

New record of Swallow-tailed Nightjar *Uropsalis segmentata* for Pichincha province and the west slope of the Andes in Ecuador

Mark R. Welford

Entre el 8 y 14 de agosto de 1997 se encontraron tres machos de *Uropsalis segmentata* cerca de la Reserva Bellavista, en la vieja ruta Nono–Mindo, bajo los 2.300 m, y una pareja fue encontrada a 1.950 m. Estos son los primeros registros en la ladera oeste de los Andes en Ecuador, y abajo de los niveles altitudinales registrados para la especie. Es posible que el incremento de la deforestación y los aludes que aparecen en consecuencia hayan vuelto al área de la provincia de Pichincha más atractiva para la especie, aunque el aumento en la actividad de observadores en el área también puede explicar esta extensión de distribución.

Introduction

The Swallow-tailed Nightjar *Uropsalis segmentata* is relatively scarce throughout its range in South America, at 2,300–3,600 m¹, and is generally found higher than Lyre-tailed Nightjar *Uropsalis lyra*^{1,2}. Hilty & Brown² note that it has been recorded on “open or shrubby slopes, forest edge or treeline clearings, and paramo”, and may sit on roadsides at night. It often forages along forest edges¹. The species was, until recently, unknown on the west slope of the Andes in Ecuador, although there are now specimen records from Carchi, a sighting from Imbabura, and several sightings from Azuay³. On 8–14 August 1997, while conducting a preliminary biogeographic survey of cloudforest at the Bellavista Reserve west of Quito (Pichincha province, Ecuador), near km 62 on the old Mindo–Nono road, I located three male *U. segmentata*. Their rising and descending call, described by Fjeldså & Krabbe¹ as rrrrrrrrrrrrrrrr ensured identification. All three males were below 2,300 m, and a pair was observed foraging at 1,950 m. This was the first documented record of the species from Pichincha province.

The first male was located by its call at c.18h25 on 8 August c.700 m north of Bellavista Lodge along the Mindo–Nono road, opposite a ranch owned by Niels Krabbe. It called for 6–7 minutes from dense foliage before flying through the open canopy directly above the dirt road. The next morning, in poor light, a male and female were again heard and observed at km 63 on the Mindo–Nono road between 05h30–05h45. Later on 9 August from 18h26, both birds were observed in the same area. The male was first heard, then observed, spreading its long tail-streamers in flight over the Mindo road and 50–100 m away over a nearby valley. It was then mostly observed foraging silently among emer-

gent vegetation with only occasional wing-flaps over an old, stabilised landslide. This was covered with a dense ground-cover of shrubs and bamboo, and scattered young emergent (5–7 m high) trees immediately adjacent to the road where the landslide terminated. Each foraging flight lasted c.25–30 seconds whereupon the male would return to a particularly densely foliated area c.80 m up the hillside and commence calling for 2–3 minutes before returning to its feeding flights. A female with its diagnostic deeply forked tail was observed as the light faded (c.18h40) on 9 August; at one point it was chased by the male for c.25 seconds. Both ceased foraging and calling at 18h45. Thereafter, the male and occasionally the female were located each day for the duration of my stay, both in the morning and evening, at this same location.

A second male was also heard calling on 9 August, 1.5 km north of Bellavista Lodge at the junction of the Nanegalito and Mindo roads by a cattle pasture. The elevation here is c.2,300 m. The road reaches another 100 m to the highest elevation on the ridge crest. In addition, up to three Common Potoo *Nyctibius griseus*, and single Mottled *Ciccaba virgata* and Rufescent Screech-owls *Otus ingens* were also heard at this location throughout my stay. In all three cases these species were previously known from lower elevations, namely up to 1,900, 2,000 and 1,700 m.

On 11 August, a male was first heard calling at 18h25 and later seen flying with a female along the Mindo–Nono road just above the village of Tandyapa but below Bellavista Lodge. Both were at 1,950 m. The female approached as close as 3 m. They were found in an area degraded by logging, quarrying and cattle pasture. Only a few remnants of cloudforest remain here.

Conclusion

The Bellavista Reserve is typical of this area's landscape. Approximately 40% of the reserve is primary montane cloudforest, 40% has been selectively logged for timber, and the remaining 20% is pasture with some regenerating forest. Because of the area's proximity to Quito (30 km distant) the forest is being rapidly clear-cut to create cattle pasture. As a result, the landscape is composed of pristine cloudforest, selectively cut forest, forest edge, managed forest, road, cow pasture, and cow pasture with living fence posts. At present, an increasing percentage is open with few dense stands of bromeliad-covered trees. Most trees appear as emergents, surrounded by a dense ground-cover consisting of bamboo, vines, shrubs or grasses. Furthermore, landslides are common—the area is dotted with landslide scars, providing ample suitable habitat for *U. segmentata*. Although the nearest areas previously considered suitable for *U. segmentata* are volcanoes east of Quito—c.60 km distant—the area immediately surrounding Bellavista is now a mosaic of forest patches with many open areas. It is possible that recent deforestation and increased landslide activity may have made this area more suitable for *U. segmentata*, or increased ornithological activity has made it more

likely that it would be found. This latter possibility is feasible as, prior to Bellavista lodge opening in 1993, no tourist facilities existed on the Mindo–Nono road between Quito and Mindo.

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References

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Mark R. Welford

Department of Geology & Geography, Georgia Southern University, P.O.Box 9149, Statesboro, GA 30460, USA.