

The first record of Variable Seedeater *Sporophila americana* in Bolivia

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Un macho de *S. americana* que fue observado cerca de Guayaramerin, Bolivia, constituye el primer registro para el país. Se necesitan más registros para determinar su estatus en Bolivia. Se discuten los registros más cercanos y los posibles orígenes de este individuo.

On 30 November 1996, on the 'calle de los Tejedores', just outside Guayaramerin (10°48'S 65°23'W), on the rio Mamoré, in northernmost dpto. Beni, I took the following description of a seedeater: 'Collared Seedy? All black & white. 2 white wingbars. Pale White under with black collar thicker at sides. Black crown & bill. (White throat).'

While this is very brief and referring to the breast band as a collar is imprecise, it is not incorrect. Double-collared Seedeater *Sporophila caerulescens* and Black-collared Swallow *Atticora melanoleuca* for example, are named after their breast bands. Only Variable Seedeater *Sporophila americana* conforms to this description, with Lesson's Seedeater *S. bouvronides*, the closest alternative, eliminated by virtue of this bird's wingbars, white throat and collar.

I was, at the time, unaware of its significance and cannot specifically remember the bird or how many individuals were involved, although it may have been flocking with Chestnut-bellied Seedeater *S. castaneiventris*, which was common, and Lined Seedeater *S. lineola*. Consequently, I realise that the record cannot gain universal acceptance, and in any case, confirmation is desirable to indicate whether *S. americana* is a regular, perhaps seasonal, vagrant or an escape from captivity in Bolivia. However, I was already familiar with nine of the 14 *Sporophila* spp. known in Bolivia at the time (including the black-and-white plumaged *S. lineola* and White-bellied Seedeater *S. leucoptera bicolor*). During two months fieldwork in cerrado in northern Beni, Near-threatened and other *Sporophila* spp. had been the focus of my team's investigations. *S. americana* was unfamiliar to me.

S. americana is not listed for Bolivia^{1,2} and had not been reported to Asociación Armonía prior to 13 January 1999 (L. Jammes *in litt.*). It has been recorded at Cocha Cashu, Manu National Park, Peru⁴, and was consequently listed by Remsen & Traylor² among those species recorded within 60–225 km of Bolivia's borders. Ridgely & Tudor³ indicate that the subspecies *murallae* has been recorded in close proximity to north-west Bolivia, 450 km west of Guayaramerin. However, my observation could have concerned the nominate subspecies—which occurs in Brazil along the

Amazon from its mouth to the rio Negro³, 150 km upriver of the rio Madeira mouth (of which the rio Mamoré is a major tributary).

Birders in the area around Guayaramerin, and in Brazil, along the rio Madeira and in farmland along the Manaus–Acre road that connects the two closest known populations with north-east Bolivia, should search for and, if successful, document the presence *S. americana*.

Acknowledgements

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References

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