

A dream come true: seeing Andean Laniisoma in Ecuador

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¡Qué bestia! It took well-known tour leader Dušan Brinkhuizen nearly two decades of birding in Ecuador to finally come face-to-face with the elusive Andean Laniisoma. Here he presents a detailed account of his quest to find one of the rarest birds of the East Andean foothills.

The Andean Laniisoma *Laniisoma buckleyi*, sometimes referred to as Buckley's Mourner, has long held a mythical status in my mind. Many birders may be more familiar with names like Shrike-like Cotinga or Elegant Mourner, which suggest that this passerine's taxonomy is almost as mysterious as the bird itself. For instance, the name Shrike-like Cotinga has been considered misleading by some (e.g., Snow 1982, Ridgely &

Greenfield 2001, Kirwan & Green 2011)—a view with which I concur as the bird neither possesses evident shrike-like features nor belongs to the Cotingidae. In the past it has even been considered a member of the manakin family (Pipridae) but currently *Laniisoma* is placed in the family Tityridae, with its closest relatives thought to be *Laniocera* mourners and the *Schiffornis* assemblage.



Figs 1–5 and 9 were taken near the Cavernas de la Anaconda, east of Wakami in the Cordillera de Cutucú, Morona–Santiago, Ecuador.

1 Andean Laniisoma *Laniisoma buckleyi*, August 2023 (Dušan M. Brinkhuizen: [sapayoa.com](https://www.sapayoa.com) [rockjumperbirding.com](https://www.rockjumperbirding.com) [@dusan.brinkhuizen](https://www.instagram.com/dusan.brinkhuizen)).