Additionally, the authors recommend that *castanea* is meritorious of recognition at species level (under the suggested English name Northern Chestnut-tailed Antbird with *M.*

hemimelaena being named the Southern Chestnut-tailed Antbird) and, in evaluating the range of variation across the entire species, they are also able to recognise a new subspecies, *M. h.*

centuncolorum, from the lowlands north of the río Marañón in Peru.

- Isler, M. L., Alvarez Alonso, J., Isler, P. R., Valqui, T., Begazo, A. & Whitney, B. M. (2002) Rediscovery of a cryptic species and description of a new subspecies in the *Myrmeciza hemimelaena* complex (Thamnophilidae) of the Neotropics. *Auk* 119: 362–378.

Xiphorhynchus necopinus is a junior synonym but Zimmer's Woodcreeper is a species

Alex Aleixo and Bret Whitney have recently shown that Zimmer's type-series of a new species, *Xiphorhynchus necopinus* (the Zimmer's Woodcreeper), are phenotypically extremely similar

to the type of *X. picus kienerii*, a subspecies of the Straight-billed Woodcreeper known from western Amazonian Brazil, around Tefé. Following Zimmer's description of *X. necopinus*, in 1934, the taxon was unknown until its rediscovery in 1993. Based on their research, Aleixo and Whitney affirm that *necopinus* is but a junior synonym of *kienerii*, but intend to demonstrate in a future communication that *necopinus*, a taxon largely restricted to tall, seasonally flooded várzea forest on riverbanks and islands, principally in central and western Amazonia, nonetheless demands specific status and should not be considered conspecific with *X. picus*.

- Aleixo, A. & Whitney, B. M. (2002) *Dendroplex* (= *Xiphorhynchus*) *necopinus* Zimmer 1934 (Dendrocolaptidae) is a junior synonym of *Dendroornis kienerii* (= *Xiphorhynchus picus kienerii*) Des Murs 1855. *Auk* 119: 520–523.

Grey-headed Quail-dove is two species

Grey-headed Quail-dove *Geotrygon caniceps* has traditionally been considered a polytypic species restricted to Cuba and the Dominican Republic, and treated as globally threatened by BirdLife International. Orlando Garrido and co-workers have recently re-evaluated the decision, taken by Bond in 1936 to merge *leucometopus* within *caniceps*, and concluded that consistent differences in coloration, some mensural characteristics, and aspects of their natural history suggest that *caniceps* (from Cuba) and *leucometopus* (in the Dominican Republic) should again be considered species. Further work on their vocalisations and molecular analyses are required to test this hypothesis. Both forms qualify as Vulnerable under current IUCN threat criteria, and *leucometopus* may warrant categorisation as Endangered under the range criterion.

- Garrido, O. H., Kirwan, G. M. & Capper, D. R. (2002) Species

limits within Grey-headed Quail-dove *Geotrygon caniceps* and implications for the conservation of a globally threatened species. *Bird Conserv. Intern.* 12: 169–187.

Two recognisable forms of Olive-capped Warbler

A recent paper recommends, on the basis of the differences in morphology and the longer tail of specimens from Grand Bahama, that Olive-capped Warbler *Dendroica pityophila* be considered to comprise two subspecies: nominate *pityophila* in Cuba and *D. p. bahamensis* on Abaco and Grand Bahama.

- Garrido, O. H. (2000) Es la Bijirita del Pinar (*Dendroica pityophila*) (Aves: Parulidae) especie monotípica? *El Pitirre* 13: 8–11.

Western Tanager photographs

In *Cotinga* 18, the photos on p. 97 of the male Western Tanager *Piranga ludoviciana* did not reproduce as we had hoped; indeed, many readers may have been hard-pressed to identify the bird as a tanager! As the originals do clearly show a male Western Tanager, we have given interested readers the option of viewing them in colour on the Internet. Visit the NBC home page (www.neotropicalbirdclub.org) and follow the links via *Cotinga* 18 to www.neotropicalbirdclub.org/feature/cotinga18/westerntananger.html. It is worth remarking that, due to constraints on the number of pages of colour in *Cotinga*, the editors are occasionally forced to make difficult decisions as to which images to prioritise. Offers of sponsorship for additional colour or just extra pages in *Cotinga* will be most welcome, and should be made via the Club Secretary (secretary@neotropicalbirdclub.org) or the Senior Editor (david.wege@birdlife.org.uk).