

## The first Brown-chested Martin *Phaeoprogne tapera* in Chile

Derek J. Evans

Cotinga 11 (1999): 67

Un individuo de *Phaeoprogne tapera* registrado en el aeropuerto Chacalluta, al norte de Arica el 21 de enero de 1998 representa el primer registro de la especie en Chile. La descripción completa del individuo indica que se trata de la raza *fusca*, un migrador de larga distancia.

A Brown-chested Martin *Phaeoprogne tapera* was observed through 10 x 40 binoculars during 10h50–11h20, on 21 January 1998, at Chacalluta airport, 18 km north of Arica and 5 km south of the Peruvian border, in Chile. The bird fed just above tree-top height over a small area of shrubs and gardens in the desert. Seen with three Blue-and-white Swallows *Notiochelidon cyanoleuca*, it was obviously a different and larger species.

This large martin was c.30% larger than Blue-and-white Swallow and had a buoyant flight pattern, alternating between glides and powerful direct flight with faster wingbeats on stiff, scythe-like, broad backswept wings.

From below, the wings appeared dusky earth-brown, darkest on the leading edge (lesser coverts) and axillaries. A complete, but smudged, brown chest band was apparent with some ill-defined spotting continuing down the centre of the underparts. The forked tail was dark brown. In contrast, the throat, belly and vent were all pure white. The bill appeared solid black. From above, the bird was a uniform dull brown with the exception of the slightly darker crown, outer primaries and tail. Occasionally the white underbody could be seen to wrap around the sides of the rump. I have had previous experience of this species in Brazil and Argentina, where I saw c.100 birds in October–December 1994.

### Possible confusion species

Bank Swallow *Riparia riparia* has a basically similar plumage pattern but is c.30% smaller (ie. the same size as the accompanying Blue-and-white Swallows which, as noted above, appeared at least one-third smaller than the Brown-chested Martin). In addition, *Riparia riparia* has a narrower, neater chest band and a different, more flickering flight pattern on faster wing-beats<sup>4</sup>.

### Discussion

The spotting down the centre of the breast indicates the bird to have been of the race *fusca* which is known to be a long-distance austral migrant. Ridgely & Tudor<sup>3</sup> note “vagrants to coastal s.w. Peru in Arequipa” while Fjelds  & Krabbe<sup>1</sup> record it to be “casual on the coast of s.w. Peru in July–Sept. (*fusca*)”. Thus, while the date is unusual, the occurrence of a wandering individual is not. The species had not previously been recorded in Chile<sup>2</sup>.

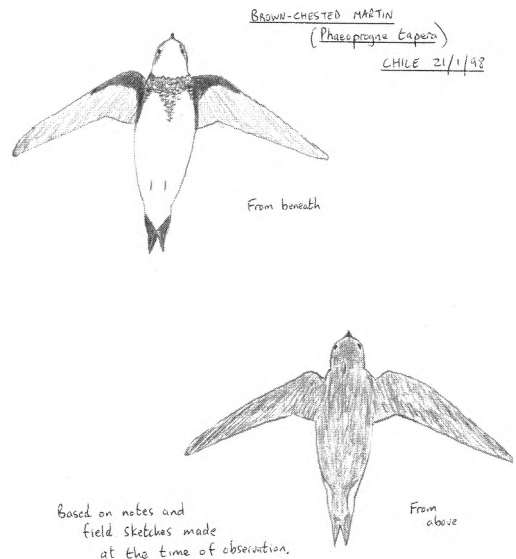


Figure 1. Sketches of Brown-chested Martin *Phaeoprogne tapera* at Chacalluta airport, Chile, 21 January 1998. (Derek J. Evans)

### References

1. Fjelds , J. & Krabbe, N. (1990) *Birds of the high Andes*. Copenhagen: Zoological Museum, University of Copenhagen & Svendborg: Apollo Books.
2. Howell, S. N. G. (1996) *A checklist of the birds of Chile*. Colorado Springs: American Birding Association.
3. Ridgely, R. S. & Tudor, G. (1989) *The birds of South America*, 1. Austin: University of Texas Press.
4. Turner, A. & Rose, C. (1989) *A handbook to the swallows and martins of the world*. London, UK: A. & C. Black.

### Derek J. Evans

c/o English Department, The Grange School, Av. Principe de Gales 6154, Casilla 218, Correo 12, 6870671 Santiago, Chile.