

First record of Black Tern *Chlidonias niger* for the northern Andes

On 21 December 2010, at 09h00–12h00, I observed a Black Tern *Chlidonias niger* at Laguna de Yambo (01°06'S 78°35'W), prov. Cotopaxi, in the Interandean valley of the central highlands of Ecuador, at 2,550 m. The bird foraged at the south end of the lake, periodically resting on dead trees in the water (Fig. 1).

It was identified as a *Chlidonias* tern by the buoyant, nighthawk-like flight, short black bill and short, slightly notched tail^{2,4,6}. The dark grey mantle, back, rump, tail and upperwing-coverts, blackish shoulder bar, short black legs and head pattern (Fig. 1) are indicative of Black Tern^{2,4,6}. Additional photographs are available on request.

This is the first published record of *C. niger* from the northern Andes^{1,3–5}. *C. niger* is a boreal migrant that winters in South America, but mainly at sea. It is common off the Caribbean and Pacific coasts of Colombia³, but uncommon in Ecuador (mainly prov. Manabí and Guayas)⁴ and Peru⁶, and accidental in Chile and Argentina². It rarely ventures inland, being only occasionally

seen at coastal lagoons or freshwater lakes^{4,6}. Occurrence in the Andes is known from two records in the Peruvian puna, near Cusco, dpto. Cusco⁶: 2–3 on 6 January 2003 at Huacarpay lake by P. O'Donnell, and one on 11 December 2011 at Huaypo lake by A. Durand (*vide* T. S. Schulenberg & G. Engblom *in litt.* 2012). It had never been reported in the highlands of Ecuador and remains to be recorded away from the coast in Colombia^{1,4,5}.

References

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Figure 1. Black Tern *Chlidonias niger*, Laguna de Yambo, prov. Cotopaxi, Ecuador, December 2010 (P.-Y. Henry)

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