

Neotropical Notebook



Neotropical Notebook contains three sections. The first consists of short papers documenting records. Photos and descriptions are published where appropriate. The second section summarises records published elsewhere, following the format established in previous issues of *Cotinga*. The third lists unpublished and undocumented records. Please indicate, with submissions, in which section you wish your records to appear.

SHORT NOTES

The Bald Eagle *Haliaeetus leucocephalus* in Cuba

Bald Eagle *Haliaeetus leucocephalus* inhabits coasts, rivers, swamps and large lakes of northern North America south to Baja California and Sonora (Mexico), Arizona, Texas, and southern Florida (including the keys)¹. It winters throughout the breeding range, but also disperses over much of the North American continent, with extralimital sight reports from Puerto Rico, Bermuda¹, the southern Bahamas² and even the Netherlands Antilles³.

In November 1997 WS made the first undocumented record in Cuba, on the north coast of Havana province, in the municipality of Caimito. The bird, a juvenile, was observed over Playa El Salado, being identified on the basis of its large size and plumage pattern. Subsequently, in late afternoon on 11 February 1998, at the mouth of the río Banes (a few km west of Playa El Salado), another Bald Eagle was observed by WS, perched in a dead Black Mangrove *Avicennia germinans*, for three minutes from c.60 m. It was identified as an adult due to the white head and tail pattern. The rest of the plumage was brown, with yellow feet and a yellow cere. The bird appeared to be scanning for dead fish at the

edge of the river. Thereafter it flew south. Due to the lack of tangible proof (i.e. photographs or a specimen), WS elected not to publish these observations.

The next sighting was made at Villa Soroa, Pinar del Río province, in late afternoon of 8 December 2002, when George Skinner saw an adult amongst a large group of Turkey Vultures *Cathartes aura* soaring around the Mirador de Venus. The larger raptor had all-brown wings and held the wings flat, rather than upward-tilted, and the all-white head and tail were clearly visible, given that the sun was behind the observer, who was using both binoculars and telescope.

Subsequently a second-year Bald Eagle was seen by Michael Good and three other observers close to the village of Las Terrazas, Pinar del Río province, in early-December 2002. MG picked out a much larger raptor flying on broad flat wings with his binoculars and followed it with a telescope as it flew south to south-west over the mountains before it half-closed the wings and flew fast out of sight. MG immediately sketched the bird in his notebook, clearly noting the underparts coloration, which was brown admixed with white.

During a birding tour, on 4 March 2004, AK and NN observed a Bald Eagle at El Salto dam, in the Viñales Valley, Pinar del Río province. The dam is c.4 km south-east of Viñales. The bird was initially spotted being chased by an Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*, immediately revealing the size of the eagle, which in total was observed for two minutes. The bird reappeared from behind a group of pines *Pinus caribaea*, and was then located on the ground beside the lake, before it suddenly flew off at c.25 m above ground and 50 m from the observers, who were able to witness all of the best field marks, including the yellow cere,

yellow feet, brown body, white underwing lining, and some white on the nape and upperwing-coverts. The tail was mostly brown and the bird was thus considered to be an immature. Next day AK returned with another tour, joined by Tom & Linda Rawles and several other observers. The bird was observed in flight on the opposite side of the lake, at c.150 m range with a group of Turkey Vultures. On 19 March AK and WS were leading another tour in the area during which the eagle was observed to land in a pine, c.12 m above ground, enabling several photographs to be taken (Fig. 1; see p.80).

Acknowledgements

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Nuevo registro altitudinal del Chiví Tres Rayas *Basileuterus tristriatus* en Venezuela

El Chiví Tres Rayas *Basileuterus tristriatus* es una especie que normalmente se encuentra entre los 500–2.000 m de altitud¹, aunque se ha registrado entre los 300–2.500 m en Colombia³, 1.000–2.200 m en Costa Rica⁹, 600–2.250 m en Panamá⁷, 700–2.000 m en Ecuador⁶ y 900–2.500 m en Perú⁴. En Venezuela, habita principalmente en los sotobosques de los bosques húmedos² y nubladados⁵, así como rastrojos viejos y plantaciones de café⁵ que se desarrollan entre los 800–2.700 m^{2,5,8}.

Durante febrero del 2003, un individuo de *B. tristriatus* fue capturado con redes de neblina a 30 m de altitud, en una plantación de cacao del área conocida como Ocumare de la Costa (10°22'N 67°40'W), en las afueras del límite norte del Parque Nacional Henri Pittier, estado Aragua, norte de Venezuela. Dentro del Parque, normalmente se le ha observado o capturado por encima de los 1.400 m, alcanzando importantes proporciones en las comunidades de aves estudiadas de La Cumbre de Rancho Grande (6%) a 1.500 m y el Pico Guacamaya (10%) a 1.860 m¹⁰. Sus registros más bajos han ocurrido a los 1.000 m de altitud¹⁰, en los alrededores del edificio de la Estación Biológica de Rancho Grande y el Paso de Portachuelo. Este registro constituye hasta el presente, el dato más bajo en el cual se haya capturado u observado la especie dentro de su área de distribución.

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Juvenile plumage and vocalisation of Jocotoco Antpitta

Grallaria ridgelyi Only recently described¹, the range-restricted Jocotoco Antpitta *Grallaria ridgelyi* is one of the rarest and most poorly known

antpittas. While searching for its nest at the Tapichalaca Biological Reserve (04°30'S 79°10'W), in southern Ecuador, we encountered a juvenile accompanied by two adults. Adults were never seen to feed the juvenile during over four hours of observation, but it was found associated with them on several consecutive days, and approached us when the adult song was played. Spontaneously, and in response to recordings of adult vocalisation, the juvenile uttered a slightly drawn-out, single *woooo* note, easily imitated with a whistle, which is similar in quality to a single note of the common song of Ferruginous Pygmy-owl *Glaucidium brasilianum*.

In appearance, the juvenile was generally similar to the adult description given by Krabbe *et al.*¹ and depicted in Ridgely & Greenfield². The throat was white, with the upper to lower breast pale slaty, fading to whitish on the belly. The distinctive malar pattern was evident, but more subdued than in the adult. The most distinctive difference was the chestnut (rather than black) crown, bearing fine black vermiculations which extended onto the hinderown and faded onto the nape, just reaching the upper back. Flight feathers were chestnut, as in the adult, and tertials bore indistinct subterminal black bands. The bill was black, except for the basal two-thirds of the lower mandible, which was fleshy orange. Otherwise, the plumage and soft-part coloration appeared similar to that of adults.

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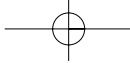


Figure 1. Bald Eagle *Haliaeetus leucocephalus*, El Salto dam, Viñales, Pinar del Río province, Cuba (Roger Craig)



Figure 2. Masked Ducks *Nomonyx domicus*, río Tambopata, Reserva Nacional de Tambopata, Peru, 3 March 2004 (Claudia Torres S.)



Figure 3. Red Phalarope *Phalaropus fulicarius*, Santa Cruz province, Argentina, 27 January 2004 (Roland van der Vliet)



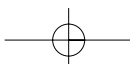
Figure 5. Southern Martins *Progne elegans*, Roura, French Guiana, 14 August 2004 (Alexandre Renaudier)



Figure 4. King Penguin *Aptenodytes patagonicus*, Harberton, Beagle Channel, Tierra del Fuego, Argentina, 30 January 2004 (Roland van der Vliet)



Figure 6. Mississippi Kites *Ictinia mississippiensis*, Savanna La Mar, Jamaica, 21 March 2004 (Wim van der Schot)



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**The southernmost Tennessee
Warbler *Vermivora peregrina***

On 4 March 2004 I was observing birds at 2,500 m in the newly protected 'Hanne Bloch' forest, 1.4 km south-west of Utuana (04°22'S 79°42'W), Loja province, Ecuador. Between two rain showers at 12h30, bird activity was rather high, when a drab bird drew my attention, which at first glance I took for a Lesser Greenlet *Hylophilus decurtatus*, but immediately rejected the identification due to altitude and habitat. On closer inspection, the following characters were noted: cap and face-sides, supercilium and underparts creamy white, belly pure white, wings brownish without clearly wingbars, and tail relatively short, but the white subterminal spots (from below) were not visible from the angle of view the bird offered, although G. Wallace (pers. comm.) notes that these are, in practice, very rarely visible in the field. Behaviour was slightly more active than a greenlet: the bird hopped quickly in the outer foliage of the border and crowns of trees (3–6 m), occasionally making short sallies. Once it captured a small caterpillar from a dead curled leaf, hanging upside-down on only one leg for a short period. A quick search in Ridgely & Greenfield⁵ revealed a non-breeding Tennessee Warbler *Vermivora peregrina* as

the most similar species, but the text therein only describing breeding plumage. However the description of the behaviour of Golden-winged Warbler *V. chrysoptera* confirmed the identification as a *V. peregrina* acquiring adult male breeding plumage. Identification was subsequently confirmed using Peterson³.

As the southernmost previous reports for South America² are from north-central Ecuador, around Mindo and in Napo province⁴, my observation extends the known wintering range of *V. peregrina* considerably further south, c.480 km, almost to the Peruvian border (just 11 km distant). It should also be noted that the elevation at which the bird was recorded is relatively high, although the species was recently recorded at Quito's Parque Metropolitano¹ at 2,900 m.

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**A record of Masked Duck
Nomonyx dominicus from
Tambopata, south-east Peru**
Masked Duck *Nomonyx dominicus* is a very local and secretive species

that occurs from Texas, USA, through Peru, to northern Argentina and Uruguay². In South America the species is uncommon in lowlands (below 300 m) on both sides of the Andes, in marshy freshwater lakes heavily overgrown with aquatic vegetation². There are also several records from Andean lakes in Colombia and Ecuador². In Peru, the species is rare in lowlands east of the Andes to 800 m¹.

On 3 March 2004, we observed eight Masked Ducks in non-breeding plumage along the río Tambopata, in the Reserva Nacional de Tambopata (13°02'S 69°32'W, at 220 m elevation). The group was observed for ten minutes and photographed (Fig. 2, see p.80). From their behaviour, it appeared that one individual was leading the group, which might indicate that it was a female with a recently fledged brood. This observation is the first confirmed record of *N. dominicus* for Tambopata. Previously in south-east Peru the species was known from the Estación Biológica Cocha Cashu, in Parque Nacional Manu³, where it is rare³. CTS has also observed a male in breeding plumage on the lower río Tambopata in February 2002.

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Noteworthy records of migrant birds in the Bolivian Chaco

Bird migration patterns in Bolivia are poorly known^{9,10}, limited by a paucity of data on the temporal and geographic distribution of migrants. We opportunistically observed migrants between 7 March and 26 May 2003 at the ranch San Julián, Cordillera province, dpto. Santa Cruz (19°47'S 62°42'W; c.300 m), south-east Bolivia. The site is relatively intact Chaco thorn forest on the west bank of the río Parapetí, c.60 km east-northeast of the provincial capital of Charagua.

Austral migrants**Snail Kite** *Rostrhamus sociabilis*

On 15 March we observed a flock of c.180 Snail Kites flying north, relatively low, with some descending to perch briefly on exposed stumps in a shallow pond. Small numbers (1–6 birds), probably winter visitors or residents, were observed on 5, 22 and 26 May. The migratory status of this species in Bolivia is unclear⁷, but March appears to be the month of peak northbound movement during the austral autumn. Davis² also noted a large influx of this species on 15 March 1987, north-east of the city of Santa Cruz. In Paraguay, Hayes *et al.*⁶ observed large flocks (up to 200 birds) in March, apparently migrating north along the río Paraguay, much like our observation on the río Parapetí.

Tawny-crowned Pygmy-tyrant *Euscarthmus meloryphus*

We first observed this species, a single individual, on 12 April. Few data are available on this species' timing of migration during the

austral autumn. Based on Chesser's¹ earliest specimen date of 2 May, our observation appears to represent an early record.

Cinnamon-bellied Ground-tyrant *Muscisaxicola capistrata*

RCD observed a single on 6 May, as it foraged on the ground in a sandy road through scrubby shrub habitat (regenerating woodland) with scattered open areas. The bird foraged by standing still and searching for prey, regularly changing positions by abruptly running short distances. In addition to foraging behaviour, the bird's shape and upright posture were typical of *Muscisaxicola*. It was intermediate in size between Lark-like Brushrunner *Coryphistera alaudina* and Rufous Hornero *Furnarius rufus*, both frequently seen in the area.

Plumage was buffy orange on the belly and flanks, plain brownish grey on the back and pale greyish on the throat and breast. The forehead and crown were darker than the rest of the head, but there were no distinct markings. The folded wing was broadly edged brownish buff, suggesting that the bird was immature³. There did not appear to be any rufous in the cap, which, although it is not always visible in adults¹⁰, also suggests an immature. This is the second sight record of this montane species in the Bolivian lowlands, the first being an adult during the austral spring (13 September 1990), also in the Chaco of south-east dpto. Santa Cruz¹⁰, c.70 km south-south-east of San Julián. The bird at San Julián was a relatively early migrant, based on high-elevation migrant records during the austral autumn in Bolivia (earliest date 5 May)¹. The bird could not be relocated the next day or during the following weeks.

Tropical Kingbird *Tyrannus melancholicus*

We noted strong migratory movements upon our arrival at San Julián, observing 20–30 individuals per day on 8–21 March. Numbers subsequently declined and the species was absent by mid-April. Tropical Kingbirds then reappeared in late May, with three birds (a single and

a pair) observed on 23 May, and another individual on 26 May. The latest record for dptos. Tarija, Chuquisaca, and southern dpto. Santa Cruz is 4 May¹. These late-May birds could be late northbound migrants or birds wintering south of what is currently recognised as the species' primary winter range. The species' status at the ranch after 26 May is unknown.

Fork-tailed Flycatcher*Tyrannus savana*

Peak movements of northbound migrants probably coincided with our arrival at San Julián, where (limited) observations of northbound transients ranged from 90–110 birds during the period 8–10 March, to 15 birds on 18 March, and a final individual on 26 March. On 17 April, we found a single late migrant or lingering individual c.50 km south of the city of Santa Cruz, along the road to Abapó. Previously, migration on this stretch of road had been impressive, with 1,400 northbound transients estimated on 10 March, and 1,000 on 14 March. The 17 April record is notable given Chesser's¹ late date of 1 April for south-east Bolivia. Davis² also reported a late migrant in April at Concepción, in north-central dpto. Santa Cruz.

Nearctic–Neotropical migrants**Common Nighthawk** *Chordeiles minor*

RCD observed a group of four birds, flying relatively high, just before dusk on 17 March. One or more of the birds gave the species' typical nasal *peent* call several times, confirming the identification. Status and distribution of this species in Bolivia, and in South America in general, is unclear⁷. The latest previously published record for Paraguay is 12 March⁵.

Bobolink *Dolichonyx oryzivorus*

We regularly observed flocks migrating north between 15 March (possibly earlier) and 7 April. Flocks consisted of 20–100+ individuals, typically flying relatively high and calling frequently. We noted migrants

overhead from before dawn until 2–3 hours after sunrise. Jahn⁸ noted a flock of 600 Bobolinks at this site in late-March 1999. Few published data describe this species' migration periods in southern South America. The latest date reported for Paraguay is 25 March⁵.

Other movements

Lesser Yellow-headed Vulture

Cathartes burrovianus
Apparently absent in March–April, this species was relatively common during May. The increase in Lesser Yellow-headed Vulture abundance coincided with falling water levels in the río Parapetí and an associated increase in the abundance of wading birds. Hayes⁴ described a similar correlation in the abundance of this vulture and wading birds, and water level on the río Paraguay in Paraguay. The migratory status of this species in Bolivia is unclear⁷, and our observations may simply reflect non-migratory movements associated with foraging opportunities along the river.

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Retificação do registro do Graveteiro *Phacellodomus ruber* na região sul de Minas Gerais, Brasil

Recentemente, nós apresentamos uma listagem da avifauna da região de Lavras e municípios adjacentes, no sul do estado de Minas Gerais, contendo 287 espécies³. Um registro do Graveteiro *Phacellodomus ruber* foi apresentado para os municípios de Bom Sucesso e Perdões, com

base em gravações de um indivíduo, efetuadas no dia 17 de novembro de 2001, em uma área brejosa próxima a um fragmento florestal, às margens de um córrego que divide tais municípios (21°05'S 44°56'W). Cópias dessas gravações foram depositadas no Arquivo Sonoro Prof. Elias Coelho (ASEC), Departamento de Zoologia, Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro. Vocalizações semelhantes às gravadas foram ouvidas em ambas as margens desse córrego no mesmo dia. Tal registro da espécie ampliaria sua distribuição para o sudeste de Minas Gerais, conforme os mapas em Ridgely & Tudor² e Remsen¹. Entretanto, em uma nova amostragem conduzida nas mesmas áreas brejosas no dia 5 de dezembro de 2003, fizemos experimentos de *playback* com as gravações obtidas em 2001 e atraímos dois casais do João-botina *Phacellodomus erythrophthalmus ferrugineigula* em margens distintas do córrego supracitado. As vocalizações de um casal foram gravadas e depositadas no ASEC. Um exemplar de *P. e. ferrugineigula* foi abatido nessa ocasião, sendo tombado na Coleção Ornitológica do Departamento de Zoologia da Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais (DZUFMG 4000). Assim, o registro de *P. ruber* apresentado para a região de Lavras³ deve ser desconsiderado, considerando-se a ocorrência de *P. e. ferrugineigula*.

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First records of Narosky's Seedeater *Sporophila zelichi* in Paraguay

Narosky's (Entre Ríos) Seedeater *Sporophila zelichi* is one of a group of closely related *Sporophila* seedeaters commonly referred to as 'capuchinos' and found in the wet grasslands of southern South America. *S. zelichi* is the rarest of the group, being considered Critically Endangered by BirdLife International². The species was described as recently as 1977⁶, and its breeding range was originally considered to be restricted to a small area of Entre Ríos province, Argentina. In February 1993, it was found for the first time outside that province, when a pair was trapped 7 km south of Colonia Carlos Pellegrini, Corrientes province, Argentina^{7,10}. The species has since been found in Uruguay¹, and here we present the first records for Paraguay.

On 13 December 1998, we discovered a male *Sporophila zelichi* in wet grassland at Ñu Guazu, dpto. Itapúa, south-east Paraguay (26°56'S 56°18'W). The bird, still showing a few signs of a presumed pre-definitive male plumage, was clearly associating with a female-plumaged *Sporophila*. BF was able to obtain video footage which will, in due course, be archived at the Visual

Resources for Ornithology, Philadelphia (USA). On 16 December 1998, we returned to Ñu Guazu and found the bird near its original locality. On this occasion it sang several times, but a brief visit on 8 January 1999 failed to relocate the bird.

A description follows: a small *Sporophila*, with a restricted grey cap and white face, throat, breast, hindneck and nape, forming a complete white collar. The white extended onto the neck, almost to the rear crown. Mantle, scapulars and lower back were cinnamon, although the mantle-sides were pale brown. Belly and flanks cinnamon-chestnut, slightly darker than the upperparts. Vent and undertail-coverts paler, more similar to the upperparts' coloration. Wings and tail greyish-brown, with the greater coverts and secondaries fringed paler. Overall, the underparts and upperparts coloration was more similar to the cinnamon lower underparts typical of Marsh Seedeater *S. palustris*, rather than the rich chestnut plumage of Chestnut Seedeater *S. cinnamomea*.

The male *S. zelichi* was found in an area of periodically inundated, tall, dense grassland. It seemed to favour an area where the tall, dense grass intergraded with shorter grazed grass, with a notably higher diversity and density of flowering herbs. This area also held the only permanent standing water in the vicinity, although in most areas the soil was damp to waterlogged. Such a preference for areas of periodically inundated tall grasslands has already been noted for various members of this group, including *S. zelichi*³. Notable numbers of *S. cinnamomea* were also observed at Ñu Guazu (e.g. 23 males on 16 December 1998), and the area appears to support a breeding colony, with many of the males exhibiting breeding behaviour (e.g. regular singing, territoriality and apparently paired birds).

As with the other 'capuchino' *Sporophila* seedeaters, *S. zelichi* is believed to be an austral migrant, although its wintering grounds are

unknown, but presumably lie to the north^{3,6,8}. On 24 October 1999, RPC found a male *S. zelichi* within a flock of mixed *Sporophila* seedeaters, in wet grassland 8 km west of Retiro Mirabeau, Estancia San Luis, dpto. Concepción (22°24'S 57°28'W). Unlike the male at Ñu Guazu, the San Luis bird was in full definitive plumage, with a neat blue-grey 'skull cap', clean white face, throat, upper breast and collar, and deep cinnamon underparts, back and rump. In the immediate vicinity, a male *S. cinnamomea* was seen the same day, and a male *S. palustris* the previous day. It remains uncertain whether the San Luis site represents part of the winter range or a migration stopover site for southbound *Sporophila* seedeaters.

Although these represent the first records of *S. zelichi* in Paraguay, they fit the pattern that is emerging for the occurrence of other members of the 'capuchino' group in the country: southbound migration through eastern Paraguay in October–November^{4,5}, and apparent breeding records in the grasslands of south-east Paraguay in December–January⁹ (Guyra Paraguay unpubl. data).

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Courtship displays of Wedge-tailed Hillstar *Oreotrochilus adela*

Wedge-tailed Hillstar *Oreotrochilus adela* is a poorly known species of arid and semi-arid Andean slopes in the central Andes. Previously considered a Bolivian endemic, its occurrence in Argentina was confirmed in January 1991, when seven individuals were mist-netted and photographed near Yavi (3,550 m), Jujuy province¹. Yavi is 15 km east of La Quiaca and just c.5 km south of the Bolivian border. Wedge-tailed Hillstar has since been found regularly around the village, either in gardens or along a canyon immediately to the north, as well as at nearby Yavi Chico, but no other sites are known in Argentina^{4,5}.

Like many hummingbirds, information on its courtship behaviour and breeding is virtually unknown. Fjeldsá & Krabbe² noted that the male produces a melodious song from an exposed perch, where it usually adopts a 'slim upright pose and with strongly expanded gorget'. They further mentioned that the male rattles the wings when females approach, and 'repeatedly rises c.1 m, singing' during courtship behaviour, sometimes followed by copulation. During 1998, in dpto. Cochabamba, Bolivia, Belisario Rioja made a recording of the species in which the dry rattling flutter of the wings is audible³. In this instance, a male chased a female into a dense bush, whereupon the latter retreated to a concealed stem and the male hovered nearby, producing these rattles in pulses. Eventually, the male perched prominently atop the same bush,

singing intermittently. No other information has been reported.

At 07h00 on 15 September 2003, JAT and N. Seddon observed a male Wedge-tailed Hillstar in pursuit of a female c.1 km north of Yavi village. This pair spent the next hour in a 200-m stretch of gorge, the female often taking flight and speeding along the sunlit western slopes, usually followed by the male. On several occasions, the male hovered excitedly in front of the female, who always perched passively, sometimes concealed on lower perches. At times the male rose and fell 1–2 m in an undulating fashion, and rattled the wings while hovering, but did not perform any stereotypical flight pattern. Twice, the male perched for extended periods in an upright posture with head raised and gorget flared, twisting the body from side to side, bobbing the tail and fluffing the plumage rhythmically.

Once the female perched on top of a bush, at which point the male perched c.30 cm distant, vocalising strongly. From this position, the male twisted sideways on an angled perch, until leaning almost upside-down, and swivelled slightly to face upwards. Thus contorted, the male directed his flared underparts towards the female and shivered the wings and tail for a few seconds. In the bright low sunlight, this served to show off the black and cinnamon underparts and iridescent green throat patch to good effect. The male emitted constant high-pitched calls (song?) throughout this performance, similar to those recorded in dpto. Cochabamba³. This vocalisation, a medley of intense twittering notes interspersed with a distinct descending cadence, is perhaps the song noted by Fjeldsá & Krabbe², although it could hardly be described as melodious.

Subsequently, on 19 October 2003, DT and I. Merle observed three individuals at the same site. At first, all three birds made erratic aerial chases, squabbling intermittently, until one disappeared. After a brief absence,

a pair settled in a nearby shrub. The male perched on a high bare branch while the female nestled discreetly lower down (again matching Belisario Rioja's description from Cochabamba). The male pumped the breast feathers in and out, giving the impression that he was 'panting' after his exertions. His body was slightly hunched over, and his head was quickly switched from side to side at c.1-second intervals.

From this position the male performed an extraordinary display flight, flying c.2–3 m up from the perch, hovering momentarily and then flying to a point c.1–2 m away by descending then re-ascending in a deep U-shaped curve. He repeated this flight-path back and forth for 5–10 seconds, before returning to the original perch, 'panting' and turning his head rhythmically. Display flights, accompanied by a very audible 'snappy' whirring of wings (i.e. the 'rattle' described above), were repeated at intervals of c.1–3 minutes. After c.15 minutes the two birds departed the area, led by the female, in direct dashing flight.

These observations suggest that male Wedge-tailed Hillstar has a variety of displays, including U-shaped flights, wing-rattles and a range of contortions to show off the bright underparts. The stereotypic flight display of *adela* is perhaps similar to the 'low undulating display flight' ascribed by Fjeldsá & Krabbe² to Andean Hillstar *O. estella*, although there is no mention of the flight being U-shaped. In addition, whilst *estella* undertakes steep display flights up to 30–40 m above ground, often spiralling upward, before diving back to a perch, this behaviour has not been reported for *adela*.

The habitat at Yavi consists of steep sheltered boulder-strewn slopes, with scattered stunted thorny trees near the valley floor (mostly *Prosopis ferox* and *Acacia visco*), terrestrial bromeliads (e.g. *Puyas fiebrigii*), flowering parasitic plants (Loranthaceae) and low dense shrubs. The hillstars fed on flowering *Puyas* columns and on the pink tubular flowers of low

shrubs.

Given the courtship behaviour noted above it seems very likely that Wedge-tailed Hillstar breeds at this location, but there is some disagreement as to whether it is only a seasonal visitor to Argentina. Fjeldsá & Krabbe² suspected that the species might migrate, although their evidence was not presented. All records at Yavi are from August–January (M. Pearman *in litt.*), but this might be more informative concerning seasonal fluctuations in birdwatching activity than about the species' behaviour. The records suggest that it is present at Yavi early in the breeding season, and it seems most likely that the species will prove to be resident in this part of Argentina. Further records year-round are needed to confirm this.

Little is known of the population size and status of Wedge-tailed Hillstar, but it does seem locally common at Yavi and at certain sites in Bolivia. As much of its range is rarely visited, and under very little threat from habitat degradation, overall numbers are probably much higher than current information suggests.

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Strong passage of austral migrants on Peninsula Valdés, Argentina

During a visit to Argentina in January–February 2004 we spent several days on Peninsula Valdés, Chubut province, which protrudes c.100 km into the Atlantic Ocean. On 9 February 2004 we were at Punta Norte, the northernmost point of the peninsula, where we witnessed a continuous stream of birds passing at low altitude from east to west, parallel to the coastline. During fours (10h45–14h45) we counted all presumed migrants with binoculars from the viewpoint at the visitors' centre (see Table 1). During this period, the wind was south-west, Beaufort scale 3–4, the sky slightly overcast and temperature at least 25°C.

Discussion

Thirteen species were recorded migrating. In an overview of austral bird migration in South America¹ most of the above-mentioned species are considered austral migrants, except Southern Martin *Progne elegans* and Patagonian Yellow-finch *Sicalis lebruni*. All of the observed migrants breed in Patagonia and move north for the austral winter, apart from White-rumped *Calidris fuscicollis* and Baird's Sandpipers *C. bairdii*. Probably most observed birds were real migrants. However for shorebirds tidal movements cannot be excluded (S. Imberti pers. comm.), although they usually migrate in larger flocks. Moreover their migration was delayed in 2004, which does not correspond with our observations.

A total of 14,385 birds was recorded during the four-hour

Table 1. Bird species and their numbers migrating at Punta Norte, Peninsula Valdés, on 9 February 2004.

Species	10h45–11h45	11h45–12h45	12h45–13h45	13h45–14h45	Totals
Two-banded Plover <i>Charadrius falklandicus</i>	0	0	23	3	26
White-rumped Sandpiper <i>Calidris fuscicollis</i>	221	26	58	117	422
Baird's Sandpiper <i>Calidris bairdii</i>	0	7	1	5	13
Least Seedsnipe <i>Thinocorus rumicivorus</i>	0	16	17	14	47
Eared Dove <i>Zenaida auriculata</i>	76	15	0	0	91
Chocolate-vented Tyrant <i>Neoxolmis rufiventris</i>	10	9	1	2	22
Patagonian (Austral) Negrito <i>Lessonia rufa</i>	6,125	4,298	948	650	12,021
Chilean Swallow <i>Tachycineta meyeri</i>	416	344	301	515	1,576
Southern Martin <i>Progne elegans</i>	0	1	0	2	3
Blue-and-white Swallow <i>Notiochelidon cyanoleuca</i>	17	7	2	2	28
Cliff Swallow <i>Hirundo pyrrhonota</i>	9	2	4	6	21
Patagonian Yellow-finch <i>Sicalis lebruni</i>	49	36	18	7	110
Carbonated Sierra-finch <i>Phrygilus carbonarius</i>	2	3	0	0	5
Totals	6,925	4,764	1,373	1,323	14,385

count. The real total may even have been higher, as we probably missed birds during periods of particularly strong passage. The passage was dominated by Patagonian Negrito *Lessonia rufa*: 12,021 individuals were noted or more than 80% of the total. Passage was most intense during the morning but, in particular, the migration of swallows continued steadily into early afternoon. One can only speculate as to the total number of birds that passed by Punta Norte on 9 February. Assuming that migration during the rest of the morning hours was as strong as during the first hour of the count c.40,000 birds may have passed between 06h00 and 12h00. In order to estimate the number of birds that might have passed between 12h00 and 21h00, we extrapolated using the final-hour total, resulting in an estimated 12,000 birds during this period and thus a total perhaps in excess of 50,000 during the entire day!

The strong passage observed on 9 February probably resulted from offshore winds that coincided with the migration of southern Patagonian breeders. The moderate south-west wind probably drifted migrants, usually passing by more dispersed, to the coast. The next day, when there was an onshore wind, very few passage birds were noted at the same location. Santiago Imberti commented that massive passage of migrants through coastal Patagonia is more frequently seen

later in the austral autumn, but systematic counts appear to be lacking. Hopefully this short note may initiate more study into this interesting and spectacular phenomenon.

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PUBLISHED RECORDS FROM THE LITERATURE

WEST INDIES

St Martin

Ruddy Duck *Oxyura jamaicensis* has recently become established as a breeder on the island³.

MIDDLE AMERICA

Costa Rica

The first country record of **Rusty-margined Flycatcher** *Myiozetetes cayanensis* was made near Golfito, on 7 April 2004, the bird being photographed. The second record of **Striated Heron**

Butorides striatus involved a bird photographed and seen twice in the Paloverde area between October 2003 and February 2004. A juvenile **Red-billed Tropicbird** *Phaethon aethereus* was found dead at 1,800 m in the Central Valley on 6 February 2004. **Masked Yellowthroat** *Geothlypis aequinoctialis* has recently been found in the Carara area, only the second Costa Rican locality for the species. A **Black-headed Grosbeak** *Pheucticus melanocephalus* was noted south of San José in mid-January 2004. Several records of **Pectoral Sandpiper** *Calidris melanotos* were made during the 2003–04 winter, whilst a **Cape May Warbler** *Dendroica tigrina* was observed at Hacienda Guachipelín, on 18 February 2004, with another at Savegre Mountain Lodge, 2 March 2004, a **MacGillivray's Warbler** *Oporornis tolmiei* at Monteverde, in mid-February 2004 and a **Bullock's Oriole** *Icterus bullockii* at Santa Rosa National Park, in late February. Perhaps the first record of **Paint-billed Crane** *Neocrex erythrops* on the Pacific slope of Costa Rica was made in April 2004, whilst equally what appears to be the first Caribbean-slope record of **Pacific Screech-owl** *Otus cooperi* was made in early 2004¹³.

Mexico

Western Gull *Larus occidentalis* was discovered breeding in the Gulf of California in 2001; it was previously known only as a winter

visitor to this region¹⁵. **White-collared Swift** *Streptoprocne zonaris* was found breeding further north than previously suspected in western Mexico, in Jalisco, in June 2000³⁵. The first record of **Chihuahuan Raven** *Corvus cryptoleucus* has been reported from southern Baja California⁷. **Ornate Hawk-eagle** *Spizaetus ornatus* has been reported in Nayarit recently¹⁴.

SOUTH AMERICA

Argentina

Surveys in the early years of the new millennium have revealed a dramatic decline (of almost 50%) in numbers of **Red Knot** *Calidris canutus* wintering in Argentina, with peripheral populations in Patagonia having decreased by as much as 98% since the mid-1980s²⁷. Trejo *et al.*³⁹ provide new data on the breeding biology of the poorly known **White-throated Hawk** *Buteo albicula*.

Brazil

The first documented country record of **Oilbird** *Steatornis caripensis* has, strangely, come from western Amazonia, rather than the Venezuelan border area⁴⁷, whilst other first country records reported recently include **Silvery Grebe** *Podiceps occipitalis* (photographed in Santa Catarina and Paraná)⁵, **Cape Gannet** *Sula capensis* (photographed at sea off Rio Grande do Sul)⁴⁵, **Collared Pratincole** *Glareola pratincola* (photographed on Atol das Rocas)³⁶, **Franklin's Gull** *Larus pipixcan* (one photographed in São Paulo, following two previous reports without documentary evidence)², **White-winged Black-tyrant** *Knipolegus aterrimus* (photographed in Mato Grosso do Sul)⁴ and **Pale-eyed Pygmy-tyrant** *Atalotriccus pilaris* (tape-recorded in Roraima)⁴⁸. On the other hand, the antpitta *Grallaria guatemalensis roraimae* has now been removed from the Brazilian list as the only specimen is actually a Variegated Antpitta *G. varia*²³. The exciting (and long-awaited) rediscovery of the Atlantic Forest population of **White-winged Potoo** *Nyctibius*

leucopterus was made in late 1999, in coastal Bahia⁴⁶. A new female specimen of the incredibly poorly known **Stresemann's Bristlefront** *Merulaxis stresemanni* has been located in Berlin; it was probably collected in the early-19th century²⁹. Mazar Barnett & Kirwan²⁴ provide full details for several nests of **Striated Softtail** *Thripophaga macroura* found in Espírito Santo and Bahia, and compare these with the nest architecture of a nest of **Plain Softtail** *T. fusciceps*, found in Bolivia, offering some preliminary comments on intra-generic relationships in the process. **Audubon's Shearwater** *Puffinus lherminieri* has recently been discovered to be breeding on Fernando do Noronha³⁷. First or confirmed state records reported recently include the following: **Light-mantled Sooty Albatross** *Phoebastria palpebrata* (Santa Catarina)³⁴, **Hook-billed Kite** *Chondrohierax uncinatus* (Rio Grande do Sul)²⁰ and **Dusky-capped Flycatcher** *Myiarchus tuberculifer* (Pernambuco)²². The fourth Brazilian record of **King Penguin** *Aptenodytes patagonicus* involved one photographed in Rio Grande do Sul in December 2003²⁶, whilst Piacentini *et al.*³⁰ report a new record of **White-rumped Monjita** *Xolmis velatus* in Santa Catarina. Further range extensions of **Grey-backed Tachuri** *Polystictus superciliaris* and **Pale-throated Serra-finch** *Embernagra longicauda* have been reported by Vasconcelos *et al.*⁴². A new breeding area for the globally threatened **Saffron-cowled Blackbird** *Xanthopsar flavus* has been discovered near Cambará do Sul, Rio Grande do Sul⁹, and further records of **Streamer-tailed Tyrant** *Gubernetes yetapa* have been presented for the same state¹. New data for Minas Gerais have been made available for the following species: **Grey-bellied Spinetail** *Synallaxis cinerascens*⁴⁰, **Brown-chested Martin** *Progne tapera*⁴¹, **Grey-headed Tanager** *Eucometis penicillata*³³ and **São Francisco Sparrow** *Arremon franciscanus*⁶, whilst new state records and other information on birds in Minas Gerais, based on

data collected in the São Francisco Valley, have also been published recently¹⁸. New data on the birds of Espírito Santo have been provided by Venturini & Paz⁴⁴, and Mazar Barnett *et al.*²⁵ provide new distributional data for birds in the country's extreme southern states.

Chile

The population of the Near Threatened **Red-legged Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax gaimardi* appears to number just over 5,000 pairs in the country at present, with c.80% of these in Region X¹². The first nests of the **Másafuera Rayadito** *Aphrastura masafuerae* have been described recently¹⁷.

Colombia

A study of the San Salvador Valley, in the Santa Marta region, revealed a total of 374 species, including the second country record of **Cooper's Hawk** *Accipiter cooperi*, a **Wood Thrush** *Hylocichla mustelina*, records of nine globally threatened species and many other notable sightings³⁸. **Least Tern** *Sterna antillarum* has recently been discovered breeding on the Caribbean coast³².

Ecuador

The nest, eggs and other breeding data have recently been described for the **White-bellied Antpitta** *Grallaria hypoleuca*, based on observations from the east slope of the Andes³¹. Other newly available breeding information has also been presented for **Spot-fronted Swift** *Cypseloides cherriei*¹⁶, **Rusty-winged Barbtail** *Premnornis guttuligera*⁸ and the globally threatened **Pale-headed Brush-finch** *Atlappetes pallidiceps*²⁸, and the latter species has also been the subject of a paper discussing its population (17 pairs in 2002), as well as its vocalisations, conservation prospects and other original data¹⁹. Freile¹¹ presents new information that updates the status and distribution of 46 species in the country.

Paraguay

Brown-and-yellow Marshbird *Pseudoleistes virescens* has been

added to the list of species known to have reliably occurred in the country¹⁰.

Peru

Vellinga *et al.*⁴³ provide notable avian records from surveys of several localities in Ayabaca province, dpto. Piura, including the second country record of **Stygian Owl** *Asio stygius* and one of the few available Peruvian records of **Masked Saltator** *Saltator cinctus*.

Venezuela

A June 2001 record of **Canada Warbler** *Wilsonia canadensis* has been reported recently from the south of the country²¹.

OTHER RECORDS RECEIVED

Argentina

A winter-plumaged **Red Phalarope** *Phalaropus fulicarius* was photographed on a shallow lake between San Julián and Río Gallegos, Santa Cruz province, on 27 January 2004 (JB, SI, AL & RV; Fig. 3; see p.80), a moulting **King Penguin** *Aptenodytes patagonicus* was photographed in a colony of Magellanic Penguins *Spheniscus magellanicus* on Harborton Island, Beagle Channel, Tierra del Fuego, on 30 January 2004 (JB, AL & RV; Fig. 4; see p.80), and a juvenile **Macaroni Penguin** *Eudyptes chrysolophus* was also photographed, at Cabo Vírgenes, Santa Cruz province, on 28 January 2004 (JB, SI, AvK, AL, RV).

Brazil

Tawny Piculet *Picumnus fulvescens* has been found in Ubajara National Park, in Ceará: two together inside the park on 16 July 2004 and another in the garden of the Alemao Inn, 1.5 km outside the park entrance on 17 July 2004 (AR).

Chile

An **Upland Sandpiper** *Bartramia longicauda* just north of Arica on 20 December 2003 is about the fifth record for the country, whilst two non-breeding-plumaged

Swallow-tailed Gulls *Creagus furcatus* were seen on a pelagic out of Arica on 15 December 2003 and a **Sandwich Tern** *Sterna sandvicensis* was at Maipo, San Antonio, on 21 December 2003 (about the eighth record). A flock of nine **Spot-winged Pigeons** *Columba maculosa* was seen at Putre on 20 December 2003. This species has not previously been mentioned for Chile, although there is apparently an, as yet, unpublished sight record at the same locality in early 2003 (all MGA, RAF & WR).

Cuba

Records from spring 2004 include: a single **Dunlin** *Calidris alpina* on Cayo Coco on 19 April, two **American Avocets** *Recurvirostra americana* at Las Salinas on 22 April at least, the regular adult **Lesser Black-backed Gull** *Larus fuscus* on Cayo Coco on 17 April, and a male **Scarlet Tanager** *Piranga olivacea* near Playa Larga on 20–22 April (JA, JF, SH & BW).

Ecuador

TM sent the following new altitudinal records (figures in brackets indicate altitudes given in Ridgely & Greenfield 2001). At Cotinga Lodge, about 12 km west of La Libertad (Carchi), in early-November 2001, during exceptionally dry weather, **Toucan Barbet** *Semnormis ramphastinus* was found at 2,730 (2,400) m, **Plate-billed Mountain-toucan** *Andigena laminirostris* 3,000 (2,600) m, **Blue-winged Mountain-tanager** *Anisognathus somptuosus* 2,720 (2,500) m and **Blue-capped Tanager** *Thraupis cyanocephala* 3,000 m (1,900 m, a misprint, which should read 2,900 m). On 15 June 2003, at Puyango Petrified Forest Reserve, **Black Phoebe** *Sayornis nigricans* was noted at 300 (500) m and **Strong-billed Woodcreeper** *Xiphocolaptes promeropirhynchus* at 340 m (west of Andes usually not below 600 m). At Tandayapa, on 2 June 2003, **Green-crowned Woodnymph** *Thalurania fannyi* was observed at 1,465 (800) m. At Manta Real, on 29 August 2003, **Fawn-breasted Brilliant** *Heliodoxa rubinoides* was found at 450 (1,000) m, and on 23 December

2003, a **Smoke-coloured Pewee** *Contopus fumigatus* at 470 (800) m and **Golden-crowned Flycatcher** *Myiodynastes chrysocephalus* at 410 (1,000) m. On the slopes of Volcán Tungurahua, on 29 December 2003, a **Grass Wren** *Cistothorus platensis* was observed singing at 2,180 (2,200) m. Along the río Negro, at 01°28'S 78°11'W, on 30 December 2003, **Thrush-like Wren** *Campylorhynchus turdinus* was noted at 1,600 (1,100) m. At the Reserva Biológica Los Cedros, on 15–16 June 2004, there was **Southern Nightingale-wren** *Microcerculus marginatus* at 1,430 (700) m, **Stripe-throated Hermit** *Phaetornis striigularis* 1,400 (800) m, **Rufous Motmot** *Baryphthengus martii* 1,530 (900) m and **Grey-rumped Swift** *Chaetura cinereiventris* 1,400 m (1,000 m on western slope of Andes). In addition, the same observer discovered the second **Dark-faced Ground-tyrant** *Muscisaxicola macloviana* for the country, at Jatumpamba, above Sozoranga, in extreme southern Loja, on 19 June 2003.

French Guiana

All records relate to 2004 and were made by AR. On 31 July **Pale-tailed Barbthroat** *Threnetes leucurus* was observed near Saül, one of the first records for the country. On 3 August, a **Long-tailed Potoo** *Nyctibius aethereus* was photographed at Monts La Fumée, near Saül, and observed again on 11 August, on the same tree, whilst another was heard singing at Mont Galbao, also near Saül, on 6 August (the fourth and fifth country records). A **Speckled Tanager** *Tangara guttata* was seen near Saül on 9 August, the second record for the country. Eight **Southern Martins** *Progne elegans* were photographed within a group of c.4,500 Brown-chested Martins *P. tapera* at Roura, on 14 August (Fig. 5; see p.80), and a male was photographed in Amaná Nature Reserve, near Mana, on 25 August. The species is considered as a vagrant in the Guianas but is easily overlooked. Five **Wilson's Snipes** *Gallinago (gallinago) delicata* were observed in rice

fields near Mana, and two were seen again on 27 August. A

juvenile **Buff-breasted Sandpiper** *Tryngites subruficollis* was observed near Mana on 31 August, the third country record.

Jamaica

A group of six **Mississippi Kites** *Ictinia mississippiensis* were photographed hawking insects at Savanna La Mar on 21 March 2004, the first record for the island and only the second for the Caribbean (Fig. 6; see p.80, WvdS).

Peru

An adult **Sabine's Gull** *Xema sabini* was noted at Pantiacolla Lodge, Manu National Park, on 18 October 2002 (MK, SM).

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