

Rediscovery of Golden-crowned Manakin *Lepidotrix vilasboasi*

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O Dançador-de-coroa-dourada *Lepidotrix* (antes *Pipra*) *vilasboasi*, antes conhecido apenas de três exemplares coletados em 1957 no alto rio Cururu, Pará, foi reencontrado próximo à cidade de Novo Progresso, na margem esquerda do rio Jamanxim, cerca de 200 km a nordeste da localidade-tipo. Esta redescoberta levanta dúvidas sobre a sugestão de que este táxon é um híbrido de *L. nattereri* e *L. iris*. A região de Novo Progresso está sob intensa pressão de ocupação por madeireiros e criadores de gado, o que deverá ser exacerbado pela pavimentação da BR 163 (Cuiabá–Santarém).

Golden-crowned Manakin *Lepidotrix* (formerly *Pipra*) *vilasboasi* is an enigmatic species known only from three adult males, collected by Helmut Sick and Raimundo Costa in July 1957 near a small left bank tributary at the headwaters of the rio Cururu, a tributary at the right margin of the rio Teles Pires^{7,8}. The holotype is in the Museu Nacional Rio de Janeiro (MNRJ), while the other specimens were sent to the American Museum of Natural History (New York) and the Museum für Naturkunde Alexander Humboldt (Berlin). The species is considered Vulnerable¹.

The species' name honours the Villas-Boas brothers, explorers well regarded for their work on behalf of central Brazilian indigenous peoples, especially the creation of the famous Parque Indígena do Xingu, one of the best-known Indian territories in Brazil. The last of the Villas-Boas, Orlando, died in December 2002.

This manakin is clearly related to Snow-capped Manakin *Lepidotrix nattereri* but is distinguished by its yellow (with a faint green tinge) crown and greenish-yellow uppertail-coverts and lower back in males. *L. nattereri* males have white crowns and lower backs. Female *L. vilasboasi* is unknown with certainty but two individuals (both at MNRJ) described as *Pipra obscura*⁷ are now believed to be a female and a juvenile male of the former species, despite their larger size.

The range of *L. vilasboasi* has been subject to some confusion, as there are two rios Cururu along the right bank of the rio Teles Pires. The map presented by Sick⁷ shows that the specimens were collected near the headwaters of the northwest-flowing rio Cururu-ri, in Munduruku Indian territory (c.07 30'S 56 45'W), not the well-known and southwest-flowing rio Cururu-açu, further south. It has been suggested that *L. vilasboasi* occurs in a belt between the rios Tapajós and Xingu, but this is hypothetical¹. The lack of recent records and the seemingly restricted range between that of *L. nattereri gracilis* (much of Rondônia and the headwaters of the Tapajós, Teles Pires and Xingu) and Opal-crowned Manakin *L. iris eucephala* (east bank of the lower Tapajós)⁶ prompted the suggestion that *vilasboasi* is a hybrid between the two³.

In May 2002, we conducted an ornithological survey of areas along the Cuiabá–Santarém road (BR163), an earthen strip running from northern Mato Grosso to the right bank of the Amazon in Pará. One of the study sites was Consórcio Jamunxim (07 09'S 55 29'W), a colonisation project on the west bank of the rio Jamunxim (or Jmauxin), near Novo Progresso, Pará. The area has been subdivided among colonists, who have cleared the local *terra firme* forest for pastures. Most properties also selectively log their remnant forests, with much resultant damage to the ecosystem but also creating logging roads permitting access to these areas. In more intact nearby forests the dominant tree species are *Dodecastigma integrifolium* (Euphorbiaceae), *Bertholletia excelsa* (Lecythidaceae), *Protium opacum* and *P. spruceanum* (Burseraceae), and *Pouteria jariensis* (Sapotaceae).

Early in the morning of 14 May, JFP observed an adult male *L. vilasboasi* perched near the ground on a fallen branch beside a dirt road with some vehicle traffic. It was visible for a few seconds, permitting observation of the distinctive yellow crown, before disappearing within the dense edge vegetation. Later that morning, we observed a female manakin that may have been a *L. vilasboasi* feeding in an undergrowth shrub together with a female White-crowned Manakin *Pipra pipra*.

Knowing that manakin males tend to remain in a limited area, we set a line of mist-nets at the site that afternoon and opened them next morning at dawn. At 09h00 the four nets held five Pectoral Sparrow *Arremon taciturnus*, a Pará Foliage-gleaner *Automolus paraensis*⁹, a male Black-faced Antbird *Myrmoborus myotherinus* and an adult male *L. vilasboasi* (Fig. 1), all apparently part of a mixed-species flock. Measurements of the manakin, taken by FO, were: culmen 7.8 mm, wing 51.6 mm, tarsus 13.1 mm and tail 31.4 mm. The manakin was then photographed and released.

The same measurements from the holotype, also taken by FO, were: 7.7 mm, 50.3 mm, 12.2 mm and 27.7 mm. The Novo Progresso bird agrees well with the holotype, both having narrow bills akin to *L. nattereri* and contrasting with the more robust bill



Figure 1. Adult male Golden-crowned Manakin *Lepidotrix vilasboasi*, Consórcio Jamunxim, Novo Progresso, southern Pará, Brazil (Fábio Olmos)



Figure 2. Left: lateral views of the holotype of Golden-crowned Manakin *Lepidotrix vilasboasi* (top; MNRJ 28742), Snow-capped Manakin *L. nattereri* (centre; MNRJ 43342 from Porto Velho) and Opal-crowned Manakin *L. iris* (bottom; MNRJ 31983 from Belém). Right: dorsal view of the same individuals of *L. vilasboasi* (left), *P. iris* (centre) and *P. nattereri* (right). All are adult males. *L. iris* has a more robust bill compared to either *L. nattereri* or *L. vilasboasi*, and the opalescent cap is very distinctive (Fábio Olmos)

of *L. iris*. It is difficult to envisage how *L. vilasboasi* could represent an intermediate between *L. nattereri* and *L. iris* both in coloration (see Fig. 2) and general structure.

Our record, c.200 km north-east of the type-locality of Alto Cururu⁷, suggests *L. vilasboasi* occurs in the intervening area between the Jamunxim and Teles Pires. Further south, we found only Snow-capped Manakin at a locality we surveyed atop the northern border of the Serra do Cachimbo (09°03'S 54°52'W), suggesting the southern limit of the range

L. vilasboasi may lie along the north edge of the Serra do Cachimbo. This larger range, and the apparent absence of either *L. iris* or *L. nattereri* at the localities where *L. vilasboasi* occurs, cast further doubt on the hybrid theory.

The type locality of *L. vilasboasi* is within the 400,000-ha area belonging to the Brazilian air force at Serra do Cachimbo. Access restrictions and the exclusion of colonists and loggers have resulted in this being one of the best-conserved areas in southern Pará. However, numbers of colonists are increasing in the region of our discovery, and the population of Novo Progresso leapt from 15,562 in 1996 to 24,948 in 2000 (an increase of 12.5% per year). Approximately 27% are less than 15 years old. Population growth, caused both by immigration

and local births, has resulted in increased logging in response to the demand for land for cattle, which are fast eliminating or damaging the forests. Current plans to pave the BR163 will surely bring even greater habitat destruction, as occurred in Rondônia following the paving of the BR362^{4,5}, unless strong government action is taken.

The rio Jamunxim has been considered a priority region for the creation of new protected areas in the Brazilian Amazon². We hope our discovery will highlight the need to conserve the Jamunxim region and assure the future not only of *L. vilasboasi* but also of the entire ecosystem of which it is a part.

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