

First nest descriptions for Hoffmann's Woodcreeper *Dendrocolaptes hoffmannsi* and Snow-capped Manakin *Lepidothrix nattereri*

During recent field work in the Madeira–Tapajós interfluvium, in southern Amazonian Brazil, we found the nests of two poorly known birds virtually or wholly endemic to this interfluvium, for both of which published data on their breeding biology were practically non-existent.

Hoffmann's Woodcreeper

Dendrocolaptes hoffmannsi

Hoffmann's Woodcreeper is a poorly known endemic of southern Amazonian Brazil, where it is restricted to *terra firme* forest within the Madeira–Tapajós interfluvium, and occurs as far south as Rondônia, and south-west Mato Grosso, e.g. in Parque Estadual Igarapés-Juruena⁶. During ornithological field work in the environs of Borba (04°24'S 59°35'W), on the right bank of the rio Madeira, Amazonas, in September 2009, together with H. Shirihai we found the first nest of this species to be reported in the literature.

The nest was discovered in the afternoon of 20 September, at the edge of a one-year-old man-made agricultural clearing of c.250 × 200 m within *terra firme* forest with a general canopy height of c.30 m. The nesting tree was dead, and had been burnt once, and was 25 m tall with a base of 2.1 m diameter. The cavity was sited in the tree's main trunk, c.18 m above ground (at which point the trunk had an estimated radius of c.1.5 m diameter), where a hollow had been formed due to a broken-off bough; the cavity was half-covered by an abandoned termitarium. From our position, the cavity was estimated to be c.50 cm high by 20 cm wide, and had two broken sticks jutting out. At 17h25, one bird was observed collecting eight pieces of bark from a dead tree c.50 m from the nest; the bark flakes were estimated to be 2.0–3.5 cm long and were taken into the cavity. The same behaviour was observed twice, but although two birds (a presumed

pair) were present in the area, only one was seen carrying nesting material. The tree from which we saw the bird take the bark had a bare area c.60 cm long by 20 cm wide, from where the bark had been apparently repeatedly stripped.

The only previously published breeding data involve a juvenile, with a yellow gape, observed with an adult on 16 March 2005 at Pousada Rio Roosevelt, also in Amazonas¹⁰, a juvenile female collected by W. Hoffmanns at Allianca, on the rio Madeira, Amazonas, in early November². Additional unpublished data, based on specimens held at the Museu Paraense Emílio Goeldi (MPEG), Belém, and examined by AW, involve a male from the rio Aripuanã, Mato Grosso, in late September (MPEG 31041; presumably the source mentioned by Marantz *et al.*⁹), single males from Santarém and Itaituba, Pará, in late October (MPEG 66116 and 58468) and Cachoeira Nazaré, Rondônia, also in late October (MPEG 39631), as well as a female from Juruti, Pará, in late September (MPEG 56622), all of which were in breeding condition. These data, with dates from late September to early November, fit the same timeframe as our late September nest building record, and confirm that *D. hoffmannsi* breeds during the late dry season and into the early wet season. Amongst the five species of *Dendrocolaptes* recognised by Marantz *et al.*⁵, materials used to line the nest appear to be mentioned for only Northern Barred Woodcreeper *D. sanctihomae* (leaves and bark) and Planalto Woodcreeper *D. p. platyrostris* (bark, also collected in nearby trees). In some genera, there appears to be quite some variation in such materials, e.g. for *Dendrocincla*⁵, meaning that further data for *Dendrocolaptes* might reveal less uniformity in this character than currently exists, but Cockle & Bodrati¹ in their extensive study of *Dendrocolaptes p. platyrostris* in north-east Argentina found that bark from a variety of live

trees was brought to all 17 studied nests, by both sexes, during the laying and incubation periods. The nest we found also appears to be considerably higher above the ground than any nest previously described for the genus *Dendrocolaptes*¹.

Snow-capped Manakin

Lepidothrix nattereri

L. nattereri is almost endemic to southern Amazonian Brazil, where it basically occupies the Madeira–Tapajós interfluvium, although it reaches just west of the former river's major tributary, the Guaporé, into Santa Cruz, Bolivia, in the far south of its range, and it crosses the Tapajós into the Serra do Cachimbo, in south-west Pará⁹. While leading a bird tour to the Parque Nacional da Amazônia (or Tapajós National Park), Pará, south of Itaituba, on the morning of 8 December 2008, AW & JCT located a Snow-capped Manakin nest (Fig. 1). The nest was found beside a narrow path through *terra firme* forest after the female had flushed from it. The nest itself was 1 m off the trail in very open understorey, sited in a small sapling (unidentified) c.65 cm tall. In the following we follow the standard methodology for describing the nests of Neotropical birds⁸. The nest was a neatly woven elementary standard cup / lateral, slung between two horizontal branches off the trunk (similar to a lateral fork) and woven tightly to these branches by spider webs along the nest's rim (Fig. 2). The walls of the cup were constructed of some larger dead palm leaves lined with thin straw-coloured strips of bark, and the entire nest was neatly bound together with spider webs. The outer walls and base of the nest had several large dead leaves also attached using spider webs and below the cup there was a 'tail' formed by a dead leaf 6.5–7.0 cm long, which disguised the nest's shape (Fig. 1). The nest was 4.5–5.0 cm from the sapling's trunk, halfway up at c.40 cm, and was 50 cm above the ground (due to it being on a slight slope) (Fig. 3). The incubating female was



Figure 1. Incubating female Snow-capped Manakin *Lepidothrix nattereri*, Parque Nacional da Amazônia, Pará, 8 December 2008 (Andrew Whittaker)



Figure 2. Nest and eggs of Snow-capped Manakin *Lepidothrix nattereri*, Parque Nacional da Amazônia, Pará, 8 December 2008 (Andrew Whittaker)



Figure 3. Nest site of Snow-capped Manakin *Lepidothrix nattereri*, Parque Nacional da Amazônia, Pará, 8 December 2008 (Andrew Whittaker)

very obvious on top of this tiny nest and sat very tight, perhaps suggesting that the eggs were close to hatching. The eggs (Fig. 2) were pinkish with irregular brown blotching more concentrated at the larger end, forming a ring, with only tiny brown flecks over the remainder of the shells.

This first nest description for *L. nattereri* almost exactly mirrors both the location and architecture of the other three species in the genus whose nests have been

described, namely Blue-crowned Manakin *L. coronata*, Golden-crowned Manakin *L. vilasboasi* and White-fronted Manakin *L. serena*^{4,7,9}. However, moss was used in some nests of *L. coronata velutina* from Costa Rica⁹ and very infrequently in nests of *L. c. coronata* in eastern Ecuador⁴, as well as in the nests of *L. serena*, but was absent from this *L. nattereri* nest. Nests of two of the other *Lepidothrix* species were sited higher above the ground than the nest described here, but the same was not true for *L. c. coronata* in eastern Ecuador. In eastern Ecuador, White-crowned Manakin *Dixiphia pipra coracina* was the only species noted to occasionally incorporate a 'tail' of dead leaves below the nest⁴, but this feature is relatively common to the nests of many manakin species⁹.

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