

SEVENTEEN BIRD SPECIES NEW TO PERU FROM THE PAMPAS DE HEATH

GARY L. GRAHAM, GARY R. GRAVES, THOMAS S. SCHULENBERG,
AND JOHN P. O'NEILL

Museum of Zoology, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70893 USA

ABSTRACT.—This paper presents notes on 17 species of birds that have not previously been reported for Peru, all of which were collected or observed on a large isolated grassland surrounded by tropical forest in southeastern Peru. Received 16 August 1978, accepted 26 December 1979.

FROM 16 June until 11 July 1977 we investigated the avifauna of the Pampas de Heath, a seasonally flooded grassland, and the forest adjacent to the Río Heath, on the Peru-Bolivia border, Department of Madre de Dios, Peru (approximately 12°53'S, 68°54'W). We worked both the forest near the river and the pampas, which occur as several islands of grassland surrounded by forest, 2–5 km west of the Río Heath (Fig. 1). These pampas are the most northwestern incursion of the more extensive grasslands found east of the river in Bolivia. During this study, we collected or observed 17 species of birds that represent first records for Peru. That we were able to add this many species to the Peruvian avifauna is not surprising, inasmuch as the birds of this grassland habitat had not previously been investigated. The purpose of this paper is to report these new records.

Specimens reported herein are from the Department of Madre de Dios; the Pampas de Heath, ca. 50 km by river south of Puerto Pardo (a small town located at the mouth of the Río Heath), has an elevation of 160 m. The area of pampa grassland was estimated to be about 50 km² in size and is characterized by very humid soils and an almost continuous expanse of grasses and sedges broken only by small (less than 100 m²) groves of trees. Palms (*Mauritia*) occur in these groves and as scattered individual trees in parts of the grassland. Termite nests (1–2 m tall) and associated shrubs, sedges, and terrestrial bromeliads are common throughout the pampas. Spring-fed pools are found in various places, and streams drain the scattered small marshes. Gallery forest extends into the grassland along these small streams and is continuous with the surrounding rain forest. Parts of the pampas are burned annually during the dry season by Huarayo Indians, but the grasses grow taller than 1 m in the unburned areas. More detailed information on the pampa habitats is available in Hoffmann et al. (1976). These authors report that the pampas are flooded from October until June.

All specimens are deposited in the Louisiana State University Museum of Zoology, Baton Rouge, Louisiana (LSUMZ catalog numbers are in parentheses). Subspecific determinations have been made from literature descriptions and with the use of comparative material at LSUMZ and the American Museum of Natural History.

Red-winged Tinamou, *Rhynchotus rufescens*.—This species was observed in newly burned and short-grass areas where two females (84273, 84274) were collected and at least 10 other birds were seen. The frequently heard call was a clear whistled "weeut tu tu," with the first syllable ascending and the last two shorter but of the same pitch as the last portion of the first. Bond and Meyer de Schauensee (1943) recorded this species from the low savanna country near Chatarona on the Río Beni, Bolivia. Meyer de Schauensee (1966, 1970) includes in the distribution of this species the area from the Beni in Bolivia south to the Province of Buenos Aires, Argentina and north to central and eastern Brazil. Our specimens are referable to the subspecies *R. r. rufescens* as reviewed by Blake (1977).

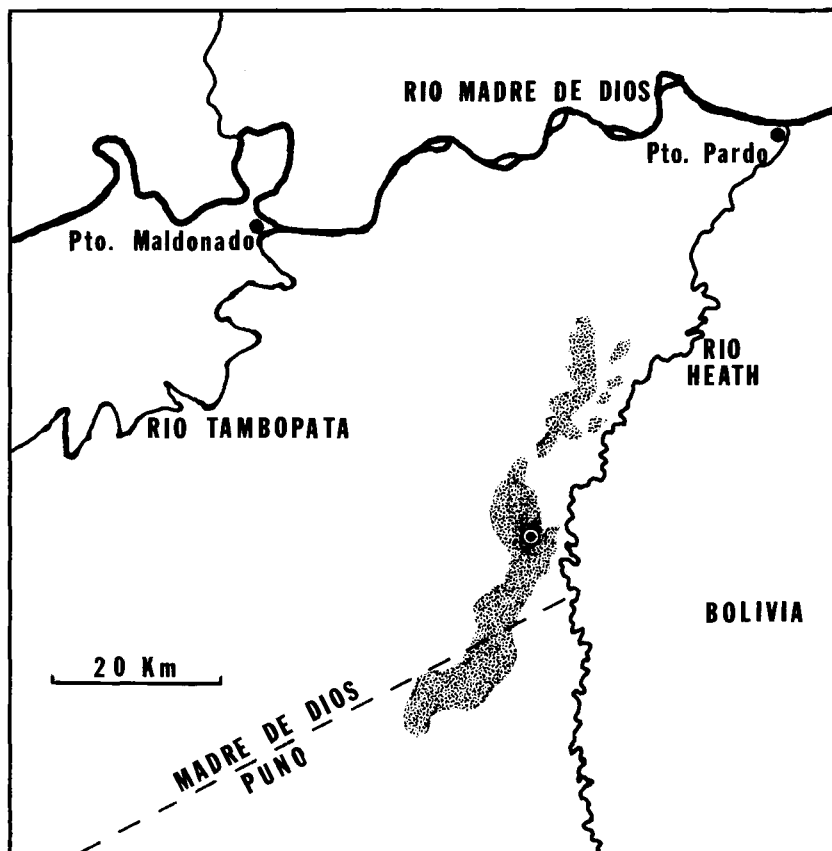


Fig. 1. Section of southeastern Peru and adjacent Bolivia. Stippled areas represent the Pampas de Heath. Specimens reported in this paper were collected in the vicinity of the circled dot (after Hoffmann et al. 1976).

White-tailed Hawk, *Buteo albicaudatus*.—On 20 June and 4 July, single individuals of this species were observed by Schulenberg and Graves soaring over the pampas. This hawk is similar to the light-phase *Buteo polyosoma* but differs in having a cinnamon rufous shoulder patch (noted during both observations). In eastern Peru, *B. polyosoma* does not occur in lowland areas, whereas *albicaudatus*, having a wide distribution in the eastern lowlands of South America outside of Amazonia, is to be expected on the pampas. The nearest record is an unpublished observation by J. V. Remsen, Jr. (pers. comm.) of a pair near Estancia Inglaterra, Department of Beni, Bolivia on 24 December 1976.

White-necked Crane, *Porzana albicollis*.—Two males (84314, 84315) collected in tall-grass marshy areas of the pampas are most similar to the subspecies *albicollis*, based on measurements of the flattened wing given by Blake (1977) and Ripley (1977). Our specimens differ from their descriptions of this subspecies in having a paler gray undersurface and olivaceous margins on the dorsal feathers, characters that typify *P. a. olivacea*. Bond and Meyer de Schauensee (1943) report specimens of *P. a. albicollis* from Chatarona in the Department of Beni, Bolivia. Ripley (1977) gives the distribution of this species as South America, from northern Colombia east to French Guiana and from eastern Brazil west to eastern Bolivia and south to northwestern Argentina. One of our specimens was collected 1 m above ground in a small (2–3 m) shrub, where it had landed after being flushed. This species was seen on at least seven other occasions, usually walking into large clumps of grass or at the edges of small marshes. Once the call was recognized, this species was noted daily.

Ocellated Crane, *Coturnicops* (= *Micropygia*) *schomburgkii*.—A male of this secretive rail was caught on 23 June in a rodent snap trap baited with oatmeal. The trap had been placed in a guinea pig (*Cavia* sp.) runway through the tall grass near an extension of the forest into the pampas. Although single

individuals were flushed on three other occasions, continued trapping failed to produce additional specimens. Ripley (1977) gives the South American range of this species as locally distributed east of the Andes and south to Bolivia and southeastern Brazil (excluding the Amazon Basin). Our specimen (84311) agrees with *C. s. chapmani* in the flat wing measurements given by Blake (1977) but differs by having an olive-brown dorsal coloration and pronounced spotting on the rump and upper tail coverts—characters used to distinguish *C. s. schomburgkii* (Blake 1977, Ripley 1977). The specimen reported by Blake as questionably belonging to *C. s. schomburgkii* from the Department of Beni, Bolivia appears to be the nearest record of this species to the Pampas de Heath. Additional specimens are needed from this area to determine subspecific relationships of this population.

Red-shouldered Macaw, *Ara nobilis*.—This species was reported from Bolivia for the first time by J. V. Remsen, Jr. and R. S. Ripley (MS). Inasmuch as they regularly recorded this small macaw as Estancia Inglaterra, Department of Beni during November–December 1976, its presence on the Peruvian pampas and in the adjacent forest is not surprising. It was seen in pairs and small flocks, usually near the pampas in the morning, apparently having roosted in some of the trees there. These birds foraged in the rain forest between the grassland and the Río Heath, where a male was collected from a flock of 12 in the crown of a fruiting tree. The specimen (84332) is referable to the subspecies *longipennis*, which Forshaw (1973) believes should be synonymized with *cumanensis*.

Peach-fronted Parakeet, *Aratinga aurea*.—This species was common in the pampas, where flocks of 2–8 individuals were seen daily flying overhead or perched in trees. A female (84338) was collected as it and another bird were leaving a hole in a termite nest 3.5 m above ground in a palm tree. Four additional specimens (84335, ♀; 84336, ♂; 84337, ♀; and 84338, ♂) also were taken. All specimens are referable to *A. a. aurea*, which also has been recorded from near Reyes, Department of Beni, Bolivia (Gyldenstolpe 1945, Bond and Meyer de Schauensee 1943). This parakeet occurs in Brazil, mostly south of the Amazon, through the east and central parts of Bolivia, Paraguay, and the northwest corner of Argentina (Forshaw 1973).

White-tailed Goldenthrout, *Polytmus guainumbi*.—The two males of the four specimens we collected (84423, ♀; 84424, ♂, 84425, ♂, and 84426, ♀) apparently are not adults, as they have incompletely developed gorgets. All specimens were netted at the edges of the pampas near gallery forest, where the smaller *Polytmus theresiae* was also common. Our specimens are probably *P. g. thaumantias*, which was reported by Bond and Meyer de Schauensee (1943) from the "llanos" in Santa Cruz, Bolivia. In December 1976, J. V. Remsen, Jr. (pers. comm.) observed this species at Estancia Inglaterra, Department of Beni, Bolivia, the closest record of occurrence of this species to our Peruvian locality. The range of this hummingbird is from eastern Colombia to the Guianas and south to Bolivia, Paraguay, and northwest Argentina (Short 1975).

Toco Toucan, *Ramphastos toco*.—On 5 July, Eley and Schulenberg observed a pair flying from a palm grove toward the forest edge. The enormous, brilliant orange bill with black spot near the tip, noted by both observers, distinguishes this species from all other *Ramphastos*. One of our Peruvian assistants, Reyes Rivera A., twice reported seeing Toco Toucans at the forest edge. This toucan is generally distributed in gallery forests, savannas, and cultivated areas of the Guianas and eastern Brazil to Bolivia and northwestern Argentina (Meyer de Schauensee 1966, 1970). The Bolivian specimens from near Reyes, Department of Beni, reported by Bond and Meyer de Schauensee (1943) are the nearest records to Peru.

White Woodpecker, *Melanerpes candidus*.—This distinctive species was observed only twice. Schulenberg observed a pair on 24 June in an open area of the pampas where only scattered small trees occur. The woodpeckers were wary and moved toward a more thickly wooded area when approached. On 6 July, Graham saw a pair flying among scattered palms, where they would briefly land and move about the upper portions of the trunks. On both occasions, the distinctive black and white pattern of this woodpecker was easily recognized. Short (1975) gives the area from the lower Amazon River and Maranhão through Brazil to northern and central Bolivia, Paraguay, and northern Argentina as the range of this species. Seven specimens from the Department of Beni, Bolivia (Gyldenstolpe 1945) appear to be the closest records to our Peruvian locality.

Black Manakin, *Xenopipo atronitens*.—A single specimen, a subadult male (85049), was netted in a *Heliconia* sp. patch at the forest edge. There is apparently no published record of this monotypic species in Peru or Bolivia, but it is known to occur from eastern Colombia east through the Guianas and through Amazonian Brazil south to Mato Grosso (Meyer de Schauensee 1966, 1970).

Gray Monjita, *Xolmis cinerea*.—Individuals or pairs of this species often were observed perched at the top of shrubs or small trees on the pampas. They were wary and often flew long distances when disturbed. We collected four specimens (85061, ♀; 85062, ♀; 85063, ♂; and 8555, ♂), which can be assigned to the subspecies *pepoaza*. This species occurs from the mouth of the Amazon through Amazonia to

northern Bolivia and south to Uruguay and northern Argentina (Short 1975). The occurrence of this flycatcher on the Pampas de Heath is not surprising in light of the specimens reported from the swampy grasslands of the upper Río Beni, Bolivia (Gyldenstolpe 1945).

Yellow-browed Tyrant, *Satrapa icterophrys*.—O'Neill twice observed single individuals of this monotypic species between 30 June and 2 July. The birds were seen about 6 m above the ground inside the canopy of small trees along the edge of forest extending into the pampas. This species is found from Chatarona in the Department of Beni, Bolivia (Bond and Meyer de Schauensee 1942) and central Brazil south to Paraguay and Uruguay to northern Argentina (Short 1975).

Chopi Blackbird, *Gnorimopsar chopi*.—We daily observed or heard loose flocks of 5–15 individuals moving across the pampas or perched in scattered trees. We collected four specimens (85733, ♀; 85734, ♀; 85735, ♀; and 86678, ♂), which are most similar to *G. c. sulcirostris*. The range of this species is from Maranhão through the campos of Brazil west to northern Bolivia, then along the Andes to northwest Argentina and east to Uruguay (Short 1975). This blackbird was recorded by both Gyldenstolpe (1945) and Bond and Meyer de Schauensee (1942) from near Reyes, Department of Beni, Bolivia.

Plumbeous Seedeater, *Sporophila plumbea*.—This species occurs in open habitats from northeastern Colombia east to the Guianas and south through eastern and central Brazil to the Bolivian Department of Beni, Paraguay, and northeast Argentina (Meyer de Schauensee 1966, 1970). Our only record is a pair seen moving among the tops of trees in an isolated palm grove. One of these birds was collected by Graham (85648, ♂) and, although in heavy molt, can be assigned to the southern race, *S. p. plumbea*.

Grassland Sparrow, *Ammodramus humeralis*.—This species occurs in grasslands and clearings throughout much of South America: east of the Andes from Colombia to the Guianas, the eastern and southern parts of Brazil, west to north-central Bolivia, and south to the Río Negro, Argentina. Our record extends the area of sympatry of this species and its allospecies, *A. aurifrons*, to include southeastern Peru. In our study areas, these two species were apparently not syntopic; *A. humeralis* occurred exclusively in open pampa grassland, while *A. aurifrons* was found only in grassy habitats along the banks of the Río Heath. We saw and heard singing *A. humeralis* frequently each day and collected five specimens (85624–85628, 4 ♂♂ and 1 sex ?), which are referable on geographical grounds to *A. h. xanthornus*, the subspecies recorded from the Department of Beni, Bolivia (Gyldenstolpe 1945, Bond and Meyer de Schauensee 1942).

Black-masked Finch, *Coryphaspiza melanotis*.—This beautiful finch was common on the pampas and was recorded daily as individuals or in pairs. Birds usually were seen as they flushed from near termite mounds or while singing from the tops of tall grass and shrubbery. The song consists of three short, thin whistles: "swee swee sezit." The first two syllables are uttered in rapid succession and the last note follows a 2-s pause.

One (85691) of the eight birds collected (85691–85696, 85993, and 86638; 5 ♂♂, 3 ?) was a subadult of unknown sex. Our birds probably belong to the nominate subspecies *C. m. melanotis*, which has been found in the Department of Beni, Bolivia (Gyldenstolpe 1945). The species occurs from the mouth of the Amazon through south-central Brazil to Bolivia, Paraguay, and northeast Argentina (Short 1975).

Wedge-tailed Grass-Finch, *Emberizoides herbicola*.—This distinctive finch was one of the most common birds on the pampas and was recorded daily as individuals, in pairs, or in small flocks of four–six individuals. Grass-finches were seen in all habitats of the pampas except gallery forest. The range of the species includes Middle America and South America from Colombia east to the Guianas and northern and eastern Brazil south to Bolivia, Paraguay, and the northeast corner of Argentina (Short 1975). Our eleven specimens (85639–85646, 85992, 86626, and 86632; 6 ♂♂, 2 ♀♀, 3 ?) are assigned to *E. h. herbicola*, the common form around Reyes in the Bolivian Department of Beni (Gyldenstolpe 1945).

One of our specimens (85644, ♂ ?) was a juvenile with heavy molt, and another was collected as it sang from the top of a grass bunch as though on a territory. The latter bird was also molting.

It is noteworthy that none of the 17 species reported here as new for Peru was unexpected. Sixteen of these have also been recorded from the Department of Beni, Bolivia (*Xenopipo atronitens* is the exception). This area is largely pampa grassland with patches of forest scattered throughout and with rain forest found near the rivers (Gyldenstolpe 1945). Its similarity and proximity to the Pampas de Heath, combined with the fact that the Peruvian pampas are completely flooded during the rainy season, indicate the possibility that at least some of the ground-dwelling birds of the Pampas de Heath may migrate from the more extensive drier Bolivian pampas

during the dry season. We have no evidence to support this speculation, nor do we know the species composition of the Peruvian pampas during the wet season (October–May).

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We gratefully acknowledge the continued financial support of the LSUMZ Peruvian field work by John S. McIlhenny of Baton Rouge, Louisiana. We thank Marc Dourojeanni R., Carlos Ponce P., Antonio Brack E., Richard Bustamante, and Susana Moller-H. of the Dirección General Forestal y de Fauna, Ministerio de Agricultura, Lima, Peru for their interest in our work and for the issuance of scientific collecting permits. Hernando de Macedo R. and Ramon Ferreyra of the Museo de Historia Natural "Javier Prado" also were helpful in many ways. We also thank Helen and Arturo Koenig, Manuel A. Plenge, and Gustavo del Solar for their interest and help in making the 1977 Peruvian expedition a success. Without the reliable assistance of our associates, Manuel Sanchez S., Reyes Rivera A., and Marcos Leon, our study of the Pampas de Heath would have been much more difficult.

John Farrand, Jr., of the American Museum of Natural History, New York, was very helpful during our trips there to identify and compare specimens. J. W. Eley, J. V. Remsen, Jr., and Theodore A. Parker, III each provided valuable assistance and information. Subspecific identification of material reported herein was carried out in part by Parker and Schulenberg when they were at the AMNH in 1979, with the assistance of monies from the Frank M. Chapman Memorial Fund of that institution. We also gratefully acknowledge the continued cooperation of Aero Peru.

LITERATURE CITED

- BLAKE, E. R. 1977. Manual of neotropical birds, Vol. 1. Chicago, Univ. Chicago Press.
- BOND, J., & R. MEYER DE SCHAUNSEE. 1942. The birds of Bolivia, part 1. Proc. Acad. Nat. Sci. Philadelphia 94: 307–391.
- , & ———. 1943. The birds of Bolivia, part 2. Proc. Acad. Nat. Sci. Philadelphia 95: 167–221.
- FORSYTH, J. M. 1973. Parrots of the world. New York, Doubleday & Co., Inc.
- GLYDENSTOLPE, N. 1945. A contribution to the ornithology of northern Bolivia. K. Suen. Vetenskapssakad. Handl. 23: 1–300.
- HOFFMANN, R. K., C. F. PONCE DEL PRADO, & K. C. OTTE. 1976. Registro de dos nuevas especies de mamíferos para el Perú, *Odocoileus dichotomus* (Illiger-1811) y *Chrysocyon brachyurus* (Illiger-1811), con notas sobre su habitat. Revista Forestal del Perú 6: 61–81.
- MEYER DE SCHAUNSEE, R. 1966. The species of birds of South America and their distribution. Narbeth, Pennsylvania, Livingston Publ. Co.
- . 1970. A guide to the birds of South America. Wynnewood, Pennsylvania, Livingston Publ. Co.
- RIPLEY, S. D. 1977. Rails of the world. Boston, Massachusetts, David R. Godine.
- SHORT, L. L. 1975. A zoogeographical analysis of the South American Chaco avifauna. Bull. Amer. Mus. Nat. Hist. 154: 165–352.