

Birds of the lowland forest of Cerros del Sira, central Peru

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Se realizó un inventario ornitológico en un sector desconocido de la Cordillera El Sira (Provincia de Oxapampa, Departamento de Cerro de Pasco) en la selva baja central del Perú (210–300 m). Este artículo describe la zona de estudio, discute la presencia de ciertas aves del bosque montano y muestra una lista de las 110 especies de aves reconocidas durante este inventario.

Introduction

The Cordillera el Sira (Cerros del Sira) is an isolated mountain chain with humid tropical forest in central Peru and a high degree of endemism. Terborgh & Weske⁶, who studied the distribution of Andean birds in this region, also discovered a new subspecies of curassow, *Pauxi unicornis koepckeae*⁸, a new species of tanager, *Tangara phillipsi*² and a new species of hummingbird, *Phaethornis koepckeae*⁹ in this area. Thus, Wege & Long⁷ considered Cerros del Sira a key area for the conservation of threatened bird species. Koepcke³ surveyed the lowlands of Sira, focusing upon birds' nesting behaviour.

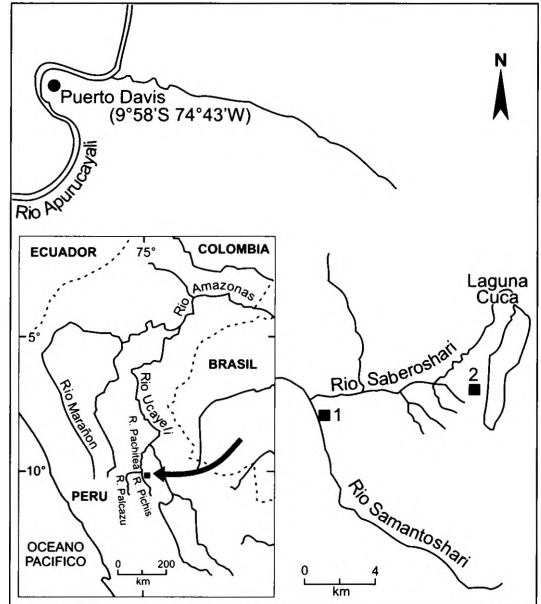
According to Terborgh & Weske⁶, the centre of Cerros del Sira lies at c.09°30'S 74°40'W, between the Pachitea and Ucayali rivers and 100 km east of the main Andean chain. It includes three widely separated peaks above 1,500 m; the highest point is between 2,400–2,500 m. The region is characterised by a marked displacement of vegetational zones; the ecotones of the montane rainforest, cloudforest and elfin forest are at 750, 1,050 and 1,800 m respectively. More than 400 bird species are known from the area, 146 in montane rainforest⁶.

El Sira has belonged ancestrally to the Campa (Asháninka) Indians. A local organisation represents them—Asociación de Nativos Asháninkas del Pichis (ANAP), who commissioned Asociación de Ecología y Conservación (ECCO), a (now defunct) Peruvian environmental NGO to perform a biological survey. They planned to petition the Peruvian government to protect the land by making it a Native Reserve (Reserva Comunal), as opposed to a National Park (Parque Nacional).

The expedition explored a previously unstudied sector of the Cerros del Sira, the lowland rainforest (210–300 m).

Methodology

Two sampling localities were selected, on the lower west slope of the Cerros del Sira: one between the rivers Samantoshari and Saberoshari (c.09°59'S



Location of cerros del Sira and two sampling localities. Redrawn from Morales (1994) and Weske and Terborg (1977)

74°40'W, at 210 m) and on a tributary of the Apurucayali river, which drains into the Pichis river; and a second near Cuca lagoon at 300 m and 2 km north-west of the former area¹. These areas were surveyed for 25 days, in October–November 1994. The former locality is 5 km south-east of the native community of Puerto Davis, which is 52 km south-east of Lllullapichis (near Koepcke's study area³) and 75 km south-east of Puerto Inca (near one of Terborgh & Weske's⁶ study areas).

The canopy averaged 45 m in height; and dominant species belonged to the genera *Cecropia*, *Persea*, *Socratea*, *Iriartea*, *Mauritia* and *Euterpe*. Lianas and ferns were common and the terrain at both sites steep⁴.

Observations were made mainly in the early morning. Five mist-nets were set within 50 m of our camps: two in primary forest, two in secondary



Fig. 1. The author with the best birdwatchers: the asháninka natives.

forest (farmland with *Manihot sculenta* and a deforested hill slope) and one in riparian thickets by the Samantoshari river. Near the Cuca lagoon, we set two mist-nets in primary forest and navigated the lagoon in a small canoe to make observations.

Results

A total of 110 species of bird, of 38 families, was identified. They are listed in the Appendix. Forty-one species were mist-netted (c), 47 observed (o) and 22 heard (h). Due to the comparatively brief survey period further sampling should reveal more species to be present. Terborgh & Weske⁶ considered that their survey was also incomplete due to a lack of field time: they reported at least 115 species in the Cerros del Sira lowlands. Koepcke³ found 52 bird families to be present during three years fieldwork, and reported low population densities for most species.

In the appendix, each species' habitat is defined according to that in which it was most frequently located, using the terminology of Parker *et al.*⁵: 66% of species were located in primary forest; 14% in second growth and 20% in aquatic areas. Psittacidae was the best represented family (11 species), followed by Formicariidae (nine species) and Tyrannidae (nine species). Other families were represented by no more than five species.

Of the birds recorded, Razor-billed Curassow *Crax mitu* and Spix's Guan *Penelope jacquacu* are frequently hunted for food by the local Indian population, although they are still relatively abundant. Other birds hunted formerly included tinamous, pigeons and doves.

It is interesting to note the presence in the lowlands (210 m) of some species usually recorded in montane forests⁵ e.g. Ruddy *Geotrygon saphirina* and White-throated Quail-doves *G. frenata*, Blue-

fronted Lancebill *Doryfera johanna*, Tawny-bellied Hermit *Phaethornis symmatophorus* and Buff-tailed Sicklebill *Eutoxeres condamini*. This can presumably be explained by the fact that the sample area was on the slope of a tropical mountain; similarly, there are records of *Geotrygon saphirina* (Cerros de Contamana, Cerros Campanquis, Loreto); *Geotrygon frenata* (Río Cenepa, Amazonas) and *Eutoxeres condamini* (Quebrada Caterpiza, Loreto) from lowland areas elsewhere (all taken from specimen data at the Museo de Historia Natural of the Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos [MHN-UNMSM]). Graves¹ provides mean altitude and vertical movements of two of these—*Geotrygon frenata* (mean altitude 2,025 m: 1,750 m vertical movement), *Phaethornis symmatophorus* (1,835 m; 330 m)—and Terborgh & Weske⁶ set the following lowest recorded occurrences: *Geotrygon frenata* (1,150 m), *Eutoxeres condamini* (900 m) and *Schiffornis turdinus* (900 m), adding that any distributional differences observed in their survey were artefacts of a separate evolutionary adjustment of the Sira populations to a novel biogeographical setting. These species may appear in lowland rainforest when conditions force them to do so.

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Appendix: Checklist of the birds of the lowland forest of the Cerros el Sira, central Peru

Key: (o) = sight record; (c) = mist-netted; (h) = heard.
 Habitat key: PF. = primary forest (humid *terra firme* forest); SF. = secondary forest (forest edge, second growth, partially deforested area, small farms of *Manihot sculenta* and camp surroundings); R. = tropical rivers and their margins (rivers Saberoshari and Samantoshari, Apurucayali river); L. = lagoons and their margins (Cuca lagoon).

TINAMIDAE

Great Tinamou *Tinamus major* (h) PF.
 Cinereous Tinamou *Crypturellus cinereus* (h) PF.
 Little Tinamou *Crypturellus soui* (h) PF.
 Undulated Tinamou *Crypturellus undulatus* (h) PF.
 Variegated Tinamou *Crypturellus variegatus* (c) PF.

PODICIPEDIDAE

Least Grebe *Podiceps dominicus* (o) L.

ANHINGIDAE

Anhinga *Anhinga anhinga* (o) L.

ARDEIDAE

Striated Heron *Butorides striatus* (o) L.
 Agami Heron *Agamia agami* (c) L.

CATHARTIDAE

Greater Yellow-headed Vulture *Cathartes melambrotus* (o) PF.

ACCIPITRIDAE

Plumbeous Kite *Ictinia plumbea* (o) SF.
 Roadside Hawk *Buteo magnirostris* (h) PF.
Leucopternis sp. (o) PF, R.
 Black-and-white Hawk-eagle *Spizastur melanoleucus* (o) SF.

PANDIONIDAE

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus* (o) R.

FALCONIDAE

Black Caracara *Daptrius ater* (h) PF.
 Red-throated Caracara *Daptrius americanus* (o) PF.

CRACIDAE

Spix's Guan *Penelope jacquacu* (c) PF.
 Razor-billed Curassow *Mitu mitu* (c) PF.

OPISTHOCOMIDAE

Hoatzin *Opisthocomus hoatzin* (c) R, L.

HELIORNITHIDAE

Sungrebe *Heliornis fulica* (c) R.

CHARADRIIDAE

Pied Lapwing *Hoploxypterus cayanus* (o) R.
 Collared Plover *Charadrius collaris* (o) R.

SCOLOPACIDAE

Spotted Sandpiper *Actitis macularia* (o) R.

COLUMBIDAE

Ruddy Pigeon *Columba subvinea* (c) PF.
 Plumbeous Pigeon *Columba plumbea* (h) PF.
 Sapphire Quail-dove *Geotrygon saphirina* (c) PF.
 Ruddy Quail-dove *Geotrygon montana* (c) PF.
 White-throated Quail-dove *Geotrygon frenata* (c) PF.

PSITTACIDAE

Blue-and-yellow Macaw *Ara ararauna* (o) PF.
 Scarlet Macaw *Ara macao* (o) PF.
 Red-and-green Macaw *Ara chloroptera* (o) PF.
 Chestnut-fronted Macaw *Ara severa* (o) PF.
 Red-bellied Macaw *Ara manilata* (o) PF.
 Dusky-headed Parakeet *Aratinga weddelli* (o) PF.
 Blue-winged Parrotlet *Forpus xantopterygius* (o) PF.
 Canary-winged Parakeet *Brotogeris versicolorus* (o) PF.
 White-bellied Parrot *Pionites leucogaster* (h) PF, L.
 Blue-headed Parrot *Pionus menstruus* (o) PF.
 Orange-winged Parrot *Amazona amazonica* (o) PF.

CUCULIDAE

Squirrel Cuckoo *Piaya cayana* (o) PF.
 Black-bellied Cuckoo *Piaya melanogaster* (c) PF.
 Little Cuckoo *Piaya minuta* (o) PF.
 Smooth-billed Ani *Crotophaga ani* (o) R.

STRIGIDAE

Spectacled Owl *Pulsatrix perspicillata* (h) PF.

CAPRIMULGIDAE

Sand-colored Nighthawk *Chordeiles rupestris* (o) R.

APODIDAE

Chaetura sp. (o) L.

TROCHILIDAE

Blue-fronted Lancebill *Doryfera johannae* (c) BS.
 Pale-tailed Barbthroat *Threnetes leucurus* (o) PF.
 Tawny-bellied Hermit *Phaethornis symrnatophorus* (c) PF, SF.
 Straight-billed Hermit *Phaethornis bourcierii* (o) PF.
 Needle-billed Hermit *Phaethornis philippi* (c) SF.
 Buff-tailed Sicklebills *Eutoxeres condamini* (c) SF.
 Fork-tailed Woodnymph *Thalurania furcata* (o) PF.

TROGONIDAE

Black-tailed Trogon *Trogon melanurus* (o) PF.



Fig. 2

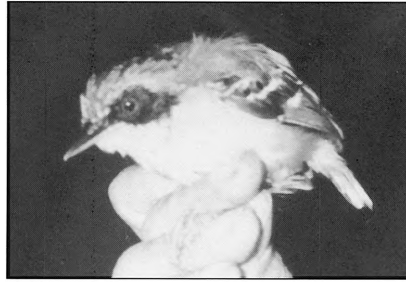


Fig. 3



Fig. 4

Fig. 2. *Selenidera reinwardtii langsdorfii*.

Primary forest

Fig. 3. *Myrmoborus myotherinus* (female).

Primary forest.

Fig. 4. *Pipra chloromeros* (female).

Secondary forest.

Fig. 5. *Basileuterus fulvicauda*.

River margins.



Fig. 5

ALCEDINIDAE

Ringed Kingfisher *Ceryle torquata* (o) R.Amazon Kingfisher *Chloroceryle amazona* (o) L.Green-and-rufous Kingfisher *Chloroceryle inda* (c) R.Pygmy Kingfisher *Chloroceryle aenea* (o) R.

MOMOTIDAE

Rufous Motmot *Baryphthengus ruficapillus* (c) PF.Blue-crowned Motmot *Momotus momota* (h) PF.

RAMPHASTIDAE

Green-billed Toucanet *Selenidera reinwardtii langsdorfii* (c) PF. (Fig. 2).Cuvier's Toucan *Ramphastos cuvieri* (c) PF.

PICIDAE

Chestnut Woodpecker *Ceuleus elegans* (o) PF.Red-necked Woodpecker *Phloeocastes rubricollis* (o) PF.

DENDROCOLAPTIDAE

Wedge-billed Woodcreeper *Glyphorhynchus spiurus castelnaudii* (c) SF, PF.

FURNARIIDAE

Olive-backed Foliage-gleaner *Automolus infuscatus* (c) SF.Chestnut-crowned Foliage-gleaner *Automolus rufipileatus* (h) PF.Plain Xenops *Xenops minutus* (c) SF.

FORMICARIIDAE

Great Antshrike *Taraba major* (h) SF.Dusky-throated Antshrike *Thamnomanes ardesiacus* (c) BP.Black-faced Antbird *Myrmoborus myotherinus* (c) PF. (Fig. 3).Black-tailed Antbird *Myrmoborus melanurus* (c) SF.Warbling Antbird *Hypocnemis cantator* (c) PF.Chestnut-tailed Antbird *Myrmeciza hemimelaina* (c) PF.White-plumed Antbird *Pithys albifrons* (c) SF, PF.Rufous-capped Antthrush *Formicarius colma* (h) PF.Black-faced Antthrush *Formicarius andis* (h) PF.

COTINGIDAE

Screaming Piha *Lipaugus vociferans* (h) PF.Purple-throated Fruitcrow *Querula purpurata* (c) PF.

PIPRIDAE

Round-tailed Manakin *Pipra chloromeros* (c) BS. (Fig. 4).Blue-crowned Manakin *Pipra coronata* (c) SF.Dwarf Tyrant-manakin *Tyrannetes stolzmanni* (h) PF.Thrush-like Schiffornis *Schiffornis turdinus* (h) PF.

TYRANNIDAE

Black Phoebe *Sayornis nigricans* (o) R.Ringed Antpiper *Corythopis torquata* (h) PF.Social Flycatcher *Myiozetetes similis* (c) L.*Pitangus* sp. (o) L.Bright-rumped Attila *Attila spadiceus* (h) PF.Eastern Wood-pewee *Contopus virens* (c) PF.Ochre-bellied Flycatcher *Pipromorpha oleaginea* (c) SF.

HIRUNDINIDAE

White-winged Swallow *Tachycineta albiventer* (o) R, L.Southern Rough-winged Swallow *Stelgidopteryx ruficollis* (o) R.

TROGLODITIDAE

Southern Nightingale Wren *Microcerculus marginatus* (c) SF.

ICTERIDAE

Giant Cowbird *Scaphidura oryzivora* (o) R.Crested Oropendola *Psarocolius decumanus* (h) PF.Russet-backed Oropendola *Psarocolius angustifrons* (o) SF, PF.Olive Oropendola *Gymnostinops yuracares* (h) PF.Yellow-rumped Cacique *Cacicus cela* (o) SF, PF.

PARULIDAE

Buff-rumped Warbler *Basileuterus fulvicauda (rivularis)* (c) BS, R. (Fig. 5).

COEREBIDAE

Bananaquit *Coereba flaveola* (h) PF.Black-faced Dacnis *Dacnis lineata* (o) PF.White-bellied Dacnis *Dacnis albiventris* (o) SF.

THRAUPIDAE

Green-and-gold Tanager *Tangara schrankii* (c) SF.Blue-grey Tanager *Thraupis episcopus* (o) SF.Silver-beaked Tanager *Ramphocelus carbo* (c) SF.Fulvous-crested Tanager *Tachyphonus surinamus* (c) PF.Magpie Tanager *Cissopis leveriana* (o) PF.

FRINGILLIDAE

Slate-colored Grosbeak *Pitylus grossus* (c) PF, SF.Blue-black Grosbeak *Cyanocompsa cyanoides* (c) SF.