SAND MARTIN *Riparia riparia* V

Two at Government House in Stanley on 13 Oct 1988 (S. Wolsey and R. Bayliss pers. comm.) were the first records for the islands. One over Beaver Pond, Pebble Is., on 18 Dec 1988.

CLIFF SWALLOW *Petrochelidon pyrrhonota* V

One along Cape Pembroke on 8 Dec 1989 (M. Whitehouse and G. Cripps); 2 at Stanley airport on 14–15 Nov 1990 were exhausted and had clearly only just arrived. The second and third records for the islands.

RUFOUS-COLLARED SPARROW *Zonotrichia capensis* V, probably annual

A small number on Beaver Is. and New Is. in late May/early June 1990 (S. Poncet and T. Chater); 1 in tussock near the settlement, Carcass Is. 4 Sept, and 1 singing by the settlement 7 Sept 1990; 2 at NW Point, Carcass Is. 8 Sept 1990 and 1 there next day. At least 4 individuals involved in this small spring influx. The species seems to be turning up more often these days, particularly in the west.

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Notes on the Black-throated Antwren *Myrmeciza atrothorax* and Spot-breasted Antwren *M. stictothorax* in Brazil

by Dante Martins Teixeira, Jorge B. Nacinovic & Frieda Maria Marti

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The Black-throated Antwren *Myrmeciza atrothorax* is a common South American formicariid, widely distributed from the Guianas, Venezuela and eastern Colombia south to northern Bolivia and Amazonian Brazil. According to our observations, this species inhabits the thick lower strata of humid forests, secondary growth scrub, and also the gallery forests of northern Mato Grosso, central Brazil. As mentioned by Hilty & Brown (1986), this antwren occasionally joins

army-ants or mixed flocks, composed of such species as *Cymbilaimus lineatus* and *Thyrothorus coraya*, as we recorded in August 1991 at an advanced base camp of the Brazilian Army (*c.* 0°28′N, 66°43′W) near the rio Demiti. In this locality, isolated individuals or pairs were easily observed hopping on the ground with the tail obliquely pointed up and sometimes flicked. Like other formicariids, *M. atrothorax* may be a noisy species when it searches within the dry leaves and scans the litter or the surface of branches and fallen trunks looking for insects (Diptera, Orthoptera, Coleoptera, Isoptera and Hemiptera, as we found from stomach contents; see also Schubart *et al.* 1965). Adult calls include a sequence of loud whistles, *bhee-bhee-bhee. . .*, and a sharp *bheerrk* as alarm; young birds may give a long series of *pic* notes, apparently as a location call.

The breeding biology of *M. atrothorax* is almost unknown. Friedmann (1948) reported one male with enlarged testes obtained in January at São Gabriel da Cachoeira (*c.* 0°08′S, 67°05′W), Amazonas. In the series of specimens in the Museu Nacional, birds from the upper rio Negro collected in August and October have small gonads, which measured 1–2 mm (males) and 6–7 mm (females). The nest and eggs seem to be undescribed, but we obtained a young bird on 6 December 1984 from Fazenda Pantanalzinho, *c.* 13 km northwest of Porto Esperidiao (*c.* 15°31′S, 58°28′W), northern Mato Grosso. This specimen (MN 36107; total length 133 mm, weight 17 g) was a young male, recently feathered, with a non-ossified skull and small gonads (1 mm), and measured: culmen 11.2 mm, wing 58 mm, tail 40.8 mm, tarsus 25.5 mm. It was observed following its parents in the thick lower strata of the humid gallery forest, and was attended by both male (MN 33664; gonads 4 mm, total length 145 mm, weight 16.5 g) and female (MN 33665; gonads 5 mm, total length 140 mm, weight 18 g).

The young male of the Black-throated Antwren has the lores, face and chin greyish (OOS-10-1° according to the colour catalogue of Villalobos & Villalobos 1947). The feathers of the pileum are chestnut (OOS-6-5°) with narrow blackish borders, giving a slightly scaled appearance; mantle and back also chestnut, slightly more rufescent and brighter (OOS-7-6°) than the pileum. Upper wing coverts chestnut (OOS-7-6°), the lesser and median ones with narrow blackish tips, giving an inconspicuous scaled pattern; alula ash grey (OOS-6-3°), with a dark chestnut (OOS-8-4°) tinge in the borders; remiges blackish (OOS-4-2°) with light chestnut (OOS-7-6°) borders. Rump ash black (OOS-6-10°); tail black. The feathers of throat, breast, belly and flank are greyish (OOS-10-1°), with broad chestnut tips (OOS-7-6°) which nearly cover the exposed area of the foreneck, breast and flanks feathers. Centre of belly, lower abdomen and thighs greyish (OOS-10-1°); under tail-coverts ash black (OOS-6-10°). Iris chestnut; bill black with a somewhat lighter gonys and yellowish rictus; tarsus pale rosy-greyish, with greyish feet.

At the first sight, the plumage of the young male of *M. atrothorax* is similar to that of the adult male, but there is no trace of a black throat, and the interscapular patch and the white spots of the upper wing coverts are completely absent. However, two subadult males collected

by G. F. Mees in Surinam, and now housed in the Natuurhistorisch Museum of Leiden (NM 36918, Brokopondo, 30 May 1965, gonads 1.7 mm, weight 15.1 g; NM 72647 Nassau Gebergte, 20 July 1972, gonads 1.9 mm, weight 16.3 g), show an intermediate plumage, which differs from the adult male pattern mainly by having a few whitish dots in the upper wing-coverts, the throat greyish or greyish-white marked with black, and an olivaceous tinge in the blackish breast patch. These specimens have the same size as adults (culmen 13–14.8 mm, wing 57 mm, tail 58.3 mm, tarsus 23.6–25.2 mm), and show no significant differences in the colouration of the bare parts, but the palate is yellow according the original labels. As the adult females of the species have a rather different colouration, especially on the underparts, it is interesting to stress that in some other representatives of the genus, such as the Sooty Antbird *Myrmeciza fortis* and the Grey-headed Antbird *M. griseiceps*, the plumage of young males has been said to be similar to that of the adult female (Gyldenstolpe 1945, Hilty & Brown 1986, Fjeldså & Krabbe 1990). This discrepancy, however, is perhaps not remarkable, as *Myrmeciza* is very heterogeneous and seems not to be a monophyletic genus (Zimmer 1932, Willis 1985).

Additionally, we would like to comment on the status of the Spot-breasted Antwren *Myrmeciza stictothorax* (Todd, 1927), which is known from a single pair collected at Apacy, west bank of lower Tapajos (probably 3°15′S, 55°10′W). As has been previously noted (Todd 1927, Meyer De Schauensee 1970), this species closely resembles *M. atrothorax*, except for the more extensively white underparts of female and the white-spotted breast of male. However, it is noteworthy that males of *M. atrothorax* from the northern bank of the Amazon may also have some white marks on the breast, which suggests that the male of the Spot-breasted Antwren is a specimen of the Black-throated Antwren with a well-defined spotted pattern (Schulenberg & Stotz 1991). In this connection we may mention that the Museu Nacional houses a second male of *M. stictothorax* (MN 31073, gonads 2 mm) collected by Jose Hidasi near Rio Branco (*c.* 9°58′S, 67°48′W), Acre, on 29 May 1968. This specimen does not appreciably differ in size from *M. stictothorax* (culmen 13.9 mm, tarsus 24.3 mm, tail 54.8 mm, wing 60 mm), and has the same dark colouration. Like the holotype of the Spot-breasted Antwren, it has the upperparts olive-brown (OOY-6-8°), and its breast shows about 30 black feathers shaft-marked with white, in the conspicuous pattern also described for the holotype of *M. stictothorax*. The larger of these white streaks are approximately 10 mm long and 0.7 mm wide, and there is a single feather with the shaft streak enlarged distally, forming a whitish apical spot.

Although it might not be unreasonable to treat *M. stictothorax* merely as a synonym of *M. atrothorax*, without even any taxonomic validity at the subspecies level, any conclusion about the status of this taxon seems to be premature, as the available information is so scanty. It should be pointed out that the alleged differences between the females of the two taxa may not be reliable, bearing in mind the high degree of intraspecific variation occurring in the plumage of several

formicariids (see also Hellmary 1929). Indeed, the series of *M. atrothorax* in the collections of Museu Nacional includes two noteworthy females (the above-mentioned MN 33665 and MN 38597 from Jacaré, rio Kuluene, *c.* 12°00′S, 53°24′W) with the centre of abdomen extensively white, in the pattern attributed to *M. stictothorax*. On the other hand, however, both males of *M. stictothorax* show the same dark plumage, which resembles the colouration of some subspecies of *M. atrothorax*, e.g. the nominate form and *M. a. obscurata*. This is a peculiar and significant detail, considering that the type-material of *M. stictothorax* was obtained within the range of *M. atrothorax melanura*, a paler-coloured representative which seems to have a marked chestnut cast on its upperparts. With a wide distribution on the southern bank of the Amazon, this subspecies occurs at Igarape Bravo (*c.* 2°24′S, 54°41′W), about 100 km away from the type-locality of *M. stictothorax* (Zimmer 1932, Meyer de Schauensee 1966), and also at other localities of eastern Amazonian Brazil such as Serra do Cachimbo (*c.* 9°00′S, 55°15′W), Conceiçåo do Araguaia (*c.* 8°15′S, 49°17′W), and Soure (*c.* 0°44′S, 48°31′W) on Marajó Island (Snethlage 1914, Pinto & Camargo 1957, Novaes 1958), contrary to what was mentioned by Schulenberg & Stotz (1991).

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Major concentration of River Warblers *Locustella fluviatilis* wintering in northern Botswana

by M. Herremans

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The River Warbler *Locustella fluviatilis* is an unobtrusive Palaearctic migrant, which enters northeastern Africa in September/October, but only continues to move through eastern Africa into southern Africa in late November and December (Dowsett 1972). Birds from late December to late January in southern Zambia were still on the move southwards (Dowsett 1972). The wintering* grounds of the species are still unknown: Zimbabwe and northern South Africa are suggested as the main wintering area (Dowsett 1972, Curry-Lindahl 1981), but there are very few records from these countries. Irwin (1981) mentions 7 scattered records from Zimbabwe and 5 have been accepted more recently (Hustler 1989, Hustler *et al.* 1990, 1991, Hustler pers. comm.). From the Transvaal there is one old specimen and a single accepted record (Tarboton *et al.* 1987), and more recently there are records from two localities, one involving several birds (Tarboton pers. comm., Hockey pers. comm.). There are two records from Botswana: one bird was seen during the 6th Pan-African Ornithological Congress in Francistown in March/April 1985 and a second one was at the same locality on 16 March 1989 (Botswana Bird Club Records Subcommittee pers. comm.). At the time of Dowsett's review there were no records available from February or early March, when River Warblers supposedly undergo a rapid moult at the final non-breeding destination (Dowsett 1972). D. J. Pearson more recently has provided evidence of wintering of River Warblers as far north as Kenya, where four were caught between 6 January and 25 March, three of which were moulting (Turner 1992).

Between 4 and 6 March 1992 River Warblers were found rather plentiful in the understory of the more open parts of the Rhodesian Teak *Baikiaea plurijuga* woodlands in the Kasane Forest Reserve, just

*The northern hemisphere biased term "wintering" is used in this paper for convenience, but the birds actually spend the local summer in the southern hemisphere.