

Trans-Andean population of the Large-headed Flatbill *Ramphotricon megacephala*

by Gary R. Graves

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On 8 April 1947, M. A. Carriker, Jr. collected a flycatcher at Simiti (7°58'N, 73°57'W), Department of Bolívar, in the Magdalena Valley of northern Colombia. When Carriker's collection (see Graves, in press) was deposited in the National Museum of Natural History (USNM), Smithsonian Institution, the unique specimen could not be assigned to any known taxon, due in part to the lack of comparative material. Recent comparison of the specimen (USNM 398196, ♂, testes enlarged) with the material at the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH) indicates that it represents an unusually pale example, and first trans-Andean record, of the Large-headed Flatbill *Ramphotricon megacephala*, a little known species with a large discontinuous distribution in western Amazonia (Traylor 1979, Parker 1984).

This discovery prompted a brief review of the taxonomy of subspecies of *R. megacephala*, namely *boliviana*, *venezuelensis* and *pectoralis* from the upper drainages of the Amazon and Orinoco Rivers, and the examination of nearly all the specimens mentioned in their original descriptions (Zimmer 1939, Phelps & Gilliard 1941, Zimmer & Phelps 1947).

Although quite distinct from the nominate *megacephala* of southeastern Brazil and adjacent Paraguay and Argentina (Traylor 1979), the Amazonian populations exhibit, at best, only minor inter-population variation in plumage colour and size. For example, the holotype of *R. m. pectoralis* from the Territory of Amazonas, Venezuela, is practically indistinguishable in plumage from the type series of *R. m. boliviana* collected in the Department of Cochabamba, Bolivia. The holotype of *R. m. venezuelensis* from northwestern Venezuela is paler than *R. m. pectoralis*, but 3, more southerly, specimens from the Río Duda, Department of Meta, Colombia, are intermediate in plumage colour. Considering the small numbers of specimens available for study, possible variation due to plumage wear, age, and sex, and the great distances between scattered specimen localities, variation among those populations may be purely clinal.

Compared to the aforementioned series, the Simiti specimen (measurements in mm: wing chord, 63.9; tail, 55.1; culmen from base, 14.5; tarsus, 16.7) is distinctively paler. It is closest in appearance to the holotype of *venezuelensis*, but differs from that specimen and others in having the feathers above the nostrils yellower, and a less dusky throat and pectoral band. This suggests that the Simiti bird represents a resident, perhaps subspecifically distinct, population. However, more specimens from both sides of the Andes in Colombia and from Venezuela are needed before the taxonomy can adequately be determined.

Parker (1984) reported that *R. megacephala* is closely associated with bamboo in western Amazonia. Carriker noted in his field catalogue that

he hunted in a low swampy area vegetated mostly with bamboo on the morning the Simiti specimen was collected.

SPECIMENS EXAMINED

Ramphotrigon m. megacephala: **Argentina**. Misiones: Arroyo Urugua-i (AMNH, 6 ♂♂, 4 ♀♀). **Brazil**. Minas Gerais: Serra do Caparaó (AMNH, 1 ♂).

R. m. boliviana: **Bolivia**. Cochabamba: Río Chimoré (AMNH, 2 ♂♂ (including holotype), 1 ♀).

R. m. venezuelensis: **Venezuela**. Barinas: Ciudad Bolívar (AMNH, 1 ♂—holotype).

R. m. pectoralis: **Venezuela**. Amazonas: Sierra Parima (AMNH, 1 ♀—holotype). **Colombia**. Meta: Río Duda (AMNH, 3 ♂♂).

Subspecies not determined: **Colombia**: Bolívar: Simiti (USNM, 1 ♂).

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Distributional data on some non-passerine species in Bolivia

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New Departmental records of some non-passerine species in Bolivia are given here, following on Remsen *et al.* (1985). Also for those species already known from Dpts. of the country, new information is given on species found in habitats other than their usual ones. Specimens collected are deposited in the collection of the Estacion Biologica Doñana (EBD).