First records of Yellow-throated Vireo Vireo flavifrons in Ecuador

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Reportamos las primeras observaciones del Vireo Goliamarillo Vireo flavifrons en Ecuador, en base a tres registros separados, provenientes de las estribaciones andinas del noreste, estribaciones andinas noroccidentales y trópico húmedo noroccidental (febrero 2008, noviembre 2011, marzo 2012). El incremento en la intensidad del trabajo ornitológico de campo en Ecuador durante los últimos años ha generado un crecimiento en la cantidad de registros nuevos para el país, incluyendo especies migratorias y/o errantes como este vireo.

Yellow-throated Vireo Vireo flavifrons is a fairly common breeder in the eastern USA and south-east Canada9,9,10, wintering from eastern Mexico5 to northern Venezuela3, with a few records as far south as Popayán, dpto. Cauca12 and one at Mitú, dpto. Vaupés4, southern Colombia. It is a widespread, common migrant and winter resident in Costa Rica2,8,9,11 but our records, three sightings from February 2008 to March 2012, represent the southernmost ever, and the first for Ecuador7.

**Field observations**

*First record.—*A single was observed by JN on 10 February 2008, at 10h35–10h40, at 1,495 m along the Coopmans Trail at Wildsumaco Lodge (00°41’S, 77°36’W), 1 km south of Pacto Sumaco, in Sumaco Napo Galeras National Park, prov. Napo. Habitat consisted of scattered medium–tall trees in a cattle pasture near mature secondary forest, c.150 m from primary forest. The area was a mosaic of pastures, secondary forests in various stages, and tall primary forest on generally hilly terrain. The bird was searching for insects c.6 m up in an open tree. Light conditions were good and the bird was observed at a distance of c.12 m using binoculars. It fed alone, although a mixed-species flock was nearby. It was identified to the genus Vireo due to its general behaviour and plumage, and careful notes and illustrations were made later the same day (Fig. 1). An hour later, using Sibley10, it was identified to species.

It was slightly larger than Blackburnian Warbler Dendroica fusca with a proportionately large head. Upperparts and head bright green with very obvious broad yellow eye-ring and supraloral. Lores dark. Throat and upper breast bright yellow ending abruptly at mid breast, sharply contrasting with white underparts and undertail-coverts. Wings dark with two broad white wingbars, and white fringes to tertials and primaries. Tail dark with narrow white fringes to rectrices. Eyes black and large-looking. Stout, dark bill, with slightly hooked tip. Legs dark. Grey rump not visible.

When feeding, the bird ‘shivered’ its tail sideways, very subtly but fast. This behaviour, not previously reported in literature9–11, was seen several times during one observation bout of five minutes. The species exhibits complex behaviour during breeding, including wing and facial feather shivering9. It is also known to cock its tail11. Movements were sluggish compared to D. fusca or the resident Brown-capped Vireo V. leucophrys.

*Second record.—*On 24 November 2011, an adult Yellow-throated Vireo was observed by AS-U at 10h30–11h20 at an elevation of 35 m along the Tululibi river trail in the grounds of Tundaloma Lodge (01°10’59.57”N 78°45’18.91”W), c.17 km from San Lorenzo, prov. Esmeraldas. Habitat consisted of tall trees, c.30 m, with second growth bordering the river and pioneer plants interspersed with large grasses and dense thickets abutting the lodge gardens. The bird was located by call, then seen foraging alone in the midstorey c.10 m up. The observer imitated the bird’s vocalisations and it responded immediately in an agitated manner, hopping sideways and calling more emphatically, approaching to within 5 m. Light conditions...
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