

# Welcome to the seventh issue of *Neotropical Birding*, the birding magazine of the Neotropical Bird Club!

**A**s this magazine has grasped since its very first issue, birding lies at the splendid interface between science, conservation and unadulterated pleasure. As the new editor of *Neotropical Birding*, I intend to build upon the work of my predecessors in harnessing the possibilities of this special space. And I'm optimistic that I will be able to do so. After all, Neotropical birds are on my side.

Ecuador features prominently in *Neotropical Birding* 7. The country is the focus of our fifth article in the series of 'Important Bird Areas in the Neotropics' (pp. 4–14). The highly-desired endemics illustrated won't let your eyes rest for a second—just like in the field. A few pages further on, Ecuadorian ornithologists invite us to seek out umbrellabirds in their country—and in Costa Rica to boot (pp. 15–23), examining how these charming creatures and birding activities can contribute to the tropical forest conservation. Venturing further into Neotropical forests, we share with you the splendours of the Neotropical Bird Club's successful trip to Guyana (pp. 26–30), which raised money for the Club's Conservation Awards programme. Keep your eyes peeled for details of the next Club tour, then go birding to help conservation!

How many taxa of red-headed cardinals have you seen? How many trumpeters? What about brush finches? Oh, and motmots? To find out, check the next installment of our taxonomic update, 'Splits, lumps and shuffles', (pp. 31–39)... Time to revise your lists or to rearrange your birding plans: amazing levels of splitting are boosting the Neotropical bird list, expanding the ever-growing gap between our region and other biogeographic realms.

We are all familiar with the nervous tension that accompanies you as you stand on the verge of seeing a new species for your personal life list. Will the bird show, or not? Is it what I think it is, or not? Some will get a buzz out of the moment when we first clasp eyes on a treat such as a small Andean dove (pp. 71–73). But why not magnify the bittersweet combination of joy and uncertainty by exploring areas where few, if any, birders have been before? Push back the

barriers, expand your horizons, extend your list: but only after reading our 'Better Neotropical Birding' article in this issue (pp. 42–47)!

Deciding where to go when visiting Brazil or Bolivia is not an easy task. Both countries have a plethora of avian riches. Fortunately, local experts make our decisions easier through articles on the states of Bahia (pp. 49–61) and Santa Cruz (pp. 62–70).

I have yet to find a birder who hasn't been inspired and excited by the contents of previous issues of *Neotropical Birding*. But producing such a magazine is expensive, and eats into our capability to fund Conservation Awards (among other activities). We are convinced that receiving two issues of *Neotropical Birding* and the single printed volume of *Cotinga* per year are three good reasons to become a member of the Neotropical Bird Club. If you enjoy this issue, please share it with your friends and invite them to join the Club. If they need a fourth reason to join, then our Conservation Awards programme is surely it. Selected back issues of *Neotropical Birding* are now on sale through the Club website ([www.neotropicalbirdclub.org](http://www.neotropicalbirdclub.org)), so it's not too late to have the full *Neotropical Birding* collection on your shelves and in your heart...

Happy (Neotropical) Birding!

*Nacho Areta, Editor*

## FANCY WRITING FOR NEOTROPICAL BIRDING?

Do you have an idea for a feature on some aspect of Neotropical birds or birding? Do you want to tell other birders about a great birding site in the Neotropics—or your experiences of tracking down a particularly exciting species? Can you help other birders identify members of a tricky genus? Would you like to share your research about a globally threatened bird that you have studied? Or would you like to showcase your photographs of a rare or poorly known bird? If so, the Editorial Committee of *Neotropical Birding* would like to hear from you. Please send your idea by e-mail to: [neotropical.birding@neotropicalbirdclub.org](mailto:neotropical.birding@neotropicalbirdclub.org). Thanks!