Chestnut-crowned Antpitta
*Grallaria ruficapilla*
occurs in Andean forests of Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador and northern Peru, at 1,200–3,600 m a.s.l. In the eastern Ecuadorian Andes *G. ruficapilla* is one of the most numerous species by voice, yet little is known of its breeding biology. Here we present a description of the nest, nest location, eggs and nestling period of *G. r. ruficapilla* from 2,250 m elevation in the eastern Ecuadorian Andes.

**Nest description**
On 20 September 2004, we located a nest of *G. ruficapilla* in montane Andean forest at SierrAzul Research Station (00°40’S 77°55’W), part of the Andean Biodiversity Research Center west of Cosanga, Napo province, Ecuador. Habitat around the nest consisted of a canopy composed almost entirely of *Alnus acuminata* (Betulaceae), c.20 m in height, with a variable understory of occasionally dense *Chusquea* bamboo (Poaceae) interspersed with herbaceous Solanaceae, Urticaceae and Piperaceae. The nest site was on the edge of a patch of *Chusquea* and surrounded by more open herbaceous understory.

The nest was located 197 cm above ground on a mat of 8–10 supporting *Chusquea* branches that ran horizontally beneath the nest (Fig. 1). Other detritus (fallen and decomposing leaves) was between the *Chusquea* branches and the nest, and may have been an old *Grallaria* nest itself. Immediately above the nest (c.10 cm) was a sparse overhang of live *Chusquea* leaves, providing cover for the nest.

The nest was composed primarily of sticks and twigs, with additional bamboo leaves, sparse moss, leaf petioles and some dicot leaves, and a sparse lining of dark rootlets. The outer diameter was 27.0 x 27.0 cm (measured at perpendicular angles). The...
inner diameter (i.e. the egg cup) measured 11.5 x 11.5 cm. The cup depth was 7 cm and the external nest height (i.e. bottom of the nest proper to the rim of the cup) was 18.5 cm, with no hanging nest material below the nest.

**Egg description**

When located, the nest contained two eggs warm to the touch. Video and field observations from 20 September 2004 showed G. ruficapilla incubating the two eggs. Eggs were uniform turquoise or pale greenish-blue, with no flecking or spotting (Fig. 2). Both eggs had a short subelliptical shape, with one egg notably stubbier than the other. The first egg measured 28.5 x 24.3 mm and weighed 8.765 g. The second egg measured 29.9 x 24.2 mm and weighed 9.095 g. Both eggs were checked six days later and the identity of these eggs is suspect.

Both the Ecuadorian G. ruficapilla and G. watkinsi have nests composed primarily of sticks and twigs, forming a messy broad cup. Most other Grallaria build bulky cups of decaying leaves, moss and other herbaceous material with few sticks. The nest in eastern Ecuador differs somewhat from Salmon’s observations in that it was composed primarily of sticks and twigs. Otherwise the nest composition is qualitatively similar, with moss and dead leaves in the bulk of the cup, and rootlets lining the nest. The structure and composition of the Ecuadorian nest is most similar to a nest described for the closely related G. watkinsi (see also G. hypoleuca). Both the Ecuadorian G. ruficapilla and G. watkinsi have nests composed primarily of sticks and twigs, forming a messy broad cup. Most other Grallaria build bulky cups of decaying leaves, moss and other herbaceous material with few sticks.

Nest placement amidst dense branches has been observed for some G. guatimalensis nests, G. watkinsi and G. quitensis. Most other Grallaria have been reported to nest against upright or fallen trunks or in the main forks of trees.

September breeding for G. ruficapilla coincides with the early dry season (September–December) in the Napo region of the eastern Andes. Other records of breeding, breeding-condition adults and fledglings are available from virtually all months. We require more data to know whether G. ruficapilla breeds seasonally as do some other Chusquea specialists in our study area (e.g. Poceliotriccus ruficeps).

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