

Splits, lumps and shuffles

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Crimson-fronted Cardinal *Paroaria baeri*, an endemic of the Araguaia Valley, Pousada Kuryala, Félix do Araguaia Mato Grosso, Brazil, November 2008 (Bradley Davis / Birding Mato Grosso).

This series focuses on recent taxonomic proposals—be they entirely new species, splits, lumps or reorganisations—that are likely to be of greatest interest to birders. This latest instalment is a bumper one, dominated by the publication of the descriptions of 15 new species (and many splits) for the Amazon in the concluding *Special Volume of the Handbook of the Birds of the World* (reviewed on pp. 79–80). The last time descriptions of such a large number of new species were published in a single work was in 1871, with Pelzeln's treatise! Most of these are suboscine passerines—woodcreepers, antbirds and tyrant flycatchers, but even include a new jay. Remaining novelties include papers describing a new tapaculo (who would have guessed), a major rearrangement of *Myrmeciza* antbirds, more Amazonian splits and oddments involving hermits, grosbeaks and cardinals. Get your lists out!



Above left: Mexican Hermit *Phaethornis mexicanus*, Finca El Pacífico, Oaxaca, Mexico, April 2007 (Hadoram Shirihi / Photographic Handbook of the Birds of the World)

Above right: Ocellated Woodcreeper *Xiphorhynchus ocellatus perplexus*, Allpahuayo-Mishana Reserved Zone, Loreto, Peru, October 2008 (Hadoram Shirihi / Photographic Handbook of the Birds of the World)

Species status for Mexican Hermit

Splits, Lumps and Shuffles is no stranger to taxonomic revision of *Phaethornis* hermits, and readers can look forward to some far-reaching future developments from Amazonia, but the *Phaethornis* under the spotlight in this issue is the polytypic Long-billed Hermit *Phaethornis longirostris*. Six subspecies are widely recognised and species status for some of these e.g. *griseoventer*, *mexicanus* and *baroni* has already been mooted (e.g. Schuchmann 1999). Arbelaez-Cortes & Navarro-Siguenza (2013) recently visited the taxonomic status of *P. longirostris* in western Mexico, finding a 4.2% divergence in mtDNA. Coupled with morphological and vocal data, reviewed by Howell (2013) in the last issue of *Neotropical Birding*, the authors recommend separation of *P. l. mexicanus* and *P. l. griseoventer* as Mexican Hermit *Phaethornis mexicanus*, an

endemic to western Mexico and sister to the remaining populations of *P. longirostris*.

A presidential puffbird

The Striolated Puffbird *Nystalus striolatus* was not an obvious candidate for a taxonomic overhaul, with two, very morphologically similar subspecies recognised: *N. s. striolatus* of Amazonia east Ecuador, east Peru, west & central Brazil, and northern Bolivia and the apparently disjunct *N. s. torridus* in eastern Pará state, south of the Amazon. The species has an easily recognised and imitated whistled song, which varies subtly between the two subspecies. Bret Whitney noticed that birds from the Madeira–Tapajós interfluvium in central Amazonian Brazil sang differently from populations either side of those rivers, prompting a taxonomic investigation into the group. It transpired that the type specimen of *N. s. striolatus* was collected in this very region, which meant that the population of Striolated Puffbirds west

of the Madeira River actually had no valid name. Whitney *et al.* (2013d) highlight marginal plumage differences between the three populations and significant genetic and vocal differences sufficient to propose a three-species arrangement: Eastern Striolated Puffbird *N. striolatus* for populations east of the Tapajós, Natterer's Striolated Puffbird *N. torridus* for those between the Tapajós and Madeira and the formal naming of *N. obamai*—Western Striolated Puffbird—for populations west of the Madeira, the name honouring Barack Obama, the current President of the United States, who probably does not need an introduction here.

Ocellated Woodcreeper is multiple species

The Chestnut-rumped *Xiphorhynchus pardalotus* and Ocellated Woodcreepers *X. ocellatus* form a species complex that is considered to comprise between two and three polytypic species, and eight to nine subspecies, which occur throughout much of lowland Amazonia and the adjacent Andean foothills, albeit with much wrangling over species limits. Sousa-Neves *et al.* (2013) have attempted to settle these debates by performing a comprehensive molecular analysis, using data from two mitochondrial and three nuclear genes for almost all taxa in the complex. Their phylogenetic analyses indicate that current species limits and subspecies taxonomy is off the mark. For example, *X. o. ocellatus* is paraphyletic relative to *X. o. perplexus*, and *X. c. napensis* comprises two distinct evolutionary lineages that are not supported as each other's closest relatives. Based on genetic divergence between populations of Ocellated Woodcreepers they recommend the following taxonomic arrangement (note they proposed no English names, those listed here are potential candidates!): 'Chunchotambo Woodcreeper' *X. chunchotambo* of the lower Andean foothills and adjacent lowland Amazonia (in southern Colombia, eastern Ecuador, eastern Peru, northern Bolivia, and creeping into Brazil in the state of Acre; 'Beauperthuy's Woodcreeper' *X. beauperthuysii* found north of the Amazon from the west banks of the river Negro in the Brazilian state of Amazonas through southern Venezuela southern Colombia, eastern Ecuador, and northern Peru east of the river Napo; and 'Ocellated Woodcreeper' *X. ocellatus* occurring south of the Amazon in north-eastern Peru to the Madeira–Tapajós interfluvium in Brazil and adjacent northern Bolivia. The authors found significant vocal variation in at least one of these clades (*X.*

chunchotambo), so even this new species may not be monotypic... (A. Aleixo *in litt.* 2013).

Amazonian Barred Woodcreeper systematics and a new taxon

Amazonian Barred Woodcreeper *Dendrocolaptes certhia* is a polytypic species with its six currently recognised taxa distributed throughout the Amazonian lowlands, in addition to an isolated (and extremely threatened) population in the north-eastern Brazilian Atlantic Forest. Although these taxa are broadly morphologically and vocally similar, *D. c. radiolatus* and *D. c. concolor* are known to be equally or more genetically divergent from each other than either is from *D. sanctithomae*, suggesting that species limits should be redrawn. A new molecular phylogeny conducted by Batista *et al.* (2013) revealed the existence of seven reciprocally monophyletic groups within the polytypic *D. certhia*, each occupying discrete Amazonian regions and all corresponding to an already named taxon with the exception of the group inhabiting the Xingu–Tocantins interfluvium in Amazonian Brazil. The team proposed the name *retentus* for this new taxon which is separated from its sister taxon *D. c. medius* by 0.7% sequence divergence in the mitochondrial genes cytochrome b and NADH subunit 2. The scientific name *retentus* reflects its mistaken treatment (along with the taxon *ridgwayi*) as an introgressive population (based on overall plumage intermediacy) between the weakly barred subspecies *D. c. concolor* and strongly barred *D. c. medius*. Given the diagnosable plumage characters and genetic differences, the authors propose splitting all taxa in the complex as follows: Amazonian Barred Woodcreeper *D. certhia* of the Guiana Shield north of the Amazon and east of the rio Negro, in Venezuela, Brazil, Guyana, Suriname and French Guiana; Napo Woodcreeper *D. radiolatus* occurring west of the rio Negro in Amazonian Brazil and Venezuela west to the base of the Andes in Colombia, Ecuador and Peru north of the Amazon; Juruá Woodcreeper *D. juruanus* distributed west of the Madeira and south of the Amazon in Amazonian Brazil, Bolivia and Peru; Plain-coloured Woodcreeper *D. concolor* in the Madeira–Tapajós interfluvium in Amazonian Brazil and Bolivia in Santa Cruz; Ridgway's Woodcreeper *D. ridgwayi* in the Tapajós–Xingu interfluvium in Brazil; Xingu Woodcreeper *D. retentus* in the Xingu–Tocantins interfluvium in Brazil; and Todd's Woodcreeper *D. medius*; found

east of the Tocantins river in Pará and western Maranhão, with an isolated population in the north-east Atlantic Forest that has not yet been subject to genetic analysis and seems likely to be divergent to some extent...

Revisiting the Lineated Woodcreeper complex

The Lineated Woodcreeper *Lepidocolaptes albolineatus* is a typical member of mixed-species canopy flocks of the Amazonian lowlands, currently treated as polytypic with five morphologically similar subspecies recognised (originally described at the species level). Rodrigues *et al.* (2013) recently reviewed the taxonomy of the complex, and their molecular phylogeny (based on mitochondrial DNA data, coupled with vocal data) supported the recognition of five reciprocally monophyletic groups each corresponding to a named taxon with the exception of those south of the Amazon and west of the Madeira rivers (and to which the name *fuscapillus* had been previously incorrectly applied). This taxon they name *Lepidocolaptes fatimalimae* after Fátima Lima, who has been the bird collection manager at the Museu Goeldi for over 30 years. In considering the reciprocal monophyly and plumage-based diagnoses of the five distinct populations they recommend their recognition at the species level as: Lineated Woodcreeper *L. albolineatus* of the Guianas east of the rios Branco and Negro in Venezuela, Brazil, Guyana, Suriname and French Guiana; Duida Woodcreeper *L. duidae* found west of the rios Branco and Negro in Amazonian Brazil and Venezuela west to the base of the Andes in Colombia, Ecuador and Peru (north of the Amazon / Solimões); Inambari Woodcreeper *L. fatimalimae* found west of the Madeira and south of the Amazon / Solimões rivers in Amazonian Brazil, Bolivia and Peru; Rondônia Woodcreeper *L. fuscapillus* ranging between the Madeira and Tapajós rivers in Amazonian Brazil and northern Bolivia; and finally Layard's Woodcreeper *L. layardi* occurring east of the Tapajós in Brazil as far as the Atlantic coast in north-western Maranhão state.

Probing scythebill taxonomy

Field-, and even specimen-based identification of the two Amazonian scythebills—the endemic Curve-billed Scythebill *Campylorhamphus procurvoides* and more widespread Red-billed Scythebill *C. trochilrostris*—is extremely challenging. A combination of historical detective

work and a thorough revision of molecular, vocal and morphological datasets by Aleixo *et al.* (2013) and Portes *et al.* (2013) has shed new taxonomic light on these tricky groups. In the former paper they name a new taxon—*gyldenstolpei* which occurs in the Inambari area of endemism west of the Madeira and south of the Solimões (Amazon) rivers in Brazil (and probably also in adjacent Peru). The name honours the Swedish ornithologist Count Nils Gyldenstolpe for his work both on scythebill taxonomy and Amazonian birds in general. The authors recommend species-level treatment for three forms: the aforementioned Tupana Scythebill *C. gyldenstolpei*, Curve-billed Scythebill *C. procurvoides* of the Guiana Shield north of the Amazon and east of the Negro–Branco rivers in Venezuela, Brazil, Guyana and Surinam, and finally Zimmer's Scythebill *C. sanus* found west of the Branco–Negro rivers in Amazonian Brazil and Venezuela west to Colombia, Ecuador and Peru north of the Amazon / Solimões rivers. Portes *et al.* (2013) demonstrate the reciprocal monophyly and morphological distinctness of Curve-billed Scythebills south of the Amazon, including an unnamed population between the rios Tapajós and Xingu, which they christen *cardosoi* after the conservationist and biogeographer José Maria Cardoso da Silva. The southern Amazonian taxa in the complex elevated to species status thus comprise Snethlage's Scythebill *C. multistriatus* of the northern portion of the Xingu–Tocantins interfluvium, Rondonia Scythebill *C. probatus* occurring between the rios Madeira and Tapajós, and the aforementioned Tapajós Scythebill of the Tapajós–Xingu interfluvium.

Epinecrophylla antwren species limits

Stipple-throated Antwrens *Epinecrophylla haematonota* are widespread inhabitants of western Amazonia forests on both banks of the Amazon. About ten years ago, Bret Whitney discovered vocal differences between Stipple-throated Antwrens inhabiting the Aripuanã–Machado interfluvium and those on the opposite side (left) bank of the river Madeira. Subsequent field studies have led Whitney *et al.* (2013b) to describe this population as a new species-level taxon *E. dentei*, the Roosevelt Stipple-throated Antwren, on the grounds of diagnostic genetic (c.3% divergent), vocal and female plumage differences from the adjacent *E. h. amazonica*, which were in agreement with the widely adopted Isler *et al.* (1998) guidelines for species delimitation in antbirds. The scientific

>> SPLITS, LUMPS AND SHUFFLES



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Jurua Woodcreeper *Dendrocolaptes juruanus*, Tupana Lodge (Purus-Madeira interfluve), Amazonas, Brazil, July 2010 (Andrew Whittaker / Birding Brazil Tours)

Xingu Woodcreeper *Dendrocolaptes retentus*, a new member of the Amazonian Barred Woodcreeper complex from the Xingu-Tocantins interfluve. Santana do Araguaia, Pará, Brazil, July 2008 (Bruno Renno)

Lineated Woodcreeper *Lepidocolaptes albolineatus*. The nominate species retains the original species English name in this complex of canopy woodcreepers. Cuieiras Biological Reserve, Manaus, Amazonas, Brazil, March 2009 (Andrew Whittaker / Birding Brazil Tours)

Inambari Woodcreeper *Lepidocolaptes fatimalimae*, the newly-described taxon in the Lineated Woodcreeper complex. Assis, Acre, Brazil, September 2009 (Andrew Whittaker / Birding Brazil Tours)



Clockwise from top left

Duida Woodcreeper *Lepidocolaptes duidae*. Composing English names for many of these new woodcreepers is challenging, given their phenotypic conservatism, so descriptive epithets are hard to come by. Novo Airão, Amazonas, Brazil, July 2009 (Andrew Whittaker / Birding Brazil Tours)

Roosevelt Stipple-throated Antwren *Epinecrophylla dentei*, another new microendemic from the 'mini-interfluves' of the Madeira-Tapajós interfluve. Left bank of the Rio Roosevelt, Mato Grosso, Brazil, August 2011 (Fabio Schunk)

Rondonia Scythebill *Campylorhamphus probatus*, Machadinho d'Oeste, Rondonia, July 2013 (Felipe Arantes)

Tapajós Scythebill *Campylorhamphus cardosoi*, a species restricted to *terra firme* forests between the Tapajós and Xingu. Cristalino Jungle Lodge Reserve, rio Cristalino, Mato Grosso, Brazil, July 2013 (Kevin J. Zimmer)

name honours the prolific bird collector Emílio Dente. Whitney *et al.* did not stop at *dentei* and their combined morphological, vocal and genetic analysis led them to propose a number of taxonomic upgrades within the Stipple-throat complex. In addition to *E. dentei* they propose the following species-level taxa: Madeira Stipple-throated Antwren *E. amazonica* occurring between the rios Juruá and Madeira in Brazil and adjacent Peru and Bolivia; Negro Stipple-throated Antwren *E. pyrrhonota* north of the rivers Napo and Solimões; Napo Stipple-throated Antwren *E. haematonota* south of the rio Napo in Peru south to the rio Marañon and Solimões and east to the rio Juruá in Brazil; and finally Foothill Stipple-throated Antwren *E. spodionota* of the Andean foothills. The authors also evaluated the taxonomic status of Yasuni Antwren *E. fjeldsaai*—described as a new species by Krabbe *et al.* (1999) based on the same framework—and, based on a high similarity of mitochondrial and nuclear haplotypes, concluded this taxon is better considered a subspecies of *E. haematonota*.

Bamboo Antwren is born

Small, grey, somewhat difficult-to-identify antwrens are a typical feature of Amazonian forests; Ihering's Antwren *Myrmotherula iheringi* falls into this group and occurs in south-western Amazonia in Bolivia, Brazil and Peru. Ihering's was historically considered to comprise two parapatric subspecies: *M. i. iheringi* in the Madeira–Tapajós interfluvium in the Brazilian states of Amazonas, Pará and Rondônia, and *M. i. heteroptera* found west of the Madeira and south of the Amazon in the Brazilian state of Amazonas and adjacent Bolivia and Peru. These differ principally in female plumage patterns (like many other antbirds). Miranda *et al.* (2013) presented new molecular, morphological and vocal data to illustrate that the current two-subspecies treatment does not reflect the group's evolutionary history. Their molecular analyses recovered three reciprocally monophyletic clades, which also reflect loudsong note structures and female plumage patterns. They argue that these three clades are better treated as separate species, one of which had not been formally named and which they call *Myrmotherula oreni*, the Bamboo Antwren of eastern Acre in Brazil the departments of Pando in Bolivia, and Madre de Dios, Cuzco, Ucayali and Puno in Peru, a distribution coincident with another newly discovered bamboo specialist—the Rufous Twistwing *Cnipodectes superrufus*. The scientific name honours David C. Oren for his

many contributions to Amazonian ornithology. In addition to *oreni*, the authors propose to treat the birds occurring west of the Madeira river in the northern part of the Inambari area of endemism as Purus Antwren *M. heteroptera*, leaving the original name Ihering's Antwren *M. iheringi* for birds occurring between the rivers Madeira and Tapajós.

A new *Herpsilochmus* antwren from the central-western Amazon

Legendary INPA (Instituto Nacional de Pesquisas da Amazônia) ornithologist Mario Cohn-Haft discovered a new species of *Herpsilochmus* antwren on the left bank of the rio Madeira near Humaitá, Brazil in July 1999. This, however, did not come as a surprise as its discovery was biogeographically predicted, given the absence of any antwrens in the genus from this region. Although superficially similar to other members of the genus such as Spot-backed Antwren *H. dorsimaculatus* it differed subtly in plumage morphology, biometrics and significantly in vocalisations, in what is a very morphologically conservative group of black-and-white antwrens. Thirteen years on, Cohn-Haft & Bravo (2013) have presented the official description of the new taxon, which is confined primarily to various localities between the rivers Purus and Madeira in Brazil (but has also been found west as far as the Juruá, where Andrew Whittaker and myself recorded it in 2007). This species was found to be significantly distinct from the *Herpsilochmus* populations on the other side of the Madeira (mtDNA c.4% in fact) and c.6% divergent from a clade containing other extra-Amazonian and Andean *Herpsilochmus*. They authors gave it the name *Herpsilochmus praedictus*—Predicted Antwren given that its discovery was anticipated!

Another new *Herpsilochmus* antwren from the central Amazon

As already alluded to above, *praedictus* is not the only new Amazonian *Herpsilochmus*. Whitney *et al.* (2013a) have recently named another new species, this one with an even more restricted distribution between the right bank of the rio Madeira in Amazonas and the left bank of the rio Aripuanã, extending to north-west Mato Grosso and adjacent north-eastern Rondônia. Originally reported by Stotz *et al.* (1997) as an isolated population of Black-capped Antwren *H.*

atricapillus, adult females are readily distinguished from others in the complex by their paler, creamy-white throat contrasting more sharply with the orangey forecrown, and more extensively white underparts, whilst males are more cryptically plumaged. Again it is a story of strong molecular and vocal differences (see the previous species) that build a case for species status. The authors name the taxon Aripuana Antwren *Herpsilochmus stotzi*, after its discoverer and the river that marks the limits of its distribution. There it occurs in *campinarana*; a stunted forest physiognomy on nutrient-poor sandy soils.

Carving up *Myrmeciza*

The lumping of 22 antbirds into the single genus *Myrmeciza* is historically a rather controversial arrangement and, with recent genetic studies confirming polyphyly in the group, an exhaustive analysis was obviously called for. Isler *et al.* (2013) have answered this, and their comprehensive molecular phylogeny of the family Thamnophilidae indicates that species currently placed within this genus are found in three of the five tribes of the subfamily Thamnophilinae. The result is that species placed in *Myrmeciza* are best assigned to *Myrmeciza* and 11 other genera. Seven of these—*Ammonastes*, *Ampelornis*, *Aprositornis*, *Hafferia*, *Inundicola*, *Poliocrania* and *Sciaphylax* are newly described, while four—*Myrmelastes*, *Myrmoderus*, *Myrmophylax* and *Sipia*—are resurrected. So—deep breath—the new arrangement in the Thamnophilinae is as follows: 1) *Myrmorchilus* Stripe-backed Antbird *M. strigilatus*; 2) *Myrmophylax*: Black-throated Antbird *M. atrothorax*; 3) *Aprositornis*: Yapacana Antbird *A. disjuncta*; 3) *Ammonastes*: Grey-bellied Antbird *A. pelzelni*; 4) *Sciaphylax*: Chestnut-tailed Antbird *S. hemimelaena* and Zimmer's Antbird *S. castanea*; 5) *Myrmoderus*: Ferruginous-backed Antbird *M. ferrugineus*, White-bibbed Antbird *M. loricatus*, Scalloped Antbird *M. ruficauda*, Squamate Antbird *M. squamosus*; 6) *Hypocnemoides*: Black-chinned Antbird *H. melanopogon* and Band-tailed Antbird *H. maculicauda*; 7) *Hylaphylax*: Spotted Antbird *H. naevioides*, Spot-backed Antbird *H. naevius* and Dot-backed Antbird *H. punctulatus*; 8) *Sclateria*: Silvered Antbird *S. naevia*; 9) *Myrmelastes*: Roraiman Antbird *M. saturatus*, Slate-coloured Antbird *M. schistaceus*, Plumbeous Antbird *M. hyperythrus*, Rufous-faced Antbird *M. rufifacies*, Brownish-headed Antbird *M. brunneiceps*, Humaita Antbird *M. humaythae*, Spot-winged Antbird *M. leucostigma* and Caura Antbird *M. caurensis*; 10) *Poliocrania*: Chestnut-

backed Antbird *Poliocrania exsul*; 11) *Ampelornis*: Grey-headed Antbird *A. griseiceps*; 11) *Sipia*: Stub-tailed Antbird *S. berlepschi*, Esmeraldas Antbird *S. nigricauda*, Dull-mantled Antbird *S. laemosticta* and Magdalena Antbird *S. palliata*; 12) *Myrmeciza*: White-bellied Antbird *M. longipes*; 13) *Myrmoborus*: Black-tailed Antbird *M. melanurus*, White-lined Antbird *Myrmoborus lophotes*, Black-faced Antbird *Myrmoborus myotherinus*, White-browed Antbird *M. leucophrys* and Ash-breasted Antbird *M. lugubris*; 14) *Gymnocichla*: Bare-crowned Antbird *G. nudiceps*; 15) *Pyriglena* White-backed Fire-eye *P. leuconota*, White-shouldered Fire-eye *P. leucoptera* and Fringe-backed Fire-eye *P. atra*; 16) *Percnostola*: Black-headed Antbird *P. rufifrons* and Allpahuayo Antbird *P. arenarum*; 17) *Hafferia*: Sooty Antbird *H. fortis*, Blue-lored Antbird *H. immaculata* and Zeledon's Antbird *H. zeledoni*; 18) *Inundicola*: White-shouldered Antbird *I. melanocephalus* and Goeldi's Antbird *I. goeldii*. Phew!

A new micro-endemic warbling antbird from southern Amazonia

Seasoned new-for-science discoverers Mario Cohn-Haft and Bret Whitney recorded calls of a 'warbling antbird' *Hypocnemis* sp. at Manicoré, Amazonas state, Brazil, in June 2000 that they realised were different from any vocalisations known from taxa in this complex. Seven years later the then Warbling Antbird *H. cantator* was carved up into six species by Isler *et al.* (2007). This was a relatively easy exercise as two subspecies occurred sympatrically making it easy to generate a taxonomic yardstick by which to judge species limits. However, the Manicoré birds were not included in this analysis as there were no specimens and only two recordings available. Six years later, with the requisite data now available, Whitney *et al.* (2013c) have put a name to this population: Manicore Warbling Antbird *Hypocnemis rondoni*. The scientific name honours Cândido Mariano da Silva Rondon (1865–1958), a Brazilian military officer and explorer famous for his support of Brazilian indigenous populations. Manicore Warbling Antbirds occur from the right bank of the rio Madeira and the left bank of rio Aripuanã in the state of Amazonas, Brazil, upriver to the rio Roosevelt in north-west Mato Grosso and the river Machado in Rondônia. Morphological diagnosis of this species is again subtle but vocal and genetic evidence (c.4% mtDNA divergent from its sister species Rondonia

>> SPLITS, LUMPS AND SHUFFLES



Above left, top to bottom

Female Madeira Stipple-throated Antwren *Epinecrophylla amazonica*, Tupana, Amazonas, Brazil, December 2007 (Hadoram Shirihi / Photographic Handbook of the Birds of the World)

Male Negro Stipple-throated Antwren *Epinecrophylla pyrrhonota*, Anavilhanas Jungle Lodge, Amazonas, Brazil, December 2007 (Hadoram Shirihi / Photographic Handbook of the Birds of the World)

Foothill Antwren *Epinecrophylla spodionota*, Quebrada Mishquiyacu, Moyobamba, San Martin, Peru, October 2008 (Hadoram Shirihi / Photographic Handbook of the Birds of the World)

Above right, top to bottom

Purus Antwren *Myrmotherula heteroptera*, Palmari Lodge, Rio Javari, Amazonas, Brazil, May 2011 (Andrew Whittaker / Birding Brazil Tours)

Predicted Antwren *Herpsilochmus praedictus*: the first published field photograph of this unobtrusive canopy antwren, Beruri, Amazonas, Brazil, July 2013 (Christian Borges Andretti)

Aripuana Antwren *Herpsilochmus stotzi* is most accessible to birders at the Pousada Rio Roosevelt, near where this adult male was caught, on the left bank Rio Roosevelt, Mato Grosso, Brazil, August 2011 (Fabio Schunck)



Clockwise from top left

(Top left and right) Acre Tody-tyrant *Hemitriccus cohnhafti*. This cryptically-plumaged tody-tyrant has recently been discovered over the border in Peru. This individual was photographed at the type locality of Assis, Acre, Brazil, September 2009 (Andrew Whittaker / Birding Brazil Tours)

Guianan Gnatcatcher *Poliptila guianensis*. Photographing members of the broadly-defined Guianan Gnatcatcher complex is very difficult as they are typically rare (or at least unobtrusive) and tend to stay in the highest parts of the forest canopy. Cuieiras Biological Reserve, Manaus, Amazonas, Brazil, March 2009 (Andrew Whittaker / Birding Brazil Tours)

Campina Jay *Cyanocorax hafferi*, arguably one of the most unexpected recent Neotropical ornithological discoveries. Humaita, Amazonas, Brazil, November 2009 (Luciano Moreira Lima)

Chico's Tyrannulet *Zimmerius chicomendesi*, a cryptic, *campina* enclave specialist. Highway BR-230, Humaita, Amazonas, Brazil December 2011 (Fabio Schunck)



Warbling Antbird *H. ochrogyna* and c.5% divergent from Spix's Warbling Antbird *H. striata*) indicate that this taxon deserves species status.

Surprise! A new *Scytalopus*...

Hosner *et al.* (2013) have described a new species—Junín Tapaculo *Scytalopus gettyae* from temperate humid montane forests in Junín department, central Peru, based on a series of four specimens and associated voice recordings—some dating back over a decade, having been erroneously assigned to other taxa. The new taxon is a fairly small tapaculo with uniformly black plumage, similar to the allopatric *S. latrans* complex. It is known from montane forest at two localities in the río Satipo watershed at 2,400–3,200 m, and occurs syntopically with the much larger Large-footed Tapaculo *S. macropus*, being replaced by *S. femoralis* at lower elevations and by *S. acutirostris* higher up. The new species has a unique song (distinct from all other *Scytalopus*) consisting of a rapidly repeated series of ascending *arpeggio* phrases in addition to a second distinctive vocal type consisting of a series of harsh, metallic notes. Its common name highlights its restricted distribution, around Junín, and the scientific name honours conservationist Caroline Marie Getty.

A new *Hemitriccus* tody-tyrant from Acre

In September 2009, long-time Neotropical stalwarts Kevin Zimmer and Andrew Whittaker came across a *Hemitriccus* tody-tyrant in second-growth and forest-edge vegetation near the río Acre, Brazil that defied their collective experience of almost all members of the genus. Subsequent expeditions returned with specimens, and both field observations (plumage characteristics and vocalisations—diagnostically duration, number of notes, peak frequency pattern, and multiple unique calls) and genetic evidence showed that the population was closest to the Yungas Tody-Tyrant *H. spodiops* of the Andes, but significantly different enough for them to propose species status as Acre Tody-Tyrant *Hemitriccus cohnhafti*. The name of the new species honours Mario Cohn-Haft, one of the foremost Amazonian ornithologists, who has contributed much to the understanding of this tricky genus. The authors speculate that the species probably occurs in neighbouring Peru and Bolivia and (stop press!) the species has just been discovered in adjacent Madre de Dios in Peru (Mike Harvey pers. comm. 2013).

Readers should be aware of several patterns emerging in this onslaught of new species: (a) most new species are cryptic, (b) the majority are from southern Amazonia, especially between the ríos Madeira and Tapajós and (c) most are suboscine passerines, particularly antbirds, woodcreepers and (henceforth) flycatchers.

A new *Tolmomyias* flycatcher from the Madeira interfluve

The genus *Tolmomyias* currently comprises five species, but seasoned Neotropical birders know that this number is set to rise in spectacular fashion in the near future... Whitney *et al.* (2013e) have just described a new species-level taxon, Sucunduri Flycatcher *Tolmomyias sucunduri*, in the Yellow-margined Flycatcher *T. assimilis* complex, a prequel to an anticipated future rash of *Tolmomyias* splits and new taxa. As reflected in its English and scientific names, the new species is found between the río Canumã and Sucunduri east to the lower río Tapajós. First found in 1995, the species was not collected until 2008, and then it took another series of expeditions to draw up the exact limits of its distribution and collect more recordings, such that the authors felt confident in publishing. The new taxon differs subtly from neighbouring (sub)species of *T. assimilis* in having a darker grey crown and mantle, but has a song that is very different from any other *assimilis*, which is perhaps the key reason why no-one picked up on the new bird until recently.

A new tyrannulet from (drumroll) the Madeira interfluve of Amazonian Brazil...

The discovery of Mishana Tyrannulet *Zimmerius villarejoi* by Alonso & Whitney (2001) was part of a flurry of new species first found in the poorly known white-sand forests near Iquitos, Peru. This species, or at least something very similar to it—the so called *Zimmerius* aff. *villarejoi*, was subsequently found at a couple of other disjunct sites in the Moyo Valley and may warrant recognition as a distinct taxonomic entity too. Despite this, the discovery of an ostensibly similar-looking species in Amazonas state, central Amazonian Brazil, by Bret Whitney in 2009 came as something of a shock to the regional ornithological collective. Occurring in stunted *campina* woodland on nutrient poor soils, the new taxon has a very restricted and patchy distribution

in central Amazonia between the rios Madeira and Aripuanã / Roosevelt. Whitney *et al.* (2013f) name the bird Chico's Tyrannulet *Z. chicomendesi* after Francisco Alves Mendes Filho—better known as 'Chico Mendes', the Brazilian rubber tapper, trade union leader, environmentalist and champion of Amazonia who was assassinated in 1988. Chico's Tyrannulet differs from both *villarejoi* populations in biometrics and by its very different voice (see recordings of all populations on Xeno-canto: <http://www.xeno-canto.org>).

A new gnatcatcher from the western Amazon

A taxonomic revision of the Guianan Gnatcatcher *Poliophtila guianensis* complex by Whitney & Alvarez (2005) proposed recognition of four allopatric species Guianan Gnatcatcher *P. guianensis*, Iquitos Gnatcatcher *P. clements*, Rio Negro Gnatcatcher *P. facilis* and Para Gnatcatcher *P. paraensis*. The authors hinted at the existence of an undescribed taxon occurring west of the rio Madeira, known from a few sight records and in July 2007 the first specimens of this new taxon were collected by Alexandre Aleixo and Andrew Whittaker. Whittaker *et al.* (2013) propose the name Inambari Gnatcatcher *Poliophtila attenboroughi* for the new species, after the famous British broadcaster and naturalist. Adult males of *attenboroughi* differ from males of all gnatcatchers in the complex in having darker grey upperparts, chest and lower throat, and the combination of a white eye-ring and a longer tail with white on the outer feathers, and lack of any white in the head. The new species also differs subtly in vocal characters and is strikingly different molecularly; separated from its sister species, *P. paraensis*, by c.3.9% sequence divergence in the mitochondrial gene NADH subunit 2.

A manakin reshuffle

The members of the manakin family Pipridae are among the most coveted by Neotropical birders; 52 species are divided into 13–15 genera with the greatest diversity found in lowland South America, principally in Amazonia. Ohlson *et al.* (2013) recently undertook a study of phylogenetic relationships within the Pipridae using sequence data from three nuclear introns and one mitochondrial protein-coding gene. Their key findings included: (1) confirming a sister group relationship between the subfamilies Neopelminae and Piprinae; (2) finding support for the division of Piprinae into two principal clades:

Ilicurini and Piprini; and (3) finding the genera *Pipra* and *Chloropipo* to be polyphyletic. The *Pipra* issue has already been resolved by Remsen *et al.* (2013) who recommended recognition of *Ceratopipra* for the Golden-headed Manakin *Pipra erythrocephala* group (*cornuta*, *chloromeros*, *rubrocapilla*, *erythrocephala* and *mentalis*) leaving *Pipra* for the *aureola* group (*filicauda*, *aureola* and *fasciicauda*) separated by *Machaeropterus* and *Dixiphia*. *Chloropipo* was found to represent three different clades, with two species in an undetermined position alongside Ilicurini and Piprini, necessitating its members to be placed in three different genera. Given that Yellow-headed Manakin *C. flavicapilla* is the type of the genus, *Chloropipo* can only be applied to that species and Jet Manakin *C. unicolor* whilst Olive Manakin *Chloropipo uniformis* becomes *Xenopipo uniformis*. Green Manakin *Chloropipo holochlora* proved more problematic, although found to be sister to the *Lepidothrix* manakins, morphological and behavioural differences argued against shifting it to that genus. The authors propose the name *Cryptopipo*—concealed manakin—both to reflect its until-now obscure phylogenetic relationships and its skulking behaviour.

A new Amazonian jay!

For most Amazonian ornithologists the news of the discovery by Mario Cohn-Haft of what was ostensibly always going to be a *new* jay in the central Amazon represents one of the most exciting discoveries in recent Neotropical ornithology history. First glimpsed in August 2002 at the edge of savanna (*campina*) formations, it took a series of expedition over the following decade to draw together sufficient information for Cohn-Haft *et al.* (2013) to be confident in naming the new taxon: Campina Jay *Cyanocorax hafferi*. The species' epithet honours the German biogeographer and ornithologist Dr. Jürgen Haffer, best known for his Pleistocene refugia hypothesis (Haffer 1969). The new taxon most closely resembles Azure-naped Jay *C. heilprini* of eastern Colombia, southern Venezuela and north-west Brazil. It differs from that species most strikingly in having a blue rather than purplish wash to the underparts and in having three (rather than one) facial marks. Occurring between the west bank of the rio Purus and the west bank of the rio Madeira, the species' restricted distribution and habitat requirements have left it vulnerable to habitat loss caused by the widespread depredations of its *campina* habitats by aggregate extractors and through agricultural expansion.

Another vote for species status for 'Xingu' Cardinal

The Crimson-fronted Cardinal *Paroaria baeri* is a poorly-known riparian fringe endemic from central Brazil divided into two subspecies *Paroaria baeri baeri* from the valley of the rio Araguaia and *P. b. xinguensis* known only from a very restricted region in the headwaters of the rio Xingu. Lopes & Gonzaga (2013) recently collected a further series of specimens of the latter taxon and, combined with morphometric data from all known existing specimens, they were able to investigate the taxonomic status of the pair, which has been the subject of previous debate (e.g. Dávalos & Porzecanski 2009). They found that whilst measurements of the two taxa overlapped, plumage colouration was diagnostic and the two differed in the respective absence (*P. b. baeri*) or presence (*P. b. xinguensis*) of sexual dichromatism. The authors inferred that these differences coupled with their allopatry indicate a lack of gene flow between them and that both warrant species status.

Unexpected results from a *Pheucticus grosbeak* phylogeny

The six grosbeaks currently recognised in the genus *Pheucticus* were a target for a multi-locus molecular analysis by Pulgarín *et al.* (2013). Their results indicated current species limits to be cloudy in both the Mexican Yellow Grosbeak *P. chrysopheplus* and the Black-backed Grosbeak *P. aureoventris*. They found that the former as currently defined is paraphyletic with respect to Black-thighed Grosbeak *P. tibialis* (although strong support is lacking). The two groups of *chrysopheplus* correspond with distributions of the well-marked allopatric forms *P. c. chrysopheplus* and *P. c. aurantiacus*, which may warrant species status. In South America, the relationship between Golden-bellied Grosbeak *P. chrysogaster* and *P. aureoventris* is also unresolved as their results indicated that *P. aureoventris* may be paraphyletic, with one population from the east Colombian Andes being sister to *P. chrysogaster* of central South America (rather than sister to *P. aureoventris* from Bolivia and Argentina). Clearly morphology is telling a different story to genetics....

Even more *Sporophila*!

The genera *Sporophila*, *Oryzoborus* and *Dolospingus* comprise a group of small-bodied,

thick-billed oscine passerines long the cause of taxonomic headaches. Revisions of species limits are a perennial feature here on SLS. Mason & Burns (2013) recently sampled mitochondrial gene regions in 33 out of the 39 species using Bayesian and maximum likelihood inferences, finding the *Sporophila* seedeaters to be paraphyletic as currently defined. The authors uncovered strong evidence that the *Oryzoborus* seedfinches and the White-naped Seedeater *Dolospingus fringilloides* are embedded within *Sporophila* and suggested merging these three genera into a broadly defined *Sporophila* (which would have taxonomic priority), a move proposed by previous authors as far back as Olson (1981). It is a shame, however, that Cone-billed Tanager *Conothraupis mesoleuca* was not sampled, given its *Dolospingus*-like characteristics...

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