Welcome to Neotropical Birding 25!

In 2019, the Neotropical Bird Club (NBC) marks its 25th anniversary. In celebration, the 25th Neotropical Birding is a special edition. Across 96 pages (rather than the usual 80), it features articles commissioned to reflect on how the world of Neotropical birds has evolved over the past quarter-century.

Chris Balchin – as intimately involved in the NBC as anyone – guides us through the NBC’s creation and development (page 3). Alex Lees, Joe Tobias and I present the outcome of late nights debating what might constitute the region’s 25 most remarkable avian discoveries since 1994 (page 11). Raymond Jeffers offers a personal assessment of the 25 best Neotropical bird books published since the NBC was ‘born’ (page 33).

Contributors take as a baseline articles published in the first two volumes of Cotinga to review subsequent developments. Harold Greeney assesses the revolution in our understanding of antpittas since Niels Krabbe wrote about the then barely known Giant Antpitta Grallaria gigantea in 1994 (page 42). Alan Chamorro and Constantino Aucca consider efforts to save Peru’s Junin Grebe Podiceps taczanowskii since Thomas Valqui used Cotinga 1 to express concern about the flightless waterbird’s critical plight (page 52).

Continuing the theme of globally threatened birds, Graeme Green furnishes a personal perspective on the species enshrined in NBC’s logo, Three-wattled Bellbird Procnias tricapitulatus (page 57). Meanwhile, Neotropical Birding has long been a platform for those who bird ‘at the cutting edge’. On page 63, Juan Freile relates the unexpected discovery of a new hummingbird, Blue-throated Hillstar Oreotrochilus cyanolaemus. Tom Schulenberg then conjures his much-appreciated magic on recent taxonomic changes (page 73). In our final feature (page 80), I explore the South American Bird Fair, a now-annual event that would have been unthinkable back in 1994 when the Neotropical Bird Club was launched.

James Lowen, Senior Editor

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