

## First record of Todd's Nightjar *Caprimulgus heterurus* in Guyana

by Christopher M. Milensky, Fiona A. Wilkinson & Ashley P. Holland

Received 22 September 2008

Todd's Nightjar *Caprimulgus heterurus* has recently been reinstated as a full species by the AOU's South American Checklist Committee (Remsen *et al.* 2008). The species was originally described by Todd (1915), but later grouped with its sister taxon, Little Nightjar *Caprimulgus parvulus*, without justification by Peters (1940) and since then its status has been debated (Davis 1978, Hardy 1983, Cleere 1998, Hilty 2003). Vocalisations of the two species distinctly differ (Fig. 1). In addition, *C. heterurus* breeds in the grassland / forest edge across northern Colombia and north-central Venezuela, whilst *C. parvulus* is unknown north of the Amazon River. Nightjars are easier to locate when they vocalise frequently, primarily in the breeding season, but nesting information and status at other times of year in general is lacking.

Here we present a new country record of *C. heterurus* from Guyana on 1 September 2006. This record is significant because it is the first for the expansive Gran Sabana / Roraima-Rupununi savanna region of northern South America. At 20.35 h at the village of Yupukari in the northern Rupununi savanna (03°39'36"N, 59°20'52"W), a single nightjar was seen and sound-recorded by APH using a Sony MZ-NF810 Minidisc and Sennheiser ME66 microphone. The recording is archived at the Macaulay Library of Natural Sounds, Cornell, Ithaca, NY (MLNS 138135). The bird was perched on a bush in savanna bordering dense gallery forest along the Rupununi River. What was presumably the same bird was heard singing at the same location on 2 and 4 September. Each time it sang intermittently for c.1 hour. This range extension demonstrates the need for further research, not only for this species but also for nightjars in general. More data will be necessary to determine if *C. heterurus* breeds in this savanna region of the Guianas or is merely an irregular visitor.

### Acknowledgements

We would like to recognise Cindy Lawrence for initially hearing the bird and bringing it to our attention. Mark Robbins encouraged publication and offered suggestions on the manuscript. Assistance in archiving the recording at the Macaulay Library was provided by Jesse Barry and Greg Budney. Miguel Lentino, Steve Hilty and Brian O'Shea provided useful information while researching this record. This is number 142 in the Smithsonian's Biological Diversity of the Guiana Shield Program publication series.

### References:

- Cleere, N. 1998. *Nightjars: a guide to the nightjars, nighthawks, and their relatives*. Yale Univ. Press, New Haven, CT.
- Davis, L. I. 1978. Acoustic evidence of relationship in Caprimulginae, *Pan-Amer. Stud.* 1: 22-57.
- Hardy, J. W. 1983. Review update. *Wilson Bull.* 95: 503.
- Hilty, S. L. 2003. *Birds of Venezuela*. Princeton Univ. Press.

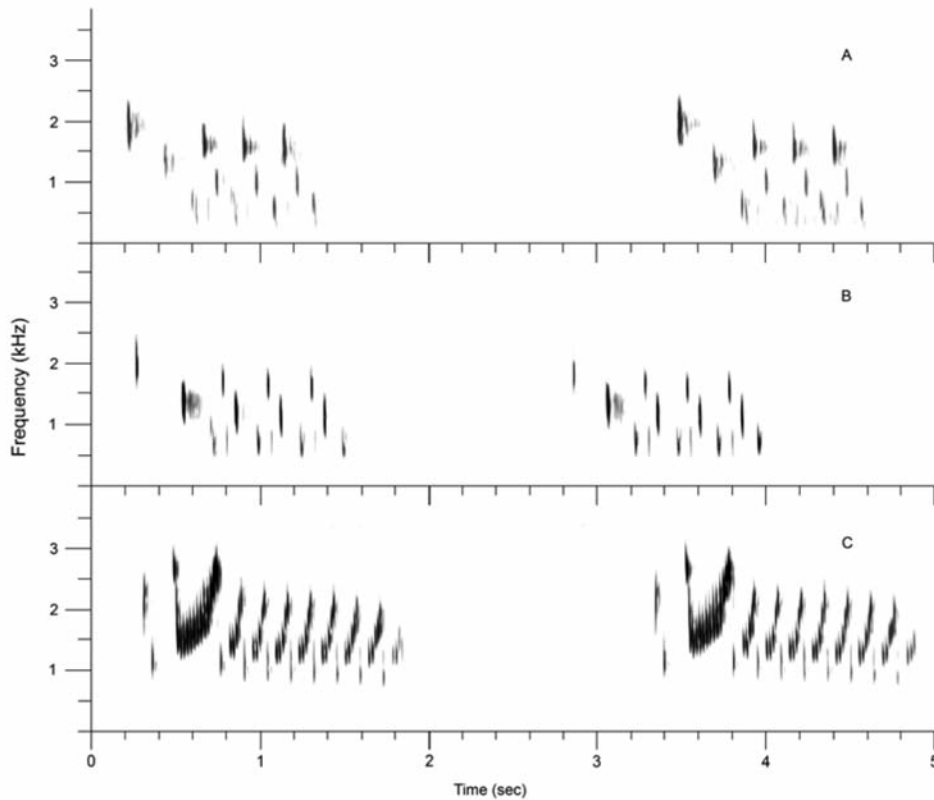


Figure 1. (A) Todd's Nightjar *Caprimulgus heterurus*, village of Yupukari, Rupununi savanna, Guyana, 1 September 2006 (MLNS 138135). (B) *C. heterurus*, near Petare, Venezuela, April 1961 (recorded by P. Schwartz, and published by Ranft & Cleere 1998). (C) Little Nightjar *C. parvulus*, Arcoverde, Pernambuco, Brazil, December 1973 (recorded by C. Chappuis, and published by Ranft & Cleere 1998). Sonograms created using Raven 1.2 (Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Bioacoustics Research Program).

Peters, J. L. 1940. *Check-list of birds of the world*, vol. 4. Harvard Univ. Press, Cambridge, MA.

Ranft, R. & Cleere, N. 1998. *A sound guide to the nightjars and related nightbirds*. CDs. Pica Press, Robertsbridge & The British Library National Sound Archive, London.

Remsen, J. V., Jaramillo, A., Nores, M., Pacheco, J. F., Robbins, M. B., Schulenberg, T. S., Stiles, F. G., Silva, J. M. C., Stotz, D. F. & Zimmer, K. J. 2008. A classification of the bird species of South America. [www.museum.lsu.edu/~Remsen/SACCBaseline.html](http://www.museum.lsu.edu/~Remsen/SACCBaseline.html) (accessed 8 September 2008)

Schwartz, P. 1968. Notes on two Neotropical nightjars, *Caprimulgus anthonyi* and *C. parvulus*. *Condor* 70: 223–227.

Addresses: Christopher M. Milensky, Division of Birds, Smithsonian Institution, P.O. Box 37012, Washington DC 20013–7012, USA, e-mail: milenskyc@si.edu. Fiona A. Wilkinson, USGS Patuxent Wildlife Research Center, National Museum of Natural History, P.O. Box 37012, Washington DC 20013–7012, USA. Ashley P. Holland, Karanambu Ranch, North Rupununi, Region 9, Guyana.

© British Ornithologists' Club 2009