

Rediscovered: seeing the Critically Endangered Antioquia Brushfinch

Henry Cook and Sophie Barrell

Antioquia Brushfinch *Atlapetes blancae* was described only in 2007, its three specimens long overlooked as a congener. In January 2018, this Colombian enigma was finally found in life – as published in *Cotinga* 41. This article explains where to see it – and how to do so in a way that helps a local conservation initiative.

Often in Neotropical birding, to see the rarest of the rare, one has to travel to remote river basins or towering sierras. In an exciting twist, one of the least-known birds in South America, only recently discovered in the wild, is found within farmland just over an hour's drive away from Colombia's second largest city, Medellín. Better yet, you can now easily go to see this species and support its conservation in the process. This article recounts the history of the discovery and relevant travel information to help you see this extraordinary bird yourself, based on our first-hand account of visiting the area.

Hidden in a drawer

A number of new brushfinch *Atlapetes* taxa have been described since the turn of the millennium. As part his research, Thomas Donegan was conducting a widespread review of specimens during 2004–05. Three skins marked as Slaty Brushfinch *A. schistaceus* stood out as atypical, with only one bearing a year on the label (1971). These were probably all taken at La Lana, near San Pedro de los Milagros, Antioquia, Colombia, by Hermano Daniel. Donegan considered them “clearly not” Slaty Brushfinch on account of



All photos taken at or near San Pedro de los Milagros, Antioquia, Colombia.

1 Antioquia Brushfinch *Atlapetes blancae*, December 2019 (Henry Cook; [flickr.com/photos/8327273@N08/albums](https://www.flickr.com/photos/8327273@N08/albums)).