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**A NEW BIRD FOR CHILE: THE RUFOUS-WEBBED TYRANT
Polioxolmis rufipennis, POTENTIALLY BREEDING WITHIN
THE PROVINCE OF PARINACOTA, TARAPACÁ REGION**

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Abstract. The first records of the Rufous-webbed Tyrant (*Polioxolmis rufipennis*) for Chile are reported from *Polylepis* woodlands at the Tarapacá Region. Indirect evidence on the reproduction of the species in the country is presented.

The Rufous-webbed Tyrant *Polioxolmis rufipennis* is a fluvicoline flycatcher with a very low population density (Fjeldsá 1990). This species has undergone several taxonomic shifts, originally described in *Muscisaxicola* by Taczanowski in 1874, subsequently included in the genus *Cnemarchus* by Hellmayr (1927), then *Myiotheretes* or *Xolmis* (Meyer de Schauensee 1966, Vuilleumier 1971, Traylor 1977). More recently Lanyon (1986) established the new genus *Polioxolmis* for this flycatcher, basing his decision on skull and syrinx morphology. Two subspecies with a clear-cut geographic differentiation, *P. r. rufipennis* and *P. r. bolivianus*, are described by Fjeldsá (1990).

P. rufipennis is considered by Fjeldsá & Kessler (1996) to be endemic to high altitudes and to be strongly associated with *Polylepis* woodlands or *Puya raimondii*. The tyrant was thought to be limited in distribution to Perú, Bolivia, and Argentina at elevations between 3,100 and 4,400 m. (Parker *et al.* 1996), with only 12 reports from Argentina (Mazar Barnett *et al.* 1998). According to Fjeldsá (1990) the southernmost record in Peru is a sighting by R. A. Hughes at Cruz de Condor,

Arequipa, and the Bolivian specimen collected nearest to Chile is from Carangas, near Nevado Sajama. Vuilleumier (1994) considered *P. rufipennis* to be rare and localized; he saw "about five" birds near Sajama in 1967 and collected one. Ridgely & Tudor (1994) considered a range extension to extreme northern Chile to be possible.

I saw *P. rufipennis* on six dates in 1998 within Chilean territory, including one observation of an adult feeding a recently-fledged young. The first five sightings of this unmistakable bird occurred on 22 and 31 January, 26 February, 23 March, and 3 April, in or near a small copse of *Polylepis tarapacana* located in the altiplano of the province of Parinacota approximately 24 km SE of the Salar de Surire, along route A-395 within the Reserva Nacional Las Vicuñas. This *Polylepis* copse nestles on the SE face of cerro Queñua-collo at 4,405 m, is adjacent to a rocky/grassy incline, and lies above a gradually sloping expanse of tola/grassland which grades into cushion bogs near the village of Mucomucone. The widely-spaced *P. tarapacana* range from small bushes to trees approximately 4 m in height, providing a park-like habitat previ-

ously noted by Fjeldså (1990) and Vuilleumier (1994). The sixth sighting of *P. rufipennis* took place on 19 September at 4,080 m at Taipicollo in Parque Nacional Volcán Isluga, province of Iquique, approximately 25 km SSE of the Queñuacollo site. Because so little has been published about *P. rufipennis*, some details of plumage and behavior are included in Appendix I.

Vuilleumier (1994) reported that at two nests in *Puya raimondii* both male and female *Polioxolmis* [= *Myiotheretes*] *rufipennis* fed two nestlings. At Queñuacollo, the tyrant was not observed while attending a nest, and no more than one adult and one fledgling were seen at a time. Because of the similarity in plumage between the sexes and because of the furtive behavior of the species while in *Polylepis*, there is a possibility that I was actually seeing two different adult birds, with one of them always out of sight.

I did not see the 10–12 m high hovering/gliding display of *P. rufipennis* described vividly by Vuilleumier (1994) and by Mazar Barnett *et al.* (1998), possibly because my observations took place after nesting. The only foraging method I observed was the "perch-to-ground sally" described by Fitzpatrick (1980). The tyrant would perch on the uppermost, dry twigs of a tola bush (height to approx. 60cm) for 2–5 minutes, then swoop down to ground with spread wings and tail. It remained out of sight for about 5–10 seconds presumably catching some prey, then hopped up to the top of another bush, thus working its way across the field. Similar foraging behavior was reported for this species in Argentina by Mazar Barnett *et al.* (1998). Occasionally the Queñuacollo tyrant used the perch-to-ground sally within the *Polylepis* woods, gliding from the top of a tree to the ground and back up.

The Queñuacollo copse was used by *P. rufipennis* for at least four months in 1998, and probably used also in December for the nesting activities that preceded my observations. Because the species was not spotted in the Queñuacollo *Polylepis* in May, August, or September, and because it was found 325 m lower in September, it may be that *P. rufipennis* descends for the colder austral winter months, using the *Polylepis* grove for about half of the year.

To my knowledge the distribution of the remnant patches of Chile's two species of *Polylepis* have not yet been mapped. However in several places in northern Chile these sparse

woodlands are contiguous with those in Bolivia (pers. ob.). In 1999 four members of UNORCH and I saw one *P. rufipennis* foraging by the hot springs at 4,410 m in Parque Nacional Sajama in Bolivia, about 105 km to the NNE of Queñuacollo and only a few kilometers E of the Chilean border, near Hito XVI, Paso de Casiri.

According to Parker *et al.* (1996) *Polioxolmis* [= *Myiotheretes*] *rufipennis* has a "medium" sensitivity to human disturbance, and merits only a "medium" priority for both conservation and research. The tyrant is not listed as endangered, vulnerable, or even data-deficient by BirdLife International (2000). The Queñuacollo *Polylepis* woodland lies within the Reserva Nacional Las Vicuñas and is, in theory, protected. However firewood cutting continues and a major project is under way to construct a tourist highway connecting Cuzco, Peru, with San Pedro de Atacama, Chile, which will pass right next to Queñuacollo. If the existing dirt road should be haphazardly widened the *Polylepis* could be needlessly destroyed.

Following a suggestion by J. Aguirre, I propose the common name "Mero de Ala Canela" for *P. rufipennis*.

I thank J. Swire for first noticing *P. rufipennis* on our trip to Queñuacollo in January 1998, and I thank the Western Foundation of Vertebrate Zoology in California for providing photocopies of ornithological literature. I am grateful to M. Marín for comments on two drafts of this note. M. Rubio, J. Aguirre, J. C. Johow, and F. Johow provided good company on the expedition to Parque Nacional Sajama.

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- Appendix I. Observations of *Polioxolmis rufipennis* in the provinces of Parinacota and Iquique in 1998.
- Queñuacollo, Reserva Nacional Las Vicuñas, province of Parinacota:
- 22 January: Jonathan Swire and I watched one *P. rufipennis* for half an hour while it perched in *Polylepis* grooming, and later foraged in tola/grassland. Bill and legs black; plumage medium gray above, including the head; somewhat lighter gray under, grading to a grayish-white lower belly and vent. Stripes under the chin were not evident. Wide panel along base of remiges salmon colored. Tail salmon with dark gray terminal band and white margins to outer rectrices. Gray central rectrices formed a V against the extensive salmon in spread tail. The rufous color in the wings and tail appeared to be paler and less orange than depicted on both plates XLIII in Fjeldså & Krabbe (1990) and 39 in Ridgely & Tudor (1994). In the field the rufous was closer to a washed out mixture of "Color 5, Flesh", and "Color 6, Salmon" in Smithe (1975). When perched, the bird appeared uniformly gray except for the underside of the folded tail which was dull salmon. Given the overall gray of the body of the bird, and that the plumage did not show any buff or brown tinge, probably the subspecies was *P. r. rufipennis*, the same taxon assigned by Fjeldså (1990) to the museum skin from Carangas in W Oruro, Bolivia.



Figure 1. *Polioptila rufipennis* at Queñuacollo, Reserva Nacional Las Vicuñas, Province of Parinacota, January 31 1998.

31 January: *P. rufipennis* was seen briefly four times from 9:30 to 11:00, always in *Polylepis*. About 1 hour before dark it began to forage in the adjacent tola/grassland. A photograph of the tyrant perched in *Polylepis* was obtained (Figure 1).

26 February: Just at dawn one *P. rufipennis* was seen perched in *Polylepis* and later seen foraging in tola/grassland.

23 March: *P. rufipennis* foraged in tola and flew six times directly back to the woodland, where I located a recently-fledged individual perched on a dead *Polylepis* bush. This adult-sized young bird had prominent orange rictal flanges and a similarly-colored gape. No down was evident. At 9:30 an adult arrived with a small, black, insect-like item in its beak. When the fledgling raised its head to accept the food its wings hung loosely open,

the tail was held about half open, and both the wings and the tail quivered. The fledgling emitted a constant soft sound probably heard not more than 15 m away. The plumage of the two birds was similar although the adult had an indistinct, grizzled, white supraloral while the fledgling's head was smooth bluish-gray. The fledgling's wings and tail were patterned in rufous similar to the adult's, but the rectrices of the young bird had dark gray shafts, and it appeared that the gray terminal bar in the tail was narrower than that of the adult.

3 April: From 15:08 to 18:30 *P. rufipennis* was not found in the copse or the tola/grassland. At 18:35 when it was starting to get dark, two birds of this species approached, foraging through the tola/grassland towards the *Polylepis* copse. Twice the two birds landed on the top of the same bush for a few seconds, very

close to each other or even touching, but it was too dark to see if food was being passed.

7 May, 22 August, 18 September: *P. rufipennis* was not sighted in or near the Queñuacollo *Polylepis* site.

Taipicollo, Parque Nacional Volcán Isluga, province of Iquique

19 September: At 14:00 a single adult *P. rufipennis* was seen perched in tola adjacent to a narrow cushion bog bordered by a rocky cliff. The bird suddenly glided across the bog and had a brief altercation with an *Agriornis montana* which immediately flew off. *P. rufipennis* also flew away upon the arrival of two llama herders and their dogs.

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PRESENCIA DEL PIDENCITO (*Laterallus jamaicensis*) EN VALDIVIA, CHILE

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Abstract. Using playback, the presence of a resident population of Black Rails (*Laterallus jamaicensis*) near Valdivia, southern Chile, is confirmed.

Con excepción de las taguas (*Fulica*) y tagüitas (*Gallinula*) que ocupan ambientes acuáticos más abiertos, la mayoría de los ráli-dos (e.g. Géneros *Rallus* y *Laterallus*) viven en zonas pantanosas y pasan la mayor parte del tiempo escondidos en la densa vegetación (Taylor & van Perlo, 1999). Por su naturaleza evasiva, muchas de estas especies han sido escasamente estudiadas y el conocimiento sobre aspectos biológicos y ecológicos básicos es casi nulo (Stiles & Levey 1988). Al respecto, varios autores coinciden en que entre los ráli-dos neotropicales menos conocidos se encuentra el género *Laterallus* (Taylor & van Perlo 1999, Ripley 1977 en Stiles & Levey 1988).

De los tres pidenes residentes en Chile, *Laterallus jamaicensis* (Pidencito) es la especie que presenta la más amplia distribución geográfica. Se reconocen cinco subespecies distribuidas localmente en Estados Unidos, Centroamérica y el Oeste Sudamericano (Taylor & van Perlo 1999). *L. j. salinasi*, la subespecie que vive en el Sur de Perú, Oeste de Argentina y Chile es considerada como Rara (Del Hoyo *et al.* 1996) y en nuestro país está incluida en la categoría Inadecuadamente Co-

nocida (Glade 1987, Rottmann & López-Calleja 1992).

En Chile se distribuye entre el Valle del Huasco (Atacama) y Angol (provincia de Malleco) (Araya & Millie 1996). Sin embargo, esta distribución aparentemente amplia se basa en unos pocos registros históricos, muchos de ellos realizados entre 1855 y 1950 (Goodall *et al.* 1951, Hellmayr 1932, Housse 1945, Reed 1941). A pesar de que existen algunos registros más recientes de la presencia de *L. jamaicensis* en la zona central, éstos no han sido publicados. Así, para Chile, durante 25 años no hubo ningún registro, hasta que un ejemplar fue encontrado muerto en octubre de 1994 (Del Hoyo *et al.* 1996).

A fines de diciembre del año 1999 escuché y grabé la vocalización de un individuo macho de *L. jamaicensis* en los alrededores de Valdivia. A partir de estas grabaciones y con el propósito de determinar la presencia de la especie en otras áreas, desde enero del 2000 hasta septiembre del 2002 realicé censos estacionales en diferentes zonas húmedas de la provincia de Valdivia. Mediante estos registros acústicos he podido compro-