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Observations on feeding and habitat use by Crimson Fruitcrow *Haematoderus militaris* in Amazonian Brazil

Crimson Fruitcrow *Haematoderus militaris* is a spectacular South American cotinga that occurs in north-east Amazonia and isolated areas in Rondônia and Roraima states⁹. It is poorly known and hard to see^{2,10}. The few available natural history data come mainly from observations at canopy towers near Manaus^{2,10}. The species inhabits the canopy of *terra firme*, frequently perching in tall emergents². It was observed nesting in a large tree at the edge of a 100-ha forest fragment in a ranch of the Biological Dynamics of Forest Fragments Project (BDFFP), near continuous primary forest¹⁰. Diet is poorly known. Until recently, all records involved

insects, e.g. orthopterans, cicadas and coleopterans^{2,3,5,10}, the last found in stomach contents. Though long suspected to consume fruit, this was only recently confirmed. In 2001 Ottema⁶ observed a male feeding on *Cecropia sciadophylla* fruits in Surinam, and it has been observed feeding on *Cecropia* fruits in central Amazonia (M. Cohn-Haft pers. comm.). Sick⁸ observed *H. militaris* with other cotingas in fruiting trees, but did not identify the trees nor explicitly state that he observed it taking fruit.

Fazenda Esteio, a BDFFP reserve c.65 km north of Manaus, Brazil (02°24'S 59°51'W), presents a mosaic of *terra firme* primary forest fragments, second growth and pastures surrounded by a primary forest matrix. For a detailed description see <http://pdbff.inpa.gov.br/area3p.html>. On 5 and 6 August 2003, at 08h50 and 09h00 respectively, I observed a male Crimson Fruitcrow at a distance of 50 m in second-growth forest, dominated by *Cecropia*, which had been cleared for pasture in 1980 but soon abandoned⁴. On both occasions the bird perched on *Bellucia* sp. (Melastomataceae) branches c.1.8 m above ground, feeding on its floral buds, which were picked whilst the bird was perched (gleaning⁷) and were entirely consumed (gulping⁷). I was able to observe the bird, which was silent, for just a few minutes and because of the dense understorey I could not observe more details.

Some primary forest birds in this region use tall second growth for foraging¹. Whether such behaviour is common for *H. militaris* is unknown. Even if the case, it should not be concluded that the species can survive in disturbed habitats, as it reportedly disappeared due to road construction and urban expansion in Pará, eastern Brazilian Amazonia⁸.

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A nest of Planalto Tyrannulet *Phyllomyias fasciatus* in Brazil

On 14 January 2006 we found a nest of Planalto Tyrannulet *Phyllomyias fasciatus* at Fazenda do Engenho, near the Reserva Particular do Patrimônio Natural do Caraça (20°05'S 43°28'W), Santa Bárbara municipality, Minas Gerais, Brazil, at c.800 m (see Vasconcelos & Melo Júnior⁵). This appears to be the second documented nest of *P. fasciatus*, the other being from Gramado, Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil, on 23 November 1983^{1,3}. In both cases, birds are from the range of the race *P. f. brevirostris*³.

The nest was c.15 m above ground in the open crown of a 20-m leguminous tree beside a dirt road traversing second-growth woodland in abandoned pastures. In external appearance and shape at least, it was apparently similar to that described by Belton¹, especially the outside covered with large flakes of lichen (Fig. 1).

However, it was not in a four-way crotch of the outer branches like the Rio Grande do Sul nest, but in a simple fork, a low cup supported at its base by the thickest and least inclined of the two branches (the low cup/base type of Simon & Pacheco⁴). Its location was revealed by one of two adults, which had been singing in the proximity, eventually flying in and apparently starting to incubate.

We, and Lauro Palú, observed the pair from 09h00–10h00 on 16 January and photographed the nest through a telescope. Our confidence in the identification of the species is based on its distinctive voice, which LPG tape-recorded; recordings are deposited at Arquivo Sonoro Elias Coelho, Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro. In addition, we had good views of the birds and their behaviour away from the nest.

The birds occasionally sang whilst on the nest, as noted also by Belton¹. Once during our observations, singing by both members of the pair, one of which was on the nest, preceded the approach of the other bird to incubate. Though it has been assumed that both sexes participate in incubation², direct evidence of this was apparently lacking: Belton¹ only remarked that a male, which lacked a brood patch, was found incubating four hours after the female had been collected, which might have been interpreted as an exceptional behaviour owing to the disappearance of the female.

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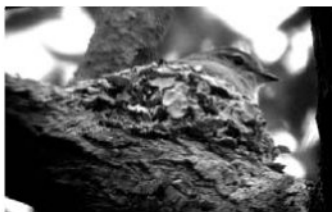


Figure 1. Adult Planalto Tyrannulet *Phyllomyias fasciatus* on the nest, Fazenda do Engenho, Serra do Caraça, Minas Gerais, Brazil, 16 January 2006 (L. P. Gonzaga)

Engenho and for his companionship there. Guy Kirwan and Marcelo Vasconcelos made suggestions concerning the manuscript. Luiz Claudio Marigo improved the quality of Fig. 1.

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