

Chestnut-bellied Guan *Penelope ochrogaster* in the Araguaia Valley, Tocantins, Brazil

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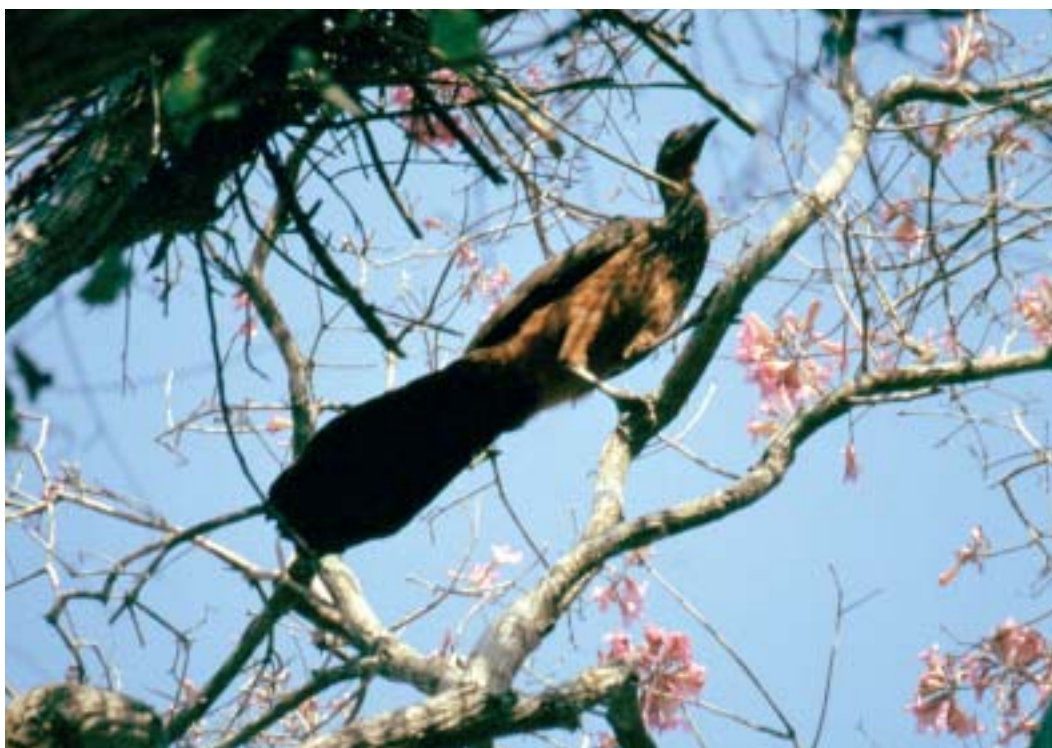
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Jacus-de-barriga-vermelha *Penelope ochrogaster* foram observados em duas localidades no oeste do estado do Tocantins, entre Lagoa da Confusão e Marianópolis, já no vale do rio Araguaia. A espécie ocupa florestas semelhantes àquelas onde é encontrado no Pantanal de Poconé, Mato Grosso, e não parece ser rara, embora a abertura de estradas e maior ocupação humana sejam ameaças ao seu habitat na região.

Chestnut-bellied Guan *Penelope ochrogaster* is globally threatened (Vulnerable)¹ and known from Minas Gerais (Pirapora, on the right bank of the rio São Francisco), Goiás (Monte Alegre de Goiás and Aruanã), Tocantins (Ilha do Bananal), Mato Grosso (several localities from São Domingos and Cáceres south to Porto Jofre) and Mato Grosso do Sul (rio Piquiri)^{1,2}. It has not been recorded recently from either Minas Gerais or Goiás, while records from Tocantins date from the early 1990s¹. The northern Pantanal of Mato Grosso, especially the Poconé region, is the source of most recent records and appears to be the species' stronghold^{1–3}.

While undertaking a faunal inventory in western Tocantins, in August 2002, I observed Chestnut-bellied Guan in two localities along the unpaved road between Lagoa da Confusão and Marianópolis, an area dominated by cerrado, riverine and semi-deciduous forests and large expanses of seasonally flooded areas, not unlike the northern Pantanal of Mato Grosso. This area is within the Araguaia Valley, a region subject to strong flooding cycles of the rio Araguaia.

On 14 August, I observed three together in logged semi-deciduous forest at Fazenda Trindade (10°37'S 49°41'W). They flew away calling loudly



Chestnut-bellied Guan *Penelope ochrogaster*, northern Pantanal, Brazil (Fábio Olmos)

upon noticing me. Another was found in the same forest next day, as well as a tail feather, now in the Museu de Zoologia da Universidade de São Paulo (MZUSP 75494). The only other cracids seen here were Bare-faced Curassow *Crax fasciolata*, whilst Rusty-margined Guan *Penelope supercilialis* was commonly observed crossing the road in areas of denser cerrado.

On 17 August, a pair of Chestnut-bellied Guan was observed feeding on the fruits of a *Vismia* tree in pasture beside semi-deciduous forest grading into riverine forest of the rio do Côco (09°58'S 49°35'W), a large tributary of the Araguaia. They were alarmed by my approach and eventually flew across the flooded buri-tizal bordering the forest.

Chestnut-bellied Guan has also been recorded in Cantão State Park⁴, a 90,017-ha reserve between the rio do Côco and the Araguaia. This, and my records, suggest it may be widespread in the Araguaia Valley of Tocantins wherever there is suitable semi-deciduous and riverine forest, and as common as it is in the Pantanal of Mato Grosso. It would be worth searching for the species along the rio Araguaia, including its western bank, where it was historically known from Aruanã.

Its discovery in the Araguaia Valley, in habitat similar to those in Mato Grosso, suggests an association with semi-deciduous forests on higher areas of floodplains. These forests, in addition to being selectively logged, are commonly cleared for agriculture. Unless legal requirements for the protection of riverine forests and other habitats are respected, the building of new roads in Tocantins may permit more intensive land use and increased pressure on the species' habitat.

It should be mentioned that Karajá and Javaé Indians invaded Araguaia National Park, where the species was noted in the 1990s, in 2001. The park formerly included the entire Ilha do Bananal but, in 1971, 1.5 million ha were granted to the Karajá and Javaé, reducing the park to just 500,000 ha. Now, the c.3,000 Indians are demanding the rest of the area, as their territory has been badly damaged by fires, overhunting and logging, principally because they rent their land for extensive cattle raising. This is just one of the ongoing disputes in Brazil between conservationists and Indian populations.

References

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