

## New distributional records of birds from Andean and western Ecuador

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Esta nota reporta nuevos registros para 27 especies de la sierra y la costa pacífica ecuatoriana. Precisa su distribución geográfica y/o altitudinal, y indica casos de expansión de población (*Bubulcus ibis*, *Columbina cruziana*, *Mimus gilvus* y *Sicalis flaveola*) o con interés para su conservación (poblaciones aisladas de *Aramides* sp., *Haematopus palliatus*, *Larus cirrocephalus*, *Sterna nilotica*, *Aratinga erythrogenys* y *Anisognathus notabilis*). También se reportan observaciones de especies registradas con poca frecuencia (*Limnodromus* sp., *Progne subis*) y aves leucísticas (*Rallus aequatorialis*, *Fulica ardesiaca* y *Turdus chiguanco*).

In 2002–2003, I spent c.290 hours, over 213 days, birdwatching in Andean and western Ecuador. I collected records for 27 bird species that refine their geographical or altitudinal distribution limits as given in Ridgely & Greenfield<sup>10</sup>. Unusual natural history observations are also presented (e.g. phenology, abundance, leucism). Details concerning the localities mentioned in the text, as well as altitude and observation effort, are provided in the Appendix. Taxonomy and nomenclature follow Ridgely & Greenfield<sup>10</sup>.

### Neotropic Cormorant *Phalacrocorax brasilianus*

Three (6 April 2002), two (15 July 2003) and 45 (roosting in pines, 29 February 2004) at Laguna de Yaguarcocha (Imbabura province) are the second, fourth and sixth records for the Ecuadorian highlands. The first involved a specimen from the same locality<sup>10</sup>. Subsequently, one was observed at Laguna de Papallacta (Napo province, 00°22'S 78°09'W, on 28 September 2002; N. Athanas *in litt.*), the highest Ecuadorian record (3,650 m), and one was photographed at Jipiro Park, Loja city (04°00'S 79°12'W, in April–October 2003; J. F. Freile *et al.*, J. M. Carrión *in litt.*). The species' rarity in the Ecuadorian Andes contrasts strikingly with its abundance in western Ecuador<sup>10</sup> and occurrence at high altitude in Colombia (2,600 m)<sup>9</sup>. Note that on 29 February 2004 three were observed within the colony of Cattle Egrets in the reeds. Breeding could thus occur at this locality in the future.

### Great Egret *Ardea alba*

Observed during most visits to Laguna de Colta (Chimborazo province): 4 February 2000 (R. Letscher, photographed), 21 February and 2 March 2001 (several), 23 and 26 February 2003 (1–2), 13 March 2004 (one); and during two visits to Laguna de Yambo (Tungurahua province): 11 March 2004 (16) and 3 May 2004 (13). Ridgely & Greenfield<sup>10</sup> reported the occurrence of wanderers at highland lakes up to 2,800 m, with only a single, old record from the Laguna de Colta (3,180 m). These records suggest regular occurrence at this high-elevation lake, which

is the only highland Ecuadorian locality outside of Imbabura and Pichincha provinces where it occurs, in addition to Laguna de Yambo. The highest elevation on record in Ecuador involves one at Laguna de Papallacta (3,650 m; Napo province, on 2 December 2000, N. Athanas *in litt.*).

### Snowy Egret *Egretta thula*

Observed during all visits to Laguna de Colta: 2 March 2001, 23 February 2003 (at least ten), 26 February 2003 (at least six), 13 March 2004 (one), 11 and 12 June 2004 (two) and 15 June 2004 (one); and at Laguna de Yambo (Tungurahua province): 11 March 2004 (three). Ridgely & Greenfield<sup>10</sup> and Hilty & Brown<sup>9</sup> reported occasional presence at highland lakes up to 2,600 m. As with Great Egret, this suggests the apparently regular occurrence of Snowy Egret at a higher elevation (3,180 m) than previously known, and south of Imbabura and Pichincha provinces, in northern Ecuador.

### Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*

First, Ridgely & Greenfield<sup>10</sup> indicated that only scattered singles remained in the central highland valley in March–October. On 29 March 1999, J. F. Freile (*in litt.*) counted 141 and 52 respectively at Laguna de Yaguarcocha and Lago San Pablo (Imbabura province). On 6 April 2002 (16h30–18h00), I counted 1,269 coming to roost at the reedbed of Laguna de Yaguarcocha. On 15 July 2003 (07h30), at least 414 were seen roosting in pine trees, 1 km west of this reedbed. On 13 July 2003, c.90 were foraging at Zuleta's Hacienda. On 15 July 2003, I observed three at Eugenio Espejo, north-west of Lago de San Pablo, and 21 c.5 km south-east of González Suárez (road 35, Imbabura, 00°10'N 78°13'W). *Contra* Ridgely & Greenfield<sup>10</sup>, these records suggest that hundreds remain year-round in the far-northern Ecuadorian highlands, at least around Laguna de Yaguarcocha and Lago San Pablo.

Second, Ridgely & Greenfield<sup>10</sup> indicated that no breeding colony was known from the Ecuadorian highlands. Observations made on 6 April 2002 at Laguna de Yaguarcocha suggested breeding

activity: calls of full-grown chicks and one recently fledged juvenile. Breeding was confirmed on 29 February 2004 when several hundred nests at all stages (from eggs to recently fledged chicks) and c.480 adults and juveniles were present. Interestingly, no breeding activity was noted on 15 July 2003, whereas July is the egg-laying season in the central Peruvian highlands<sup>4</sup>. Three other species of heron were observed in the colony: several adult Snowy Egrets, one non-breeding Great Egret (and one in breeding plumage nearby), and two recently fledged chicks, two juveniles and c.10 adult Black-crowned Night-herons *Nycticorax nycticorax*. This locality may thus host the first mixed breeding colony of all of the colonial herons known from the Ecuadorian highlands.

Finally, according to Ridgely & Greenfield<sup>10</sup>, in the Ecuadorian highlands Cattle Egret was not known to occur outside of Imbabura and Pichincha provinces. Thus, four observed at Ecological Park Riobamba (14 February 2003) and several records at Laguna de Colta (15 on 23 and 26 February 2003, 22 at roost on 13 March 2004, one on 11 June 2004, two on 12 and 15 June 2004) represent the first published records for Chimborazo province. However, according to J. F. Freile (*in litt.*), numerous unpublished records are available from throughout the inter-Andean valleys (e.g. Loja, Cuenca, Laguna de Colta and haciendas along the Pan-American highway). In sum, the status of Cattle Egret in the Ecuadorian highlands has changed since the publication of Ridgely & Greenfield<sup>10</sup> and needs revision in certain details.

#### **Ecuadorian Rail** *Rallus aequatorialis*

A leucistic individual was observed at Laguna de Colta (26 February 2003). Its head was entirely white down to the mid-neck, but the rest of the plumage was normal.

#### **Wood-rail sp.** *Aramides* sp.

A wood-rail was very briefly observed in a low mangrove, within a channel between shrimp ponds, just outside the village of Cojimíes (Manabí province, 28 September 2003). Clapper Rail *Rallus longirostris* was discounted because the upperparts were unmarked, not streaked or barred. Wood-rails are rare in north-west Ecuador. This sighting provides a new locality record for either Brown Wood-rail *A. wolfei* or Rufous-necked Wood-rail *A. axillaris*. The former is rare and apparently decreasing in western Ecuador, having been recorded recently only three times in Esmeraldas province<sup>6,10</sup> and has been found only once in mangroves<sup>10</sup>. Rufous-necked Wood-rail is mostly associated with mangrove but is even rarer, with only one record for north-west Ecuador (25 km north of Cojimíes)<sup>10</sup>.

#### **Andean Coot** *Fulica ardesiaca*

A leucistic individual was observed at Laguna de Colta (26 February 2003). Its mantle and breast were white, whereas the rest of the plumage was normal.

#### **American Oystercatcher** *Haematopus palliatus*

Four to six paired birds were observed foraging on mudflats (two pairs) or resting on a beach (one pair) at the río Canuto delta at Cojimíes (28 September 2003), where one was also seen flying upriver. These are the first records for north-west Ecuador (250 km north-northeast of the known northerly distribution limit), where the species' apparent absence was considered inexplicable by Ridgely & Greenfield<sup>10</sup>.

#### **Wilson's Plover** *Charadrius wilsonia*

More than ten were observed at the delta of the río Canuto at Cojimíes (28 September 2003). Two were chasing others with aggressive calls that I interpreted as territorial behaviour. This is the first record for northern Manabí, where the species was considered likely to occur<sup>10</sup> but had not been recorded previously.

#### **Dowitcher sp.** *Limnodromus* sp.

A dowitcher was observed at Laguna de Colta (23 February 2003) under good conditions (at c.30 m with 10x40 binoculars). It was in non-breeding plumage. Genus identification was based on the relatively long straight bill (compared to godwits *Limosa* spp. and Lesser Yellowlegs *Tringa flavipes*), long dark legs (compared to snipes *Gallinago* sp.) and the lack of wing pattern. Size was intermediate between nearby Greater Yellowlegs *Tringa melanoleuca* and Pectoral Sandpipers *Calidris melanotos*. It was unlikely to have been a Long-billed Dowitcher *L. scolopaceus*, as this species is very rare in South America<sup>13</sup> and has never been recorded in Ecuador<sup>10</sup>, although a recently examined specimen, collected in 1929, pertains to this species (R. S. Ridgely *in litt.*). This represents the second record of a *Limnodromus* sp. in the Ecuadorian highlands. The first was of a Short-billed Dowitcher *L. griseus* from Cañar province<sup>10</sup>. *L. griseus* is also very rare in inland Colombia<sup>9</sup> and inland Peru<sup>4</sup>.

#### **Grey-hooded Gull** *Larus cirrocephalus*

Three adults and a nest with three eggs (Fig. 1) at the río Canuto delta, at Cojimíes (28 September 2003) is the northernmost breeding site in South America, as well as the first breeding record away from the Santa Elena Peninsula (Guayas province), and the second record in north-west Ecuador<sup>10</sup>. This northernmost record is congruent with the apparent current increase and northward spread of the species. Indeed, its breeding in Ecuador was first proven only in 1978<sup>11</sup> (R. S. Ridgely *in litt.*).



Figure 1. Nest of Grey-hooded Gull *Larus cirrocephalus* at the río Canuto delta, Cojimíes, northern Manabí province, 28 September 2003 (Pierre-Yves Henry)

#### Gull-billed Tern *Sterna nilotica*

Two adults were observed feeding two still-dependent juveniles at the río Canuto delta at Cojimíes (28 September 2003). The reluctance of the juveniles to fly and the alarm-calls of the adults when I approached suggest that they were raised locally. At least five still-dependent juveniles were also observed at shrimp ponds at Cojimíes. If these bred locally, this would represent the northernmost breeding record in Ecuador<sup>10</sup>. However, as terns feed their juveniles up to several thousands of km from their actual breeding area, breeding at Cojimíes remains to be unequivocally demonstrated. The Ecuadorian breeding population being the only known for the species on the Pacific coast of South America<sup>10</sup>, if breeding were to be confirmed, this new locality may be of conservation value.

#### Croaking Ground-dove *Columbina cruziana*

Recorded three times in Chimborazo province: a pair at the Office of Protected Areas, Riobamba (15 March 2002), a pair at Riobamba cemetery (16 March 2002) and a juvenile at Nitiluisa community (2 February 2003). This last was probably on dispersal, as the species has not been found breeding at this locality (pers. obs.). These records are the first in the Ecuadorian highlands outside Azuay province, and elevate to 3,230 m the known upper altitudinal limit in Ecuador (2,600 m<sup>10</sup>; 3,100 m in Peru, near Arequipa, 16°24'S 71°31'W; E. Málaga & M. Ugarte *in litt.*). They also suggest that the species is spreading north in the inter-Andean valley, and echoes the recent population increase noted in the Tumaco region, in south-west Nariño, Colombia<sup>10</sup>.

#### Red-masked Parakeet *Aratinga erythrogenys*

A flock of c.10 was observed flying above a small patch of rather well-preserved subtropical forest at Río Verde community (30 September 2003). This would be the third record for Bolívar province, the

species being known to occur at Pallatanga<sup>10</sup> and Tiquibuzo<sup>6</sup>. The species being considered Vulnerable in Ecuador<sup>10</sup>, this isolated record on the western slope may be of conservation interest in a metapopulation context.

#### Greater Ani *Crotophaga major*

Two adults were observed at a fruiting tree in Barrio Las Palmeras, at Ventanas, Los Ríos province (7 August 2003). This unique record, despite my regular visits, suggests that these birds were wanderers. The species has a highly fragmented distribution in western Ecuador, and the closest known population to Ventanas is c.15 km to the north-west (at Jauneche, 01°20'S 79°35'W, 70 m; P. Van Gasse *in litt.*). The present record (c.300 m) is higher than the known altitudinal limit in western Ecuador (50 m)<sup>10</sup>.

#### Barn Owl *Tyto alba*

Recorded twice at Nitiluisa community: heard (28 March 2002) and seen (17 February 2003), suggesting that the species is resident there (*contra* Ridgely & Greenfield<sup>10</sup>, who proposed that wanderers might account for the scattered highland records above 2,000 m). Furthermore, Barn Owl breeds in old buildings of highland cities such as Quito, Ibarra and Cuenca (J. F. Freile & D. F. Cisneros-Heredia *in litt.*). Thus, the species may be a local resident in the Ecuadorian highlands. These records raise to 3,230 m the upper limit in Ecuador (3,000 m in Colombia<sup>9</sup>), slightly higher than the bird observed below Laguna de Papallacta (3,100 m), on 2 February 2002 (N. Athanas *in litt.*).

#### Tawny-bellied Hermit *Phaethornis symrnatophorus*

One observed at the river next to La Esperanza/Tingo community (17 August 2003) is a new locality on the west slope of the Ecuadorian Andes, where the species' known distribution is highly discontinuous<sup>10</sup>. The species has been found at two other localities in Cotopaxi province: at Caripero (00°35'S 79°00'W, 1,900 m; N. Krabbe & F. Sornoza unpubl.) and Otonga reserve<sup>6</sup> (near San Francisco de las Pampas, 00°25'S 79°00'W).

#### Stripe-throated Hermit *Phaethornis striigularis*

Two solitary foraging birds observed at the river adjacent to La Esperanza/Tingo community (16–17 August 2003), are the highest records (1,570 m) for the species, which ranges mostly below 800 m (up to 1,350 m at Maquipucuna)<sup>10</sup>.

#### Amazilia Hummingbird *Amazilia amazilia*

At least two individuals observed at Barrio Las Palmeras, Ventanas (29–30 July, song on 20 August 2003), are the first records for Los Ríos province, and 45 km east of the extrapolated distribution given in Ridgely & Greenfield<sup>10</sup> (although in Vol. 1

the authors consider the species as present 'in the lowlands of western Ecuador'). The extent of rufous on the underparts and the bronzy tail indicated the lowland subspecies *dumerilii*.

#### American Pygmy Kingfisher *Chloroceryle aenea*

One observed in mangroves at Manglares-Churute Ecological Reserve (21 September 2003), the second locality for the species in south-west Ecuador, where it was previously known only from Cerro Blanco in the Chongón Hills, Guayas province)<sup>1</sup>.

#### Purple Martin *Progne subis*

All metallic black, i.e. adult male, *Progne* martins were observed on all visits to the urban roost of Grey-breasted Martin *P. chalybea* in Ventanas: >3 birds (11 July), >5 (0.5% of 1,130 martins examined, 28 July), >5 (2 August), >2 (0.1%, N = 1,305; 21 August), >33 (3.6%, N = 927, 11 September) and >60 (2.1%, N = 2,882, 7 October 2003). The roost increased from 16,130 on 11 July to 24,780 martins on 7 October 2003. Other martins, also distinct from Grey-breasted Martin, were considered to be females (F; greyish plumage, dark-centred undertail-coverts, same size) or moulting second-year males (SYM; mixed greyish and metallic black plumage or all metallic black with white on breast and/or belly) of Purple Martin<sup>8</sup>. Numbers recorded were: 2 SYM and 2 F on 28 July, 2 F on 21 August, 2 SYM and 3 F on 11 September, 16 F/SYM on 7 October. Black and related martins were c.1 cm longer than nearby Grey-breasted Martins. The percentage of adult males significantly varied among random count samples (data from 11 September and 7 October; logistic regression model including a date effect plus a replicate effect nested in the date effect; date effect, Likelihood Ratio Test = 0.0005, d.f. = 1, P = 0.982; replicate effect, LRT = 97.151, d.f. = 14, P < 10<sup>-4</sup>), which demonstrates that black martins were aggregated (i.e. not randomly distributed) within the roost. I consider these to be Purple Martins because of their plumage features and their temporal occurrence at Ventanas. The proportion of adult males increased in July–August (0.3%) and September–October (2.4%;  $\chi^2 = 41.654$ , d.f. = 1, P < 10<sup>-4</sup>), a pattern unexpected for other all-dark *Progne* (Southern Martin *P. elegans* or Peruvian Martin *P. murphyi*). This massive arrival of migrants by early September is congruent with (i) the occurrence of Purple Martins in August<sup>7</sup> and from mid-September to mid-October in Lima, Peru, in 2001–2003 (G. Engblom *in litt.*), (ii) the record of 30 Purple Martins at Ecuasal Lagoons, Guayas province, in August 2000 (D. F. Cisneros-Heredia *et al. in litt.*), (iii) decreasing roost sizes in the USA by late July<sup>12</sup>, and (iv) the paucity of records in South America prior to August<sup>2</sup>. This temporal pattern is very different from that presented in Ridgely &

Greenfield<sup>10</sup> (occurrence from December to April). The species would appear either to have been overlooked in western Ecuador, or to have changed its migratory route to more regularly include the Pacific coast of South America, thus explaining its apparent increase in Peru. An unexplained difference between the Ventanas and Peruvian records is that only female-like birds were observed in Peru.

Identification as Peruvian Martin is plausible as the breeding range of this species lies quite close to the south, in coastal western Peru. It is therefore conceivable that the species migrates north in the non-breeding season, although this is undocumented<sup>10</sup> (R. S. Ridgely *in litt.*). Identification as Southern Martin would be consistent with plumage features and seasonal occurrence (as an austral migrant<sup>10</sup>). However, as far as is known, Southern Martins winter on the opposite side of the Andes (in western Amazonia)<sup>10</sup>, and has been recorded only twice in (Amazonian) Ecuador<sup>10</sup>. Thus, occurrence in large numbers in western Ecuador seems very unlikely. To confirm the identity of those martins in western Ecuador, it would be valuable to obtain biometric data and specimens. This would provide the first confirmed records of all-dark *Progne* martins for Ecuador<sup>10</sup> (M. Vargas-Mantilla, Museum Ecuatoriano de Ciencias Naturales of Quito, pers. comm.).

#### Band-backed Wren *Campylorhynchus zonatus*

Found in three out of four visits to cultivated foothill localities around Ventanas. Two were heard and seen at Libertad community (27 July 2003), in a mixed cacao/café/banana plantation. The typical scratchy call of the genus was heard at two nearby localities: on the track 5 km east-northeast of San Luis de Pambil (one seen in an orange-tree plantation) and at the 'La Y' community (at least two duetting in an orange-tree plantation; 7 October 2003). Finally, three were heard and seen at Asunción de Yatuvi community (29 August 2003), in a mixed cacao/café/banana plantation. The species is thus common in the foothills of Bolívar/Los Ríos provinces, 90–110 km south-southeast of the extrapolated range given in Ridgely & Greenfield<sup>10</sup>. The ochraceous belly distinctive of Band-backed Wren was noted on only one bird (7 October 2003). All others were attributed to Band-backed Wren, and not to Fasciated Wren *C. fasciatus*, because the belly was not fully barred and the habitat was closer to that typical of Band-backed than of Fasciated Wren (humid versus arid lowlands)<sup>10</sup>.

#### Chiguanco Thrush *Turdus chiguanco*

A leucistic individual, with white uppertail-coverts and rump, was observed at Palacio Real, 2 km south of Nitiluisa community (18 January and 10

February 2003). A second individual, with white uppertail-coverts, was observed at Pungal Santa Marianita community (26 May 2004).

#### **Tropical Mockingbird** *Mimus gilvus*

At least 11 on the north-west shore of the Laguna de Yaguarcocha (15 July 2003): three times two birds (twice one was singing) and a group of five (including a singing bird) at the Hotel Parador de Yaguarcocha. One of the 'paired' birds, a first-year male, was electrocuted (specimen deposited at the Museum Nacional de Ciencias Naturales of Quito, MECN 7703). These records confirm that the species has become established at this recently discovered locality<sup>3</sup>, and provide the first specimen for Ecuador. Other recent records suggest the species continues to expand south in the Ecuadorian highlands<sup>3</sup>: one at San Rafael in June 2002 (00°19'S 78°28'W, Pichincha province; P. Coopmans *in litt.*) and regular records of at least two pairs, with vocal activity, at Puenbo since March 2003 (Las Huertas, Pichincha province, 00°11'S 78°21'W, c.2,400 m; X. Muñoz, B. Palacios *in litt.*).

#### **Black-chinned Mountain-Tanager**

##### *Anisognathus notabilis*

A mixed flock was observed several times (5–10 individuals) at Río Verde community, in a small patch of rather well-preserved subtropical forest (30 September 2003). This is the first record from between Pichincha and Buenaventura (El Oro)<sup>10</sup>, suggesting that populations remain undiscovered in the intervening area (cf. a recently documented population at Otonga reserve, near San Francisco de las Pampas, 00°25'S 79°00'W)<sup>5</sup>.

#### **Saffron Finch** *Sicalis flaveola*

Observed in three western lowland cities: a pair at the bus station of Santo Domingo de los Colorados (21 July 2003; not seen on 12 July, 13 and 29 August 2003); two brightly coloured displaying birds (perhaps males) and a moulting bird (possibly a female) at Plaza Sucre, Ventanas (25 September 2003; not recorded on other occasions despite c.50 visits to this square from 25 July to 8 October 2003); and a flock of three pairs, with a male transporting nest material, at Bahía de Caráquez (27 September 2003). These new localities are respectively 220 and 80 km north-northeast, and 170 km north-northwest of Guayaquil, the previous northern limit for the species<sup>10</sup>. Two other unpublished records from Pichincha province can be added. A cage bird remained several days at the campus of the Universidad San Francisco de Quito (Cumbaya, 00°12'S 78°26'W, 2,300 m, in 2001; D. F. Cisneros-Heredia *in litt.*), before being recaptured by its owner. A male was observed at the outskirts of Tumbaco (0°18'S 78°27'W, in December 2003; P.

Coopmans *in litt.*). These are the first reports from Pichincha, Los Ríos and Manabí provinces. The status of these populations is unknown: they may have resulted from introductions and/or by a natural colonisation process.

#### **House Sparrow** *Passer domesticus*

A small flock of this invasive was observed at Nitiluisa community. The first record was of two birds (22 March 2002). A year later, a group of at least eight males and ten females had become established there (daily observations, 18 January–4 March, 9 August, 13 September, and 11 October 2003, March–June 2004). House Sparrows were also heard at two neighbouring communities (Palacio Real, c.3,200 m, 18 January 2003, and Cunduana, c.3,100 m, 13 September 2003, 2 km respectively south and south-east of Nitiluisa), and were common in Riobamba city (e.g. a roost of several tens at Plaza Sucre, and territorial birds around Baños bus station; 1 February 2003). These new records elevate to 3,250 m the known upper limit of the altitudinal range in Ecuador (previously 2,500 m<sup>10</sup>). Elsewhere in the Andes, it reaches locally to 4,100 m<sup>4</sup>.

#### **Discussion**

Beside the previous species-specific comments, it is worth making some broader remarks. First, the numerous and rapidly accumulating new altitudinal or geographical records obtained in remnant patches of subtropical and foothill forest between 00°54' and 01°25'S highlight that the western slope of the Andes (Cotopaxi, Bolívar and Los Ríos provinces) requires more ornithological investigation. Populations of poorly known (e.g. Tawny-bellied Hermit and Black-chinned Mountain-tanager), Vulnerable (e.g. Red-masked Parakeet) or altitudinally marginal populations (e.g. Stripe-throated Hermit, and also Crimson-mantled Woodpecker *Piculus rivolii*, Rufous-chested Tanager *Thlypopsis ornata*, White-sided Flowerpiercer *Diglossa albilatera* and Rusty Flowerpiercer *D. sittoides*, P.-Y. Henry unpubl.) remain to be documented there. Second, the rio Canuto delta (northern Manabí) had seemingly never been investigated for birds and could prove of conservation importance: it may be the northernmost breeding locality for several species in Ecuador (American Oystercatcher, Wilson's Plover and Gull-billed Tern) and the northernmost breeding locality anywhere for Grey-hooded Gull. Local residents confirmed that hundreds of waterbirds nest on these islands, whose eggs they reportedly consume. Third, the current expansion in Ecuador of some species associated with human-modified habitats is suggested or confirmed (Cattle Egret, Croaking Ground-dove, Band-backed Wren, Tropical Mockingbird, Saffron Finch and House

Sparrow). Finally, the apparently regular occurrence of Purple Martins at Ventanas indicates that its status in western Ecuador requires clarification.

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**Appendix.** Description of localities (including name, nearest city, altitude in m) and quantification of observation effort (months, number and time duration in hours); – = unknown. Habitat descriptions based on Ridgely and Greenfield<sup>10</sup>.

Locality	City	Province	Altitude	Coordinates	Visit		Habitat
					Months	No. Time	
Río Verde community	Echeandia	Bolívar	–	01°25'S 79°12'W	September	1 3	Subtropical montane forest
Estero Lindo community	Las Naves	Bolívar	–	01°20'S 79°21'W	July	1 < 1	Lowland cultivated terrain
La 'Y' community	San Luis de Pambil	Bolívar	–	01°15'S 79°12'W	October	1 2	Foothill cultivated terrain
Libertad community	San Luis de Pambil	Bolívar	–	c.01°17'S 79°09'W	July	1 8	Foothill cultivated terrain
Nitiluisa community	Calpi	Chimborazo	3,220–3,250	01°35'S 78°45'W	January–October	c.110 days	Highland cultivated terrain
Pungal Santa Marianita	Quimiag	Chimborazo	c.2,400	01°37'S 78°33'W	May	3 36	Highland cultivated terrain
Urban squares	Riobamba	Chimborazo	2,750–2,850	01°40'S 78°39'W	January–April	6 12	Highland urban squares
Laguna de Colta	Santiago de Quito	Chimborazo	3,180	01°44'S 78°45'W	February, March, June	9 13	Highland lake
Bus station	La Mana	Cotopaxi	–	00°56'S 79°13'W	August, October	3 5	Lowland urban squares
La Esperanza/Tingo community	Tingo	Cotopaxi	1,560–1,580	00°54'S 79°03'W	August	3 14	Subtropical montane forest, cultivated terrain
Laguna de Yambo	Antonio José Olguín	Cotopaxi	c.2,550	01°07'S 78°35'W	March, May	2 1	Highland lake
Manglares-Churute Ecological Reserve	Churute	Guayas	1–100	02°25'S 79°35'W	September	2 15	Deciduous forest, mangrove, shrimp pools
Lago San Pablo	San Pablo	Imbabura	2,570	00°13'N 78°14'W	July	1 < 1	Highland lake
Laguna de Yaguarcocha	–	Imbabura	2,450	00°23'N 78°07'W	February, April, July	4 10	Highland lake
Zuleta's Hacienda	Zuleta	Imbabura	c.2,900	00°12'N 78°05'W	April, July	3 11	Highland pastures
Asunción de Yatuví	Potosí	Los Ríos	–	c.01°33'S 79°22'W	August	1 2	Foothill cultivated area
Urban squares	Ventanas	Los Ríos	c.300	01°26'S 79°28'W	June–October	c.60 days	Lowland urban squares
Harbour	Bahía de Caráquez	Manabí	1	00°36'S 80°25'W	September	1 2	Lowland urban squares
Surroundings of village	Cojimies	Manabí	1	00°22'N 80°02'W	September	2 15	Sandbars, shrimp pools
Bus station	Santo Domingo de los Colorados	Pichincha	c.600	00°15'S 79°10'W	July, September	3 < 1	Lowland urban squares