

First record of Scaled Fruiteater *Ampelioides tschudii* in the Central Andes of Colombia

Scaled Fruiteater *Ampelioides tschudii* is a distinctive cotinga that inhabits very humid premontane and humid montane forests at 575–2,700 m in the Andes^{7,8}. It occurs on the east slope from dpto. Caquetá, southern Colombia, to dpto. Beni, northern Bolivia, and on the west slope from dpto. Antioquia, northern Colombia, to prov. Loja, southern Ecuador. The species also occurs in the Serranía de Perijá on the Colombia / Venezuela border south to dpto. Norte de Santander (Colombia) and in Táchira (Venezuela), and on the west slope of the East Andes in dpto. Huila (Colombia). Isolated populations occur in the Serranía de la Macarena of eastern Colombia, Yacambú National Park in north-west Venezuela, two sites in the coastal cordilleras of Ecuador, and the Cordillera Azul in Peru (Fig. 1)^{7,8} (note the range map in *HBW*⁸ is partially incorrect for Colombia). Scaled Fruiteater is rather secretive, perching motionless for long periods and is shyer than *Pipreola* fruitedeaters^{7,8}. Although its long-whistled voice is quite conspicuous, it can be confused with a raptor (DCF obs. pers.), complicating the species' detection.

On 31 July 2011, JCH was guiding a trip in the municipality of Anorí in the northern Central Andes, at Alto El Chaquiral (06°58.798'N 75°07.151'W, c.1,855 m⁵) in the Reserva Natural de las Aves Arrierito Antioqueño. At 08h20, JCH spotted a female Scaled Fruiteater that landed c.10 m away, c.6 m up in the midstorey (Fig. 2). It switched perches in an area of c.35 m radius while occasionally foraging on fruit. Fifteen minutes later, a Chestnut-capped Piha *Lipaugus weberi* responded to playback by perching just a few metres away;



Figure 1. Current known distribution of Scaled Fruiteater *Ampelioides tschudii*. 1 = east slope of the Andes, 2 = west slope of the Andes, 3 = Perijá Mountains, 4 = west slope of Colombian East Andes, 5 = Macarena Mountains, 6 = Yacambú National Park, 7 = Cordillera de la Costa, 8 = Cordillera Azul, and 9 = new record in the northern Central Andes of Colombia. Map based on Kirwan & Green¹³ with modifications.

the fruiteater promptly came to the same perch where it performed flights in front of the piha for a couple of minutes before departing. The piha never left its perch during this period.

This is the first record of the species in the Central Colombian Andes, a range extension of c.450 km north and / or c.150 km from the West Andes, despite thorough recent research by experienced ornithologists, which has led to many discoveries including new species¹⁻⁶. Scaled Fruiteater could have been expected to occur at the north end of the Central Andes⁴. It is striking how relatively secretive birds such as this can go unnoticed despite increasing numbers of birders visiting an area.

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Figure 2. Female Scaled Fruiteater *Ampelioides tschudii*, Reserva Natural de las Aves Arriero Antioqueño, Anorí, Colombia, 31 July 2011 (José Castaño Hernández)

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