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**First documented mainland  
South American record of  
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker  
*Sphyrapicus varius***

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker  
*Sphyrapicus varius* is a northern migrant that winters in the southern and south-east USA, Middle America and the West Indies<sup>10</sup>. Vagrants have been recorded in the Netherlands Antilles<sup>11</sup> and there have been sight records on San Andrés Island<sup>7</sup> and the Santa Marta Mountains<sup>6</sup>. On the morning of 23 November 2010, members of a birdwatching tour were in the vicinity of the ProAves El Dorado Lodge (11°06'02"N 74°04'20"W; c.1,900 m) in the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, dpto. Magdalena, Colombia. G. Roberts noticed a woodpecker he did not recognise and alerted PAG, who immediately identified it as a sapsucker and then pointed it out to the only other North American birder



Figure 1. Young female Yellow-bellied Sapsucker *Sphyrapicus varius*, El Dorado Lodge, Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, dpto. Magdalena, Colombia, November 2010 (Ketil Knudsen)

present, J. Skevington, who agreed with the identification; photographs were taken by K. Knudsen (Fig. 1). The bird was observed again on 25 November in the same trees, at heights of c.10–20 m for approximately ten minutes.

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker is the only species of *Sphyrapicus* whose wintering range generally approaches South America, although there are records of Red-naped Sapsucker *S. nuchalis* from Guatemala and Honduras<sup>4</sup>. Separation of *S. varius* from *S. nuchalis* can be difficult, especially in female *nuchalis* vs. male *varius*. In this case, however, identification is easier because of the golden head spangling characteristic of juvenile / immature *varius* at this late date (they are slower to develop adult plumage)<sup>1,8</sup>, whereas *nuchalis* would be in near-adult plumage by this time. The bird's underparts lack adult-like plumage including any hint of the breast shield, further denoting it is a juvenile (S. Shunk pers. comm.). It appears to lack any red on the throat, indicating a female, which sex tends to migrate further south<sup>10</sup>. This record constitutes another instance of vagrancy in Santa Marta<sup>2,3,9</sup>, which region is principally renowned for its high level of endemism.

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