

## First record of Buff-necked Ibis *Theristicus caudatus* for Peru

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Presentamos el primer registro de la Bandurria de Ala Blanca *Theristicus caudatus* para el Perú. Registramos tres individuos en las Pampas del Heath, Parque Nacional Bahuaja-Sonene, dpto. Puno en septiembre de 2009 y dos individuos en el mismo localidad en agosto de 2010. El registro fue documentado con fotos y grabaciones de sonidos.

Buff-necked Ibis *Theristicus caudatus* is a polytypic species of lowland savannas and wetlands in South America: *T. c. caudatus* occurs in Colombia and Venezuela, and *T. c. hyperorius* south of the Amazon in Brazil, Bolivia, Paraguay, Uruguay and Argentina<sup>4</sup>. In Bolivia, the species is widespread in the lowlands and foothills of the Andes to 2,400 m in dptos. Beni, Cochabamba, Santa Cruz, Chuquisaca, Tarija and La Paz, where this subspecies reaches its north-west limit at Pilón Lajas<sup>3</sup>.

During a visit to the Peruvian Pampas del Heath on 27–30 September 2009 we documented the presence of Buff-necked Ibis. Observations were made at Pampa Juliaca, dpto. Puno (12°57'14"S 68°54'48"W; 165 m), 3.2 km from the confluence of

the río Heath and Quebrada Juliaca. This is the same area visited by Zeppilli *et al.*<sup>5</sup> in 2006 and that most visited by other biologists, it being the most accessible savanna habitat. It forms part of the 1,091,416-ha Bahuaja-Sonene National Park, in extreme south-east Peru (dptos. Madre de Dios and Puno). The Pampas del Heath is the only edaphic tropical savanna in Peru, with an area of 6,549 ha (based on a Landsat image from 24 August 2010) distributed in two blocks, of which Pampa Juliaca is the larger. Our observations were made in savanna interspersed by scattered woodlots, isolated trees and open *Mauritia minor* palm swamps along permanent watercourses. The grassland had been burnt (regularly burning by local communities maintains the habitat and facilitates hunting) c.1 month previously and was dominated by relatively short grass c.40 cm high, but there were also more humid patches with grass growing in standing water and a sward c.10 cm high.

The first record was of a single bird heard calling as it flew over our campsite in gallery woodland at c.15h00 on 27 September 2009, shortly after our arrival. RSRW relocated the bird 15 minutes later, c.400 m north of the camp, and obtained photographs (Figs. 1–3) and sound-recordings to document the observation. During the next three days we observed the species on nine



Figures 1–2. Buff-necked Ibis *Theristicus caudatus*, Pampa Juliaca, dpto. Puno, Peru, 30 September 2009 (Robert S. R. Williams)



Figure 3. Buff-necked Ibis *Theristicus caudatus*, Pampa Juliaca, dpto. Puno, Peru, 29 September 2009 (Robert S. R. Williams)

separate occasions, mostly in pairs or single birds, but once three together (Fig. 3). Sound-recordings were made using a Sennheiser ME-66 microphone and Edirol R-09 digital recorder, and one recording has been archived online at [www.xeno-canto.org](http://www.xeno-canto.org) (XC39406). In 2010, RSRW returned to the Pampas del Heath on 28–30 August and observed two Buff-necked Ibis in the same area.

This documentation of Buff-necked Ibis at Pampas del Heath is the first record for Peru and the westernmost for *T. c. hyperorius*. The species had previously been recorded at Pílon Lajas, in Madidi National Park, Bolivia, c.220 km south-east of Pampas del Heath, making Buff-necked Ibis a relatively unexpected addition to the Peruvian avifauna, especially given that previous ornithological work at the Peruvian Pampas del Heath did not find the species despite being similarly timed<sup>1,2,5</sup>. Also, we are unaware of any records of the species from the more frequently visited savannas on the Bolivian side of the río Heath. The Pampas del Heath is the westernmost limit for many species of tropical savannas south of the Amazon and is the only Peruvian locality for these birds, though some have recently colonised newly created pastures around the city of Puerto Maldonado, dpto. Madre de Dios (RSRW pers. obs.). It is probable that further new species for the country will be recorded in both the Pampas del Heath and these new, savanna-like pastures. The Pampas del Heath represent one of the few areas of tropical savanna habitat not grazed by cattle. Although protected, the savannas are still burned in an uncontrolled manner by local communities, and to ensure their long-term conservation the burning regime requires adequate management.

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