

Frontiers of knowledge: a quarter-century of Neotropical discovery

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There is arguably no greater thrill for a birder, ornithologist, ecologist or conservationist than to discover something new. But what are the most jaw-dropping Neotropical discoveries since the Neotropical Bird Club was founded in 1994? Specifically, what are our ‘top 25’ (revelations) of the last 25 (years)?

In this article, we seek to celebrate a quarter-century of ornithological discoveries across the Neotropical region since 1994, when the Neotropical Bird Club was established. Twenty-five remarkable discoveries across the last 25 years. We apply a broad church to the definition of ‘discovery’. We showcase astonishing new species for science. We cheer for birds feared extinct but – against expectations – found to persist. We gasp at gobsmacking acts of vagrancy. We salute unanticipated information on avian distributions. And we doff our hats to amazing ecological discoveries and unanticipated taxonomic revelations.

Deciding what to include has not been easy. Anything novel, almost by definition, is exciting. And there is much from which to choose. That said, any selection involves considerable subjectivity because one person’s remarkable can be another’s run-of-the-mill. In the hope of reaching a balanced consensus, we joined forces as co-authors rather than giving a single writer free rein; we crowdsourced ideas in person and via social media (particular thanks to the many contributors to a thread on the NBC Facebook group); and we argued long into the night to whittle down a mighty longlist into the 25 discoveries that we hereby present. (In the text or



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1 Pink-legged Graveteiro *Acrobatornis fonsecai*, Mascote, Bahia, Brazil, December 2017 (Ciro Albano/NE Brazil Birding).