

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 Canada^{6,9}, 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 Rica^{2,8,9,11} 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.

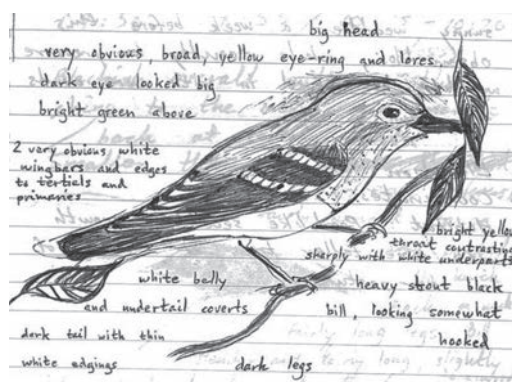


Figure 1. Field sketch of Yellow-throated Vireo *Vireo flavifrons* observed at Wildsumaco Lodge, prov. Napo, Ecuador, 10 February 2008 (J. Nilsson)

When feeding, the bird 'shivered' its tail sideways, very subtly but fast. This behaviour, not previously reported in literature^{9–11}, 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 Tululbí 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



Figure 2. Yellow-throated Vireo *Vireo flavifrons*, Los Cedros Reserve, prov. Imbabura, Ecuador, 15 March 2012 (J. García-Domínguez)

were good and the observation was made using binoculars. The individual was identified to species based on the observer's previous experience in North and Central America.

Third record.—A single was photographed feeding on insects attracted to the dining room lights at Los Cedros Reserve, prov. Imbabura (00°18'N 78°46'W), at 1,350 m on 15 December 2011 by J. Poon & J. de Coux. Presumably the same bird was relocated there by JFF on 15 March 2012 and seen sporadically over three consecutive days at 1–5 m range. JG-D photographed the same bird several times (Fig. 2). It was observed in a garden adjacent to secondary forest, with fairly sparse low-stature trees and bushes, providing a continuous cover from garden to forest. The species was recorded again at Los Cedros on 5 January 2013. Noticeable plumage differences were noted, but local residents (M. Obando and J. de Coux pers. comm.) suggest that the bird remained year-round.

It was identified by the rich yellow throat, contrasting white belly, dark wings with broad white bands, yellow eye-ring, 'large' eyes and grey rump. The identification was confirmed after consulting Dunning¹. The bird moved sluggishly between branches, including its entire body sideways on a few occasions. No aggressive or flocking interactions were observed with other insectivores, including *V. leucophrys*, Red-eyed Vireo *V. olivaceus*, *D. fusca*, Montane Woodcreeper *Lepidocolaptes lacrymiger*, Dusky-capped Flycatcher *Myiarchus tuberculifer*, Common Tody-Flycatcher *Todirostrum cinereum*, House Wren *Troglodytes aedon*, Black-and-white Warbler *Mniotilta varia* and Slate-throated Redstart *Myioborus miniatus*.

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