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## Potentially important populations of Chocó Tinamou *Crypturellus kerriae* and Brown Wood-rail *Aramides wolfi* in Colombia

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Observaciones en la Ensenada del Parque Nacional Utría, al noroeste de Colombia sugieren que importantes poblaciones de las vulnerables *Crypturellus kerriae* y *Aramides wolfi* sobreviven en la región. Están listadas varias otras especies por las cuales el parque pueda ser importante; ya que muy poco trabajo de campo sobre la avifauna ha sido realizado, debido, en gran parte, a lo inaccesible que es el área. La integridad y el status de conservación del parque en el futuro son brevemente discutidos.

Ensenada de Utría National Park is situated on the Pacific coast of the Department of Chocó, west Colombia, between 05°50' and 06°10'N 77°10' and 77°25'W<sup>3</sup>. The park protects 54,300 hectares of marine and coastal habitats, including some fine mangrove, and forest. Approximately 75% of the

park is humid tropical forest, from sea level to c. 1,400 m on the Alto del Buey, one of the highest points in the Serranía de Baudó. The park is administered by the National Parks Unit of the Colombian Ministry of the Environment.

The protected area represents only a small part

of the extensive area of high-quality humid tropical forest, centred on the Serranía de Baudó. Travel in this low coastal mountain range is extremely difficult due to an absence of tracks and trails, itself due to the steep, dissected and heavily forested terrain. Degradation of primary forest outside the park is largely restricted to the coast and locally near navigable rivers, principally on the east side of the mountains.

The call of the Chocó Tinamou *Crypturellus kerriae* is well known<sup>2</sup> and frequently heard by the park staff. On the overcast morning of 15 March 1996 much calling was heard, and 10-15 individuals were estimated along c. 3 kms of trail in steep coastal forest. *C. kerriae* is classified as Vulnerable<sup>1</sup>, Darién National Park, Panamá, being considered a major stronghold for the species, with few records from Colombia.

The sheltered inlet for which the park is named contains extensive areas of good-quality mangrove, which possess, at least locally, a healthy population of Brown Wood-rail *Aramides wolfi*. A short (200 m) trail behind the park headquarters leads to mangrove where at least six *A. wolfi* were present at dawn on 11 March 1996. They fed in the mangrove but retreated into thick undergrowth if disturbed. Considering the area of mangrove within the park, the population of this species may be considerable, although Grey-necked Wood-rail *A. castanea* is also present. Relative numbers are unknown and access problems impede an accurate census. *A. wolfi* is classified as Vulnerable<sup>1</sup> with a paucity of recent records.

Further evidence of the quality of habitat in Ensenada de Utría National Park is provided by apparently strong populations of Great Currawong *Crax rubra* and Crested Guan *Penelope purpurascens*. The two species of large Pacific slope toucans, Chocó Toucan *Ramphastos brevis* and Chestnut-mandibled Toucan *R. swainsonii* are present at particularly high densities. The interior of the park is virtually unexplored and no complete inventory of the avifauna exists. Other globally threatened species recorded or which may occur within the park are Baudó Guan *Penelope ortoni*, Five-coloured Barbet *Capito quinticolor*, which was recently confirmed near Quibdó 100 kms to the south-east<sup>4</sup>, Speckled Antshrike *Xenornis setifrons* and Baudó Oropendola *Psarocolius cassini*.

There appears to be little immediate concern over the integrity of the park. A wide buffer zone exists on three sides, which would also benefit from

formal protection. The park has a permanent resident staff and the Colombian Ministry of the Environment, since its recent formation, has established a laudable record in the field of environmental protection. On the negative side, access problems make it difficult for the small team of staff to provide effective protection, small-scale forest clearance and tourist developments threaten the northern and southern park boundaries near the coast, and there is some local hunting pressure. Ensenada de Utría and its surroundings represent one of the most important areas of remaining biodiversity in the Chocó biogeographic region, and as such its continued protection is of considerable priority.

#### References

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