

## Eastern *Calyptophilus frugivorus* and Western Chat-tanagers *C. tertius*

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Since the early 20th century the taxonomic history of the forms included within Chat-tanager *Calyptophilus frugivorus* has been unclear and confusing. Consensus points to the existence of four races differing in size, colour, eye-ring pigmentation (see below) and voice. They are separated geographically between Gonève Island (*abbotti*; this form has not been reported recently), the Massifs de la Hotte and de la Selle (all Haiti) and Sierra de Baoruco (all *tertius*), the Sierra de Neiba and Cordillera Central (*neibae*), and north-east lowlands of the Dominican Republic to Samaná (*frugivorus*; presumed to be extirpated)<sup>2</sup>. Two groups, *tertius* (including *abbotti*) and *frugivorus* (including *neibae*), have been considered to be involved (and treated specifically by several authors), but a recent study by Klein<sup>1</sup> found significant morphometric, vocal and genetic differences between *tertius* and *frugivorus* (*neibae*) based on a single specimen of each. This was sufficient for the AOU<sup>1</sup> to classify them as separate species. BirdLife International, on the other hand, considers the four generally recognised taxa to form a single species, which they treat as Vulnerable<sup>2,6</sup>. Raffaele *et al.*<sup>5</sup> also consider chat-tanagers to be one species. Should more detailed and extensive testing of Klein's preliminary results prove her initial findings to be correct, a reassessment of the conservation status of the two forms will be required. Here we follow the AOU arrangement.

Eastern (Lowland) Chat-tanager *Calyptophilus frugivorus* is thus considered endemic to the western Dominican Republic east to Samaná, including the Cordillera Central, and Gonève Island<sup>1</sup>. We recently recorded it for the first time within the Reserva Científica de Ebano Verde, which is in the north-east of the central mountains and occupies 37 km<sup>2</sup>. Within the reserve, habitats include pine, cloud, riverine and second-growth forests at 800–1,565 m. JA had heard several *C. frugivorus* on a previous trip to the upper part of the 'Sendero de las Nubes' in the reserve. We decided to try and capture an individual and document the species' occurrence photographically. On 1 April 2000, seven mist-nets were erected on the trail, at 05h45–10h30. They were opened along a 150 m-section of the trail, between the antenna and watchtower. In addition, we performed playback for the species. The area's undergrowth is dominated by an invasive fern, *Dicranoteris pectinada*, with native bushes and trees typical of Hispaniolan cloud forest. This provides an ideal habitat for chat-tanagers, which

prefer dense vegetation<sup>2</sup>. Following playback, a *C. frugivorus* responded almost immediately and was trapped, photographed (Fig. 2) and released. During the same period, JA heard a second individual and saw a third cross the trail c.30 m beyond the watchtower.

On this occasion we did not take any measurements, but *C. frugivorus* is considerably smaller than the Western (Highland) Chat-tanager *Calyptophilus tertius* that inhabits the Sierra de Baoruco. Wetmore & Swales<sup>4</sup> provide the following mensural data.

	Wing	Tail	Culmen	Tarsus
Eastern Chat-tanager <i>Calyptophilus frugivorus</i>	92	88	20	28 mm
Western Chat-tanager <i>Calyptophilus tertius</i>	97.3	102	23.9	31.2 mm

Another interesting difference between the species that we have noted is that *C. frugivorus* has a bright yellow eye-ring, which *C. tertius* lacks (Figs. 1–2, see back cover). This method of separating the two taxa does not appear to have been mentioned previously in the literature, although several previous authors have mentioned that *frugivorus* caught in Samaná, Sierra de Neiba, and the Cordillera Central have yellow eye-rings<sup>3,7,8</sup>.

In order to further clarify the status of the different *Calyptophilus* populations in Hispaniola, we intend to continue taking measurements, voice recordings and photographic evidence.

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See back cover for colour photos of Eastern *Calyptophilus frugivorus* and Western Chat-tanagers *C. tertius*



Eastern Chat-tanager *Calyptophilus frugivorus* (top) and Western Chat-tanager *C. tertius* (Eladio Fernández)

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