

## Evidence of communal roosting by Bicoloured Conebill *Conirostrum bicolor* and Mangrove Cuckoo *Coccyzus minor* in mangroves at Cayenne, French Guiana

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De nombreuses espèces d'oiseaux forment des dortoirs, mono ou plurispécifiques. Cependant, ce comportement a été décrit chez relativement peu d'espèces néotropicales. Le Conirostre bicolor *Conirostrum bicolor* est un passereau spécialiste des mangroves littorales dans les régions côtières de son aire de répartition, très commun le long de la côte guyanaise. Un autre spécialiste des mangroves, le Coulicou manioc *Coccyzus minor*, est vraisemblablement répandu sur la côte guyanaise mais rarement observé. Nous décrivons ici pour la première fois la formation d'un dortoir plurispécifique rassemblant plus d'un millier de Conirostres bicolores, ainsi que des Coulicous manioc, dans la mangrove littorale à Cayenne, Guyane française.

Bicoloured Conebill *Conirostrum bicolor* is a small Neotropical species in the family Thraupidae. It has a discontinuous distribution along the Atlantic coast of South America (nominate subspecies *C. bicolor bicolor*) and inland along the Amazon River and some of its tributaries, as far west as Ecuador (subspecies *C. bicolor minus*)<sup>10</sup>. The nominate subspecies is strictly associated with mangroves, and its range is restricted to coastal areas of northern South America, mainly from Colombia to the mouth of the Amazon River and Maranhão state in Brazil, locally south to São Paulo<sup>10</sup>. In French Guiana, it is a very common resident of coastal mangroves, distributed along the entire coast<sup>7</sup>.

Mangrove Cuckoo *Coccyzus minor* ranges from southern Florida (USA) and northern Mexico south through the West Indies and Central America to the Guianas<sup>11</sup>. Although it can live in a variety of coastal habitats across its range<sup>11</sup>, in French Guiana it is a strict mangrove-specialist. It is considered fairly common along the coast of French Guiana, but encounters with this secretive bird are scarce<sup>7</sup>.

Many birds are known to have communal roosts, both single-species and multispecies, gathering at dusk or, in the case of nocturnal species, during the day<sup>1,5,15,17</sup>. Dense and secure areas of suitable habitat are generally selected as a roost site and sometimes used regularly over a season, including over consecutive years<sup>5,14</sup>. Although a widespread phenomenon, communal roosting is described for only a few Neotropical species<sup>13,15,17</sup> other than parrots<sup>3,4,8,12,14</sup>. Hilty<sup>9</sup> mentions communal roosting only in one species of tanager (Thraupidae), Crimson-backed Tanager *Ramphocelus dimidiatus*, but this behaviour can be observed in other tanager species (pers. obs.). The citizen-based database Faune-Guyane<sup>7</sup> contains unpublished data on communal roosts for at least 100 species, including five

members of the Thraupidae: Bicoloured Conebill, Silver-beaked Tanager *Ramphocelus carbo*, Paradise Tanager *Tangara chilensis*, Blue-grey Tanager *Thraupis episcopus* and Palm Tanager *Thraupis palmarum*.

The scarcity of information regarding roosting habits of mangrove-dwelling passerines and allies is probably partly due to the difficulties of studying birds in mangrove habitats. To our knowledge, communal roosting has not yet been published for Bicoloured Conebill or Mangrove Cuckoo. In this paper, we report on a mixed-species communal roost of these species observed at Cayenne, French Guiana.

### Methods

From February 2013 to July 2014, a communal roost of Bicoloured Conebill was monitored at Cayenne, French Guiana, aiming to estimate the number of birds involved, and to determine daily or seasonal variations. The roost was located in mangrove forest at Pointe Saint-François, a rocky point marking the eastern side of the mouth of the Cayenne River (c.04°56'25''N, 52°20'19''W). Although the roost site itself was not visited, its location was assumed because the width of the mangrove forest was greatest there and did not extend much further east (Fig. 1).

Observations were made from the paved jetty of the old harbour of Cayenne, which cuts through the mangrove forest. Birds moving through the forest on the way to the purported roost, coming from the Cayenne River, concentrated at this point due to the reduced width of the forest there. Counts of birds crossing the 10-m-wide jetty were carried out by one or two observers over consecutive periods of 15 minutes, from 17h00 up to nightfall (18h45–19h00, depending on the season). Observations were made with binoculars or with the naked eye, since