

First record of Burrowing Owl *Athene cunicularia* in Amazonian Ecuador

On 4 and 7 August 2013, on sandbars in the río Napo opposite Pilche (00°30'S 75°24'W; 220 m), TCM, DJH & D. Galarza noticed two owls, which on the second date had moved c.100 m upstream. Because Burrowing Owl *Athene cunicularia* had not previously been recorded in eastern Ecuador¹, the identification was confirmed through reference to Ridgely & Greenfield¹ and Schulenberg *et al.*². The following features were noted: broad white eyebrow, no ear-tufts, long bare tarsi, white spots on back and wings; one individual had a rusty-brown throat and creamy belly, the other had creamy-buff underparts with incomplete, ochre-brown barring (Fig. 1).

For Peru, Schulenberg *et al.*² mentioned that the species is



Figure 1. Burrowing Owls *Athene cunicularia*, near Pilche community, río Napo, Ecuador, August 2013 (Tony Mander)

occasionally seen on young river islands in Amazonia, further supporting our observation. In Ecuador, this owl was previously known only from the south-west of the country and the inter-Andean highlands. Given their pale coloration, we suspect the

subspecies involved was *carrikeri*, which otherwise ranges from lowland eastern Colombia to west-central Venezuela. This is the first record of Burrowing Owl for Amazonian Ecuador.

References

1. Ridgely, R. S. & Greenfield, P. J. (2001) *The birds of Ecuador*. London, UK: Christopher Helm.
2. Schulenberg, T. S., Stotz, D. F., Lane, D. F., O'Neill, J. P. & Parker, T. A. (2010) *Aves del Perú*. Lima: CORBIDI.

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