

## The presence of Wavy-breasted Parakeet *Pyrrhura peruviana* confirmed for Ecuador

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La colección de dos especímenes de *Pyrrhura peruviana* y la observación de una bandada de ocho individuos que probablemente pertenecen a la misma especie, fueron registrados en una expedición a la Cordillera del Cóndor, sur oriente del Ecuador. Estos registros son los primeros después de 30 años, desde que D. L. Pearson en 1972 visitó la cuenca del río Macuma, Provincia de Morona Santiago, y observó 15 individuos de *Pyrrhura picta* en el Ecuador. La colección de estos especímenes ha permitido confirmar que las poblaciones en Ecuador corresponden a la especie recientemente descrita *Pyrrhura peruviana*, la misma que se distribuye de manera aislada en el norte de Perú y sur-oriente del Ecuador, y que presenta características morfológicas distintivas, tales como la presencia de una banda de plumas azules en la coronilla y un margen distal pálido amplio en las plumas del pecho y cuello.

An expedition to the Cordillera del Cóndor, in south-east Ecuador, was conducted on 22 October–21 November 2002. During this period two specimens, initially identified as Painted Parakeets *Pyrrhura picta*, were collected in the drainage of the río Santiago, Morona-Santiago province, Ecuador. In the same locality, eight individuals of presumably the same species were observed in flight. The two specimens represent the first official record of the species in Ecuador for 30 years. In 1972, D. L. Pearson observed several flocks of 10–15 individuals, identified as Painted Parakeets, on the río Macuma, Morona-Santiago province, Ecuador. At the time, the species' presence in Ecuador was considered probable because it was previously known from northern Peru<sup>5</sup>, and Pearson's observation was considered a range extension. Since then no further records have been made in Ecuador and the species' presence required confirmation. The closest localities to Ecuador from which Painted Parakeet is known are the drainages of the ríos Cenepa and Santiago, in northern Amazonas, Peru, where nine specimens were taken during expeditions organised by Louisiana State University (LSU) and the Field Museum of Natural History (FMNH) in the 1960s and 1970s<sup>3,6</sup>.

### Description

The Ecuadorian specimens are both males, and were taken, at 875 m, at Nantip (09°65'N 82°37'E) within the homeland of an indigenous Shuar community. The specimens are adults with no sign of moult. Head mostly dusky brown, with a narrow band of bluish-turquoise on the forehead, creamy ear-coverts, reddish-maroon cheeks and a whitish ocular ring almost completely encircling the eye. Throat, breast and neck-sides also dusky brown, the feathers having broad buff fringes, affording a scaly pattern. Vent-sides, undertail-coverts and wing feathers, except the primaries, bright green.

Primaries blue, with no trace of red. Underwing-coverts bright green. The back has a red patch extending from the scapulars to the rump. Undertail reddish maroon, and there is a maroon patch on the mid belly characteristic of *Pyrrhura*. Indian Shuar people recognised the bird because they had seen them feeding at a clay lick within primary forest 2 km from their village (Center Shuar Nantip), where we collected the specimens. According to local people the lick is regularly visited by up to hundreds of this species, although we were unable to confirm this. The group of eight, tentatively identified as the same species, were observed flying over yucca and plantain fields adjacent to secondary forest.

### Discussion

Painted Parakeet *Pyrrhura picta* has long been considered polytypic, being distributed from Panama to northern South America, with disjunct populations in Panama, Venezuela, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru. The level of isolation of such populations has promoted morphological and genetic differentiation suggesting the distinction of unique species within the complex. This is true of Wavy-breasted Parakeet *P. peruviana*, which recently has been separated from *P. picta* due to the combination of extensive cream fringes to its breast feathers and a discernible bluish forecrown<sup>1,2</sup>. Currently, *P. peruviana* is known from north-west and central Amazonian Peru, where the FMNH and LSU specimens, cited earlier, confirmed its presence at three localities along the río Santiago, and single localities on the ríos Cenepa and Kagka, south-east to Chamicuro and Chavitas<sup>2</sup>. Northern populations, of what were long considered *P. picta*, in Colombia correspond to three subspecies, also recognised as species by Joseph<sup>2,4</sup>: *P. subandina*, *P. caeruleiceps* and *P. lucianii*<sup>7</sup>. In this regard, the Ecuadorian specimens



Figure 1. Male Wavy-breasted Parakeet *Pyrrhura peruviana*, collected at the Shuar de Nantip, in the Cordillera del Cóndor, south-east Ecuador, and held in Museo Nacional de Ciencias Naturales, Quito (Ana Agreda)

differ from Colombian populations in several aspects. *P. subandina* is smaller and has a distinctive combination of bicoloured reddish and blue cheeks, and reddish-brown ear-coverts, both of which are absent in the Ecuadorian specimens, whilst *P. caeruleiceps* differs from the Ecuadorian specimens because it has lores that are a deeper red than the uniformly red cheeks, and a bluish wash over most of the crown. Finally, *P. lucianii*, which has been suggested to be the form present in Ecuador<sup>6</sup>, differs from the specimens in having no bluish forehead or forecrown, and much reduced pale subterminal bands to the breast and throat feathers. Thus, populations matching those specimens we collected have recently been recognised at species level, *P. peruviana*, by Hocking *et al.* in Joseph<sup>3</sup>. Regarding the distribution of *Pyrrhura lucianii*, some western Amazonian populations were initially treated as *lucianii* or *roseifrons*, but a more detailed analysis has demonstrated that most specimens identified as *lucianii* are from north of the ríos Marañón/Amazonas and have brown crowns and maroon ocular rings<sup>2</sup>. A subsequent study restricted the distribution of *lucianii* to the area of Tefé and the rio Purús in Brazil<sup>3</sup>, and excluded the westernmost populations

of Amazonia. In conclusion, we believe that the population inhabiting the drainage of the ríos Santiago and Zamora in Ecuador should be identified as *P. peruviana* of north-west Amazonia, and not as *P. lucianii*, now restricted to the east in central Brazil.

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