

## New records concerning range and altitudinal distribution of Tropical Mockingbird *Mimus gilvus* in Ecuador

Diego F. Cisneros-Heredia and Pierre-Yves Henry

Cotinga 21 (2004): 74–75

---

Se reportan dos nuevas localidades para el Sinsonte Colilargo *Mimus gilvus* en Ecuador. Junto a estos registros la especie es conocida por cuatro observaciones en el país, todas ubicadas en los Andes del norte de Ecuador. Se sugiere que *Mimus gilvus* puede estar extendiendo su rango de distribución desde Colombia, colonizando nuevas áreas posiblemente debido a la modificación de hábitats por actividades antropogénicas. Además, se presenta una extensión al rango altitudinal de la especie (laguna de Cuicocha 3.100 m).

Tropical Mockingbird *Mimus gilvus* is widespread from southern Mexico to Brazil<sup>1,2</sup>. It was introduced and is now widespread in Panama<sup>3</sup> and has recently expanded its range in Nicaragua<sup>4</sup> and El Salvador<sup>5</sup>. In Colombia, it is common in the north<sup>2</sup>, but in Nariño, near the border with Ecuador, the species

was not recorded until 1996<sup>6</sup>. The highest altitudinal records are from Colombia: 2,600 m in the Bogotá savanna, and 2,100 m in Tolima<sup>1-3</sup>.

The species has only recently been recorded in Ecuador, where it is known from two localities in the northern Andes: near Otavalo (where initially

discovered by C. Vogt and J. Nilsson in September 1996), Imbabura province (00°14'N 78°16'W; 2,600 m) and one found at Cosanga (by M. Lysinger in September 1998), Napo province (00°36'S 77°52'W; 1,900 m)<sup>3</sup>. Ridgely & Greenfield<sup>3</sup> considered its status in Ecuador uncertain, as both records may have involved natural vagrants from Colombia, and indeed the Cosanga record probably does relate to a vagrant, supporting this hypothesis<sup>3</sup>.

On 17 November 2001, during a trip of the '2001 Protected Areas' group of the Universidad San Francisco de Quito, an adult and juvenile *M. gilvus* were observed on Padre Yerovi island, within Cuicocha Lagoon, Imbabura province (00°18'N 78°22'W; 3,100 m). The adult was feeding the juvenile within a patch of native bushes near the shore. This represents the first proof of breeding in Ecuador. The habitat was montane forest and elfin forest, dominated by shrubs and low trees.

On 5 April 2002, two adults were observed at Yaguarcocha Lagoon, near Ibarra, Imbabura province (00°22'N 78°07'W; 2,450 m). They were foraging in the ornamental garden of a tourist resort, on the north-west side of the lagoon, 50 m from the shore. Away from the garden, the dominant vegetation was xerophytic scrub, with scattered *Mimosa* trees, according with the species' known habitat requirements<sup>3</sup>, i.e. semi-open agricultural lands and suburban areas. The two were in flight together, and one was heard singing several times. This behaviour could suggest pair-formation and possible breeding activity. Identification was straightforward given the grey upperparts and white underparts, the white supercilium and tail pattern.

The new localities are also in the northern Andes of Ecuador, and suggest that the species may be currently colonising Ecuador from Colombia, a spread perhaps promoted by the modification of natural environments by human activity, as in Nicaragua<sup>4</sup>. The Cuicocha record is also the highest known site for the species, at 3,100 m, representing an altitudinal range extension of 500 m.

### Acknowledgements

P-YH is especially grateful to Fanny Ines Paucar Muñoz for her assistance during his visit to Ecuador. DFC-H thanks Maria Elena & Laura Heredia for financial and logistic support, and appreciates the support of the '2001 Protected Areas' group of the Life Sciences College, Universidad San Francisco de Quito, especially Dr Gunther Reck. The staff of the Cotacachi-Cayapas Ecological Reserve was very also helpful. Paul Greenfield and Christopher Canaday provided constructive suggestions on the manuscript.

### References

1. Fjeldså, J. & Krabbe, N. (1990) *Birds of the high Andes*. Copenhagen: Zool. Mus., University of Copenhagen & Svendborg: Apollo Books.
2. Hilty, S. L. & Brown, W. L. (1986) *A guide to the birds of Colombia*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
3. Ridgely, R. S. & Greenfield P. J. (2001) *The birds of Ecuador*, 1. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
4. Weidenfeld, D. A., Morales M., J. & Lezama L., M. (2001) Sight records of new species for Nicaragua and noteworthy records on range and occurrence. *Cotinga* 15: 53–57.
5. Komar, O. (2001) Contribuciones a la avifauna de El Salvador. *Cotinga* 16: 36–41.
6. Strewe, R. (2000) New distributional sightings of 28 species of birds from Dpto. Nariño, SW Colombia. *Bull. Brit. Orn. Club* 120: 189–195.

### Diego F. Cisneros-Heredia

Life Sciences College, Universidad San Francisco de Quito, Av. 6 de Diciembre 3935 y Checoslovaquia, P.O. Box 17-12-146/48, Quito, Ecuador. E-mail: diegofrancisco\_cisneros@hotmail.com.

### Pierre-Yves Henry

Le Fruchâge, Av. de Viton, 84400 Apt, France. E-mail: henry@ccefe.cnrs-mop.fr.