

## Hoary-throated Spinetail *Poecilurus kollari*

## White-lored Spinetail *Synallaxis albilora*



### Hoary-throated Spinetail *Poecilurus kollari*

Hoary-throated Spinetail *Poecilurus kollari* is known from a very limited area on the rio Cotingo, rio Surumu, rio Tacutu and upper rio Branco, in north Roraima, Brazil, and from adjacent Guyana<sup>1</sup>. Since 1956 most records had been on the rio Tacutu, within 2 km of the Brazil–Guyana border<sup>1</sup>. However, in March 1998, Bret Whitney (*in litt.*) and Sally Conyne found it on the rio Surumu, near the town of Surumu, and made audio and video-recordings, which will be archived at the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology. In May 2001 it was seen and its vocalization tape-recorded by Luciano Naka and Mario Cohn-Haft (pers. comm.) on the rio Cotingo, near Contão, Roraima.

In July 2001, we found the species at four points on the east bank of the rio Uraricoera, 45 km northeast of Boa Vista, at the ferry on the RR-319 road (03°12'N 60°34'W). Three were in riverine thickets within 100 m of the river, being separated from each other by c.200 m along a line parallel to the river. Unlike the habitat of most other recent sightings, these thickets are not subject to annual flooding by the river, though there was standing rain water nearby. At two places *P. kollari* was only heard and we are unsure whether one or two birds were present. At the third, two birds, apparently a pair, were seen though only one vocalised. The fourth record was nearby but in different habitat. A single individual was heard singing incessantly in bushes along the embankment where the RR-319 crosses a marsh, c.500 m from the rio Uraricoera. It was watched at close range for 30 minutes, photographed and its song recorded. It was seen to enter a nest but appeared to be unpaired.

The nest was 1.5 m above the ground in a dense bush on the embankment. It was a round cup, c.20 cm in external and c.10 cm in internal diameter, constructed entirely of twigs. It was not lined and appeared to be incomplete.

The birds were photographed by AG. The plumage of those in the photographs differs in important details from the illustration of *Poecilurus kollari* in *Threatened birds of the world*<sup>1</sup>, particularly in the extent and distribution of the brown and grey areas on the head. The description in Ridgely & Tudor<sup>2</sup> refers to the species' 'brown-tinged crown', whereas the photographs show a uniformly grey crown, and 'black throat flecked with white, especially in the malar area', whereas in the photographs the upper

throat is white, flecked black, there is a faint blackish malar stripe and the lower throat is black. The white tail feather evident in Fig. 1 is probably due to lack of pigmentation in this individual rather than a feature of the species' plumage.

At all four points the birds vocalised and were recorded by JM. The song, whether spontaneous or in response to playback, consisted of pairs of short notes at one-second intervals, the second note being higher pitched. This vocalisation is very similar to that recorded by Naka and Cohn-Haft at Contão, and we thank them for providing the recording that enabled us to locate the species.

At the same site we tape-recorded and photographed a pair of Rio Branco Antbird *Cercomacra carbonaria*, in a riverine thicket. This species had not previously been found on the rio Uraricoera<sup>3</sup> and our record extends its small range north by 30 km.

JM's recordings will be deposited at the National Sound Archive, London, and the Arquivo Sonoro Prof. Elias Coelho, Universidade Federal de Rio de Janeiro.

### References

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### White-lored Spinetail *Synallaxis albilora*

White-lored Spinetail *Synallaxis albilora* (Fig. 4) is common in the Brazilian Pantanal and adjacent areas of Bolivia and Paraguay<sup>2,4</sup>. It mainly occupies undergrowth of dry and gallery forests, as well as riverine shrubs and cultivated areas<sup>1,2,7</sup> (Fig. 5). It generally forages among tangles and vines, such as

*Croton* sp., *Solanum* sp., *Palicourea* sp., and *Cissus spinosa*, usually in the lower 2 m of vegetation, and rarely venturing above 3 m. White-lored Spinetail takes small arthropods<sup>3</sup>. The one depicted here was photographed in riparian shrubbery close to the rio Pixaim, Mato Grosso, Brazil. Its vocalisation is one

of the most frequently heard in the Pantanal, a *keeeu, kit-kweeit* song<sup>2,8</sup>. Its nest is large and constructed of sticks; the eggs are greenish white<sup>1</sup>.

The species was considered conspecific with Plain-crowned Spinetail *Synallaxis gujanensis*<sup>2</sup>; their ranges do not overlap<sup>2,4</sup>. White-lored Spinetail differs in its whiter lores, browner back and more ochraceous underparts<sup>2,4</sup>. Silva<sup>5,6</sup> suggested that the form *S. a. simoni* (Fig.6) should be also treated as a species; it is endemic to the Araguaia Valley and is separated from the nominate, in the rio Paraguay drainage, by the Guimarães Plateau<sup>6</sup>.

Though the species has a restricted range, it is not considered threatened and is very numerous in the Pantanal. It is easy to find in suitable habitats along the entire Transpantaneira road in Mato Grosso, where it frequently occurs with Mato Grosso Antbird *Cercomacra melanaria*, which shares the same restricted range.

### References

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Habitat of White-lored Spinetail *Synallaxis albilora* (Marcelo Ferreira de Vasconcelos)



Habitat of Araguaia Spinetail *Synallaxis albilora simoni* (Guy M. Kirwan)



1



2



3



4



5

Figure 1–3. Hoary-throated Spinetail *Poecilurus kollari*, rio Uraricoera, Roraima, Brazil, July 2001 (Arthur Grosset)  
 Figure 4. White-lored Spinetail *Synallaxis albilora*, rio Pixaim, Mato Grosso, Brazil (Marcelo Ferreira de Vasconcelos)  
 Figure 5. Araguaia Spinetail *Synallaxis albilora simoni*, island within the rio Araguaia, near Caseara, Tocantins, Brazil, January 2002 (Arthur Grosset)