

First North American record of Crowned Slaty Flycatcher *Griseotyrannus aurantioatrocristatus*, at Cerro Azul, Panama

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El primer registro de Tuquito Gris *Griseotyrannus aurantioatrocristatus* en Norteamérica fue documentado en Cerro Azul, Panama, el 1 de diciembre de 2007. La identificación y las pruebas las cuales confirman el registro se presentan aquí con un comentario contextual de la distribución y de la migración austral.

The town of Cerro Azul lies 40 km north-east of Panama City in the foothills of the Pacific slope, whilst Hostal Casa de Campo is nearby at an elevation of 650 m. The area around the hostel is residential, with a variety of mature trees and shrubs. Bordering the residential area is Chagres National Park, which contains the main watershed for the Chagres River and Panama Canal.

On the afternoon of 1 December 2007, whilst birding in this area, we found a medium-sized tyrant flycatcher perched on a wire above Calle Principal. Visibility was good, with the sun low in the sky, and we observed the bird for c.20 minutes, taking several photographs (Fig. 1) during this period. The bird appeared to be c.15–17 cm long and

rather stocky. It had a black cap with a narrow yellow central coronal stripe, which was only evident when the wind ruffled the feathers. The nape appeared slightly crested and there was a pale supercilium, with a dark eyestripe, black lores and grey cheeks. The bird's upperparts were grey, including the tail, which had a rufous tint at the base of the outer rectrices. The underparts were paler grey, grading to faint cream on the undertail-coverts. The secondaries had whitish fringes as did some tertials. The legs and feet were black. Viewed from below the bill was broad-based, mostly black, and pale only at the base of the mandible. Despite the good views, we were unable to identify the bird, which did not appear in Ridgely & Gwynne¹².



Figure 1. Crowned Slaty Flycatcher *Griseotyrannus aurantioatrocristatus*, Cerro Azul, Panama, 1 December 2007 (Roger Robb)



Figure 2. Crowned Slaty Flycatcher *Griseotyrannus aurantioatrocristatus*, Cerro Azul, Panama, 4 December 2007 (Kit Larsen)



Figure 4. Crowned Slaty Flycatcher *Griseotyrannus aurantioatrocristatus*, Cerro Azul, Panama, 4 December 2007 (Kit Larsen)

On the morning of 4 December 2007, we again found the flycatcher on the same wire. The morning light was good, and we observed the bird for another 20 minutes, taking more photographs (Figs. 2 and 4). It called once, which was faint and brief and sounded like a dry, fading trill, as it flew to some trees at the edge of the road.

That afternoon we travelled to the Canopy Tower, between Summit and Gamboa, to whose bird guides we were quick to show the photographs of the tyrant flycatcher at Cerro Azul. None of the guides could identify it. We then sent our photographs by e-mail to L. McQueen. On 9 December we travelled to Canopy Lodge, near El Valle, where we were able to consult additional literature^{5,6,11}, which revealed the bird to have been a Crowned Slaty Flycatcher *Griseotyrannus aurantioatrocristatus*, an identification supported by L. McQueen in an e-mail received virtually simultaneously. Further, we sent our notes and photographs to K. Allaire and R. S. Ridgely, both of whom were able to confirm the bird's identity as Crowned Slaty Flycatcher.

Based on comments by K. Allaire and J. Rowlett, the bird was probably a first-year, based on the whitish fringes to the secondaries and some tertials, and the rufous evident at the base of the outer tail feathers. J. Rowlett (*in litt.* 2008) also noted that the primary projection suggests the bird was of the nominate, migratory race, rather than *G. a. pallidiventris*, of east-central Brazil, which is considered sedentary.

The nominate race of Crowned Slaty Flycatcher is migratory and breeds in southern and eastern Bolivia⁴, the interior of Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay, and north and central Argentina in the austral summer, but migrates north in the austral winter, mainly to western Amazonia, as far north as eastern Ecuador, south-east Colombia and the Manaus and Belém regions of Brazil¹³. *G. a. pallidiventris* in central-eastern Brazil is non-migratory¹⁴.

The species' appearance in Panama can be understood in the context of vagrancy in other long-distance migrant Tyrannidae. Species of Tyrannidae constitute more than 50% of passerine austral migrants and c.30% of all austral migrants². Two species have even reached North America, Variegated Flycatcher *Empidonomus varius* and Fork-tailed Flycatcher *Tyrannus savana*, the only subspecies austral migrants to have done so.

Variegated Flycatcher is resident throughout most of South America east of the Andes. Some birds move north in the austral winter as far as the northern coast of South America and Trinidad, and the species has been recorded three times in North America. The first was photographed at Biddeford Pool, Maine, on 5–11 November 1977¹, with other

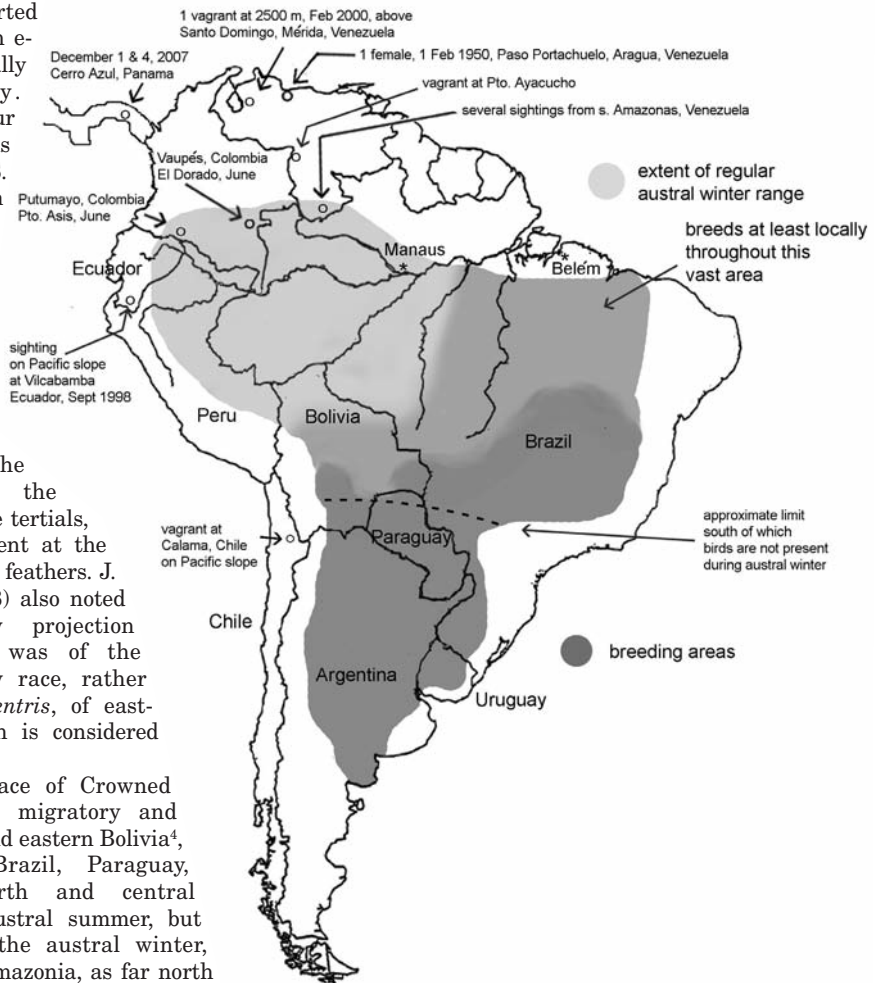


Figure 3. Distribution of Crowned Slaty Flycatcher *Griseotyrannus aurantioatrocristatus* showing published extralimital records and the Panama record reported herein.

sightings in Reelfoot Lake, Tennessee, on 13–15 May 1984¹⁰ and the Toronto Islands, Toronto, Ontario, on 7 October–6 November 1993⁷.

Fork-tailed Flycatcher breeds in Central and South America and is a regular vagrant to North America. *T. s. savana* breeds as far south as southern Argentina and migrates to northern South America in the austral winter². Fifty-six of the 77 Fork-tailed Flycatchers found along the Atlantic coast of North America appeared in autumn, with the majority in September–October⁹.

There are several extralimital records of Crowned Slaty Flycatcher (see Fig. 3). Two records are from the west slope of the Andes; from Vilcabamba, Ecuador¹¹, and Calama, Chile⁸. Records north of the regular wintering grounds include two sightings in Colombia; from Putumayo and Vaupés, both in June⁶. Three specimens have been taken in Venezuela: one at Paso Portachuelo, Aragua, in February 1950, and two from the río Ocamo, Amazonas⁵, with sight records in the same country from Puerto Ayacucho (R. S. Ridgely *in litt.* 2008) and above Santo Domingo, Mérida⁵. Two of the northernmost records in Venezuela were in February—at Santo Domingo and Paso Portachuelo—the latter at 10°22'N, slightly further north than the record at Cerro Azul (09°11'N). Crowned Slaty Flycatcher breeds in Bolivia at up to 2,500 m, with two March records at 3,300 m³. Crossing the north Colombian Andes into Middle America is thus relatively unsurprising.

Our sighting of a Crowned Slaty Flycatcher near Cerro Azul, Panama, in December 2007, fits the pattern of other vagrant Tyrannidae from South America. The bird should have been on its breeding grounds at this season. Probably the bird was a reverse migrant that had migrated north from its wintering grounds instead of south. However, it is possible that the bird migrated north beyond its normal wintering grounds and had arrived in Panama during the austral winter.

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