

Notes on some birds from central and northern Peru

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Este artículo reporta comentarios sobre un total de 45 especies de aves peruanas. Treinta de estas especies se encuentran dentro de alguna de las categorías de amenaza de extinción. El artículo cuenta con observaciones hechas en el centro y norte del Perú las cuales se basan en avistamientos y grabaciones de vocalizaciones. Nuestro propósito es el de contribuir con información que finalmente ayude a establecer políticas de protección y conservación de la avifauna peruana.

Current trends of land conversion in Latin America are likely to lead to a further deterioration in biological diversity. Many species and their communities will suffer from habitat transformation, while other may be more resilient to change. Diagnosing the effects of land transformation requires systematic data collection and experimentation, or consistent updates on the status of the habitat and its animal communities. Moreover, the way birds respond to changed conditions can be used to extrapolate the effect of habitat deterioration on animal communities.

In this note we report observations of Peruvian bird species considered threatened (2) and make brief comments on habitat conditions. We also report range extensions and comment on other noteworthy observations. Our purpose is to assist in monitoring the status of endangered taxa, as well as to report any changes in habitat. We seek to encourage other observers to make their observations generally available, in order that conservationists and researchers can update knowledge of the many poorly known species in these regions of the country.

Methods

Between 11 June and 31 August 1999 we covered, by car, over 10,000 km in central and northern Peru. Our objective was to visit known localities of species listed as threatened (2). The scope of our trip prevented stops of longer than four days at any locality. We searched for target species along pre-existing trails and roads. Only sight records and tape-recordings were made. All recordings have been deposited at the Library of Natural Sounds, Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology.

Results

A total of 46 species is included here. Thirty are classified as threatened: Critical (two), Endangered (four), Vulnerable (15) and Near-threatened (nine).

Rufous-headed Chachalaca *Ortalis erythroptera*

On 25–28 August, at least three pairs of this restricted-range cracid were heard duetting near Quebrada El Caucho, at 450 m (03°50'S 80°16'W), in Tumbes Reserved Zone, dpto. Piura. While military personnel are commonly considered wildlife hunters, the species was heard near El Caucho military base. In addition, 5–6 Pale-browed Tinamou *Crypturellus transfaciatus* were heard at dusk (17h45) around this base. Species commonly used for human consumption are often scarce or absent near human settlements (1). These species' presence near the military base suggests that hunting pressure is either minimal or absent, and may not represent a threat to these species in Tumbes National Forest.

White-winged Guan *Penelope albipennis*

Three near 'Quebrada Limón' (c.650 m), west of Limón (03°50'S 79°40'W), 35.5 km north of Olmos, dpto. Lambayeque, on 20 July. Three groups of guans in this valley are thought by local people to have dispersed from the adjacent San Isidro Valley (05°49'S 79°42'W), which has long been known to support the species. If true, this may suggest the guan population is reaching a point of habitat saturation in the adjacent valley and starting to disperse. Moreover, preliminary information from a recent survey conducted during March 2000 has brought evidence of new groups of guans in valleys adjacent to Limón and San Isidro (F. Angulo pers. comm.). Noteworthy is that a group of guans, including two young, was subject to constant attacks by Black-chested Buzzard-eagle *Geranoaetus melanoleucus* and Harris's Hawk *Parabuteo unicinctus*, and the chicks eventually disappeared. Although circumstantial, this observation and local residents reports suggest that raptor predation is an important cause of mortality among young and adult guans.

Bearded Guan *Penelope barbata*

Three rather tame individuals near Cruz Chiquita pass, at c.2,800 m, between Huancabamba and Tabaconas (05°18'S 79°18'W), Cerro Chinguela ridge, on 21 August. The mountains on the border between dptos. Piura and Cajamarca are a stronghold for this species in Peru. While

there was little evidence of deforestation along the short stretch of road explored, forest between Huancabamba and Sapalache, also on Cerro Chinguela ridge, has been transformed into agricultural fields. Moreover, the road under construction from Sapalache to the Ecuadorian border is likely to bring further deforestation within the area. The species occurs in Parque Nacional Podocarpus, Ecuador, and Tabacones–Namballe Reserve, Cajamarca (14). A protected area in Cerro Chinguela would protect this and at least ten other species (2). Surveys of Tabacones–Namballe National Sanctuary would also be useful to determine the population status of this and other species within its limits.

Peruvian Pigeon *Columba oenops*

Common along the río Marañón, near Balsas (06°50'S 79°01'W), being seen and heard virtually throughout 29 July. Trapping for the domestic market appears to have diminished as former hunters have abandoned this activity or moved to different towns (pers. obs.).

Military Macaw *Ara militaris*

On 20 August, a flock of 16 flew overhead, c.7 km south-east of Tamborapa (05°24'S 78°51'W), 43 km north of Jaén, dpto. Cajamarca. Also reported in Tabaconas–Namballe Reserve (15), the species is known to move into deciduous forest following seasonal rains to take advantage of ephemeral food sources (8).

Yellow-faced Parrotlet *Forpus xanthops*

Only one pair was seen in the Marañón valley near Balsas. Hunting appears to have decreased in this area (see Peruvian Pigeon). A local ex-hunter in Bellavista, near Celendin, suggested that during our visit on 28 July, parrotlets were concentrated in the upper valleys within the upper río Marañón drainage.

Grey-cheeked Parakeet *Brotogeris pyrrhopterus*

Three separate pairs flew overhead at El Caucho, Tumbes National Forest, on 25 August.

Rufous Nightjar *Caprimulgus rufus*, Spot-tailed Nightjar *C. maculicaudus* and Blackish Nightjar *C. nigrescens*

Rufous Nightjar has been reported at scattered locations in Peru, while Spot-tailed Nightjar is patchily distributed and, in Peru, known only from Pampas del Heath, and Blackish Nightjar is associated with dark rock adjacent to Amazonian rivers. On 12–15 August, the two first-named species sang each day at dusk and dawn, at Jesus del Monte (06°03'S 76°48'W), dpto. San Martín, sometimes near one another (both were tape-recorded). A Blackish Nightjar with a recently fledged chick was seen at c.700 m on the road between Tarapoto and Yurimaguas (06°29'S 76°19'W), on 13 August. These records constitute range extensions or new localities in Peru for all three species.

Purple-backed Sunbeam *Aglaeactis aliciae*

This range-restricted hummingbird was observed near El Molino, dpto. La Libertad, on 23 July, in a sheltered ravine, with *Alnus* sp. a conspicuous element of the plant community. *A. aliciae* was clearly associated, and defended shrubs, with yellow flowers that resembled *Nicotiana* sp. While observed chasing conspecifics, once three foraged at the same shrub without noticeable interaction. On two separate occasions birds perched on the same branch less than 0.3 m from each other. At the same shrub, an adult-plumaged individual was seen feeding an immature. At least 4–5 were seen and the species was the most conspicuous hummingbird in the area, followed by Tyrian Metaltail *Metallura tyrianthina* and Violet-throated Starfrontlet *Coeligena violifer*. Once a sunbeam chased a Violet-throated Starfrontlet from an arboreal bromeliad flower. The ravine represents an island among agricultural fields and *Eucalyptus*. We failed to find the species in an adjacent ravine that was more open, drier, and dominated by montane scrub. As suggested by Stattersfield *et al.* (14), a more thorough analysis of the area is required to assess the population status of the species.

Marvellous Spatuletail *Loddigesia mirabilis*

Observed foraging on up to four different red flowers with conical corolla, as well as on shrubs at forest edges, hedgerows and stands of *Bomarea formosissima* (known locally as romero). As suggested by Fjeldså & Krabbe (6), females and immature males outnumbered adult males 10:1. Males were shyer, moving inconspicuously among bushes when travelling between flowers within a patch, and never perching on exposed branches. They flew c.10 m above the vegetation when moving between patches. Males used patches of romero that included larger bushes used for sheltering. One observed for over an hour consistently returned to the same patch, despite romero being widespread in the area. Adults were submissive to Green Violet *Colibri thalassinus* and Long-tailed Sylph *Aglaicercus kingi* and sheltered in neighbouring

bushes when either of these species entered the area where male spatuletails foraged, but we observed a female spatuletail pursue a Green Violetear from a flowering patch. Observations were also made (31 July–2 August) half-way between Pedro Ruiz and Florida–Pomacochas (05°50'S 77°55'W), dpto. Amazonas, at c.1,800 m. It was uncommon in this area, but little is known concerning the species' status elsewhere within its range. It is probable that vegetation composition, foraging preferences and interactions with other hummingbirds vary, which may influence its relative abundance.

Royal Sunangel *Heliangelus regalis*

During five days (1–4 August) at Abra Patricia (Pedro de Miguel), dptos. San Martín/Amazonas, we observed just one male, at c.1,200 m, on a ridge with elfin forest. Reportedly locally common at the type-locality (5), but at Abra Patricia it appears uncommon, although the species may perform seasonal movements.

Speckle-chested Piculet *Picumnus steindachneri*

Three pairs of this range-restricted species were observed, two near the río Afluente (c.1,300 m) and one, at c.1,800 m, between Florida–Pomacochas and Rioja, on 3–5 August. All were with mixed-species flocks in which tanagers of various genera were predominant. One pair was observed in a bamboo stand mixed with other plant species, and two pairs, on separate occasions, were in the subcanopy of old second growth adjacent to primary forest. One pair ventured to new (2.5 m tall) second growth within agricultural fields.

Chestnut-throated Spinetail *Synallaxis cherriei*

On 9 August, one in early second growth, at c.1,450 m, near Jerillo (06°03'S 76°44'W), east of Moyobamba, dpto. San Martín. Chestnut-throated Spinetail has a localised distribution in Brazil, Ecuador and Peru. This is the first observation in northern Peru since Cory & Hellmayr (3) collected four specimens in 1912 and additional specimens were taken in 1933 (2). It vocalised in mid-morning and was highly responsive to playback of its own voice. The species' elevational gradient is one under heavy pressure for agriculture. This, coupled with its patchy distribution, may pose a significant threat, although it appears to utilise second growth.

Marañón Spinetail *Synallaxis maranonica*

Endemic to the Marañón Valley in Cajamarca and extreme south Ecuador (11, Marañón Spinetail inhabits undergrowth of deciduous woodland, forest edges and regenerating secondary scrub. Our experience, echoed by other observers (D. Willis pers. comm.), suggests the species is very skulking, difficult to observe and quiet. Two pairs were located within five minutes of playback, c.42 km north of Jaén and c.7 km south-east of Tamborapa (05°24'S 78°46'W), dpto. Cajamarca, but remained difficult to observe even after responding to playback and a previous five-hour search failed to find the species. One pair responded to playback and then resumed apparently normal foraging behaviour, perch-gleaning on lower branches (1 m above ground) and searching for insects on the ground or very near it. The species is reported to have declined in the last few years (2), although it appears that it may be easily overlooked. Currently not known from any protected area, its possible presence and status within Tabaconas–Namballe National Sanctuary should be determined.

Russet-bellied Spinetail *Synallaxis zimneri*

Known from scrub and dense undergrowth within a very small area in the Casma and Huarmey Valleys (9). During 15 to 18 July, at Bosque San Damian (above San Damian, 09°51'S 77°47'W), Huarmey Valley, dpto. Ancash, we found at least three pairs in two dry watercourses, within densely vegetated, steep-sided small ravines, at c.2,250 m. Despite using playback every c.30 m, we failed to find it along two 300 m-long trails sampled, before playback at the ravines produced sightings. Circumstantial evidence suggests that the presence of understorey may affect the species' spatial distribution, as previously suggested (2). Nearby areas, including the two trails, had less steep slopes, were accessible to cattle, and had clearly been affected by overgrazing, being devoid of understorey cover (including dry shrubs usually visible after the rainy season).

Previously observed (in 1998) along the two trails we sampled (D. Willis pers. comm.) following intense rains caused by El Niño, which prompted growth of a seasonal understorey that in turn may have permitted birds to use areas away from the ravines. Cattle grazing appears to be the most significant threat to this species at this locality. Tree-felling for firewood by the villagers of San Damian appears to be restricted to dead trees (pers. obs.). However, tree mortality may be linked to the swift loss of water from the soil due to the relative absence of ground cover. Overgrazing by livestock appears to have caused tree mortality at Lomas de Lachay, south of Bosque San Damian. Agricultural expansion does not appear to be a threat. Similar measures to those taken at Lomas de Lachay and Bosque de Zarate, dpto. Lima, are needed at Bosque San Damian, and would ensure protection for the distinctive plant and avian communities on the arid west slope of the central Andes. Species benefiting from such measures include Rufous-breasted Warbling-finch *Poospiza rubecula*, Great Inca-finch *Incaezpiza pulchra* and

Piura Chat-tyrant *Ochthoeca piurae*.

Chinchipe Spinetail *Synallaxis chinchipensis*

Recorded in disturbed scrub on the outskirts of Jaén (05°43'S 78°47'W), dpto. Cajamarca, on 17 August. On 20 August, three in undisturbed deciduous forest c. 12 km from Tamborapa (05°24'S 78°40'W), north of Jaén, dpto. Cajamarca, in the same forest where Marañón Spinetail was seen. It appears to be uncommon in the area. Given its restricted range, it may be subject to similar threats to those affecting Marañón Spinetail. The song is remarkably similar to that of Necklaced Spinetail *S. stictothorax* and Russet-bellied Spinetail, but the song of all three does not bear any resemblance to that of the similarly plumaged Great Spinetail *Siptornopsis hypochondriacus*.

Great Spinetail *Siptornopsis hypochondriacus*

The species' ecology is poorly known and its precise habitat requirements remain unclear (12). On 22 July, we tape-recorded a pair in a ravine, 3 km north of San Marcos (07°20'S 78°10'W), dpto. Cajamarca, in montane scrub with mixed cacti and thick underbrush. Just to the south we found three, apparently inactive, nests of the species (we are unaware of any other species that builds large thorn nests in the area) in dry *Acacia* scrub with almost no understorey, although evidence of dry shrubs suggests that, during the rainy season, this woodland acquires a dense understorey or ground cover. Repeated playback around the nests failed to yield a response. Vegetation changes occasioned by the seasonal rains may force the species to occupy areas other than montane scrub within ravines. Such seasonal expansion may coincide with the breeding season. Visits to the area in the rainy season, which would assist in understanding of the status of this near-threatened species, could test this hypothesis. The threat for this species may be the overgrazing of the understorey of the woodlands it inhabits. Agricultural expansion did not appear to threaten the area in which we made our observations, although elsewhere its habitat does appear to be under pressure from this source (8).

Pale-tailed Canastero *Asthenes dorbignyi* unnamed ssp.

This poorly known and unnamed subspecies was observed on the outskirts of Yungay, near Pueblo Libre (09°47'S 77°49'W), north of Lima, on 12 July, in rather sparse dry scrub interspersed with *Opuntia* cactus and *Agave*. Two apparently inactive nests among cacti columns were seen in the same area. Very responsive to playback of their vocalisations, which are similar to those of *A. d. usheri*. This area appears not to be immediately threatened (14), although long periods of livestock overgrazing during the rainy season may represent a problem, preventing regeneration of shrubs.

Russet-mantled Softtail *Thriphoga berlepschi*

One responded to playback, but was not seen, in forest 16 km from Leimebamba (06°41'S 77°47'W). Surrounding forest has been degraded or converted to pasture. Reported from Abra Patricia, dpto. San Martín from 1,900 m, but playback at this elevation failed to yield a response. On 31 July, a very responsive pair was in dense montane forest (mean height 16 m), at 2,400 m, above the río Chido, near Florida–Pomacochas (05°50'S 77°55'W), dpto. Amazonas. This forest type is perhaps at greater risk than elfin forest because it appears more productive and is at lower elevations than the latter.

Chestnut-backed Thornbird *Phacellodomus dorsalis*

A pair in a dry streambed at Hacienda Limón, Cajamarca, at c. 1,800 m, on 26 July, with 3–4 more heard in scrub surrounding agricultural fields below this area, but absent from lower elevations, with Bombacaceae trees, at c. 1,400 m. The general area is potentially threatened by agricultural activities (14), thus deeper knowledge of the species' status would be helpful in directing conservation efforts.

Henna-hooded Foliage-gleaner *Hylocryptus erythrocephalus*

On 26 August, a pair sang persistently at dawn and was very responsive to playback around El Caucho military base (03°50'S 80°16'W), Tumbes Reserved Zone, dpto. Tumbes.

Ash-throated Antwren *Herpsilochmus parkeri*

Relatively common at the type-locality, Jesus del Monte, near Jerillo, east of Moyobamba, at 1,450 m (06°03'S 76°44'W), in semi-stunted vegetation within sand forest. During two days in the area, most observations were in patches of sand forest and not in adjacent tall forest (4). Forest on sandy soil has different plant communities, which is apparently reflected in the presence of bird species restricted to this forest type, as noted in northern Brazil and north-east Peru, near Iquitos. At Jesus del Monte several species exhibited remarkable vocalisation differences from populations at other localities and, in some instances from those in adjacent

forest types. Ash-throated Antwren is known only from a very small area, although a chain of sandy ridge-tops in adjacent areas has not been explored ornithologically and may conceivably hold the species. Legal protection is required (2), along with further exploration of adjacent sand forest to determine its population status, as well as to understand the taxonomic relationships between those forms occurring in sand forests and their non-sand forest counterparts.

Peruvian Slaty-antshrike *Thamnophilus (punctatus) leucogaster*

This little-known antshrike was relatively common in the Huallaga (Quebrada Shatayacu, 13 km south of Tarapoto [06°76'S 76°21'W]), on 9 August and Marañón drainages (near Jaén and Tamborapa, dpto. Cajamarca), on 19 August. Those near Tamborapa foraged c.2 m above ground in a manner typical of the genus (13), but one male foraged on the ground by flipping leaves for c.2 minutes.

Rufous-rumped Antwren *Terenura callinota*

On 2 August, we observed three individuals within mixed-species flocks, at c.1,400 m, above the río Afluente, dpto. Amazonas, north-east Peru. A pair was seen at close range, at eye level, as the flock moved across a road. Also reported in this area by Hornbuckle (7), the record fills a gap between populations in east Ecuador and east Peru.

Pale-billed Antpitta *Grallaria carrikeri*

At least four tape-recorded and two seen in *Chusquea* bamboo admixed with other plant species, above the río Chido, 4 km south-west of Florida–Pomacochas, on 30–31 July. Its rather restricted altitudinal range (13) is subject to heavy pressure for agriculture and cattle pasture (2,350–2,900 m). This threat is particularly marked in dptos. Amazonas and San Martín, which have received large numbers of landless people from adjacent Cajamarca, apparently due to road improvements. *Thripophaga berlepschi* and *Poecilotriccus ruficeps* (the form from east of the río Marañón) were also seen in this area. *G. carrikeri* is not known from any protected area and, given its restricted distribution, may be threatened. Protection forest (Alto Río Mayo) exists to the north of this site, but is situated at lower elevations and *G. carrikeri* has not been reported there.

Cinnamon-breasted Tody-tyrant *Hemitriccus cinnamomeipectus*

Intensive playbacks between Florida–Pomacochas and Rioja (below Pedro de Miguel Pass or Abra Patricia) failed to elicit a response, but the species was found, at 1,850 m, in a large stand of *Chusquea* bamboo, where one sang on 3 August. The song consists of a single descending *prrrrrr*. Following playback one gave a short trill typical of the genus.

Pacific Royal Flycatcher *Onychorhynchus occidentalis*

On 25–28 August, in Tumbes Reserved Zone, we observed at least two along a ravine with vines and shady vegetation over a stream. They were rather vocal, giving a rather melodious song (which we have never heard from *O. coronatus*). One was observed displaying on a horizontal branch; it fanned the crest, keeping the head erect, and shivered its wings while giving a distinctive song from that used by non-displaying birds. It was very responsive to playback of the display vocalisation. The display resembles that of many female passerines prior to copulation. Pacific Royal Flycatcher also gives the typical *tee-roh* calls uttered by *O. coronatus*. While it occurs in several protected areas in Ecuador (14), Tumbes appears to be an important stronghold for the species in Peru (11).

Grey-breasted Flycatcher *Lathrotriccus griseipectus*

Two observed on separate occasions (perhaps the same given the close proximity of the observations), at 2–4 m above ground in rather dense vine vegetation (similar to that used by Pacific Royal Flycatcher), near Quebrada Faical, Tumbes National Forest.

White-tailed Shrike-tyrant *Agrionis andicola*

Apparently declining throughout its range, for unknown reasons (8). On 26 July, two were watched at close range, at c.2,700 m, above Cruz Conga (07°00'S 78°12'W), dpto. Cajamarca. One landed on an exposed branch adjacent to small ravine with thick vegetation 3–4 m high. It then flew into the ravine and emerged in c.7 minutes with a large arthropod, perhaps a katydid. Subsequently, two individuals, one perhaps the same, were observed apparently taking food to a nest, adjacent to a pine plantation. They flew over the pines' canopy twice in the same direction. Similar observations have been made in the vicinity of a pine/*Eucalyptus* plantations in south Ecuador (10). The extent of any association between the species and pine/*Eucalyptus* plantations is unknown. Several Black-billed Shrike-tyrants *A. montana* called from within pines

near Cruz Conga at dawn, suggesting that they also use these trees, at least for roosting.

Ochraceous Attila *Attila torridus*

Two called from opposite sides of a small ravine, at intervals of c.15 minutes between 07h40 and 08h30, and sporadically, with intervals of over an hour, during the rest of the day, near Quebrada Faical, Tumbes Reserved Zone. Previous expeditions have recorded the species within this area (11). The most recent visit (Walker unpubl.) also recorded it at Quebrada Faical. It appears shy, even in response to playback.

Rufous Casiornis *Casiornis rufa*

A pair was tape-recorded between Tarapoto and Shapaja, 5 km north of Juan Guerra (06°35'S 76°21'W), dpto. Amazonas, at c.350 m. This sighting, in mid-August, was made during the period when austral migrants, such as this species, move north. The two were within 15–20 m of each other, foraging in the subcanopy. This record constitutes an extension of the species' wintering grounds which, in Peru, previously reached their northernmost limit in Junín.

Yellow-cheeked Becard *Pachyrampus xanthogenys*

Two in deciduous forest adjacent to a watercourse near Tamborapa (05°24'S 78°51'W), 43 km north of Jaén, dpto. Cajamarca, on 19 August. Also observed in coffee plantations, near Villa Rica, dpto. Pasco, on 13 June. Previously known from dptos. Huánuco, Pasco and Junín. No differences in vocalisations between those in central (Villa Rica) and northern Peru. The range extension into Cajamarca is perhaps expected, as it uses similar habitat and is common in adjacent Ecuador (11).

Purple-breasted Cotinga *Cotinga cotinga*

This species occurs in Guyana, Venezuela and Brazil, where it appears to be associated with sand forest (13). While at Jesus del Monte, a female (Frank Rheindt pers. obs.) and two males were seen. Although previously known from this area, we mention it here to emphasise the uniqueness of the avian community of this sand forest, which deserves further study.

White-cheeked Cotinga *Zaratornis stresemanni*

One in *Polylepis/Gynoxis* forest at Portachuelo, above Yurac Corral (09°3'S 77°3'W), Parque Nacional Huascarán, on 13 July. Elsewhere, it appears uncommon (more than three birds seen per day) at Quebrada Uta, south of Portachuelo (2,900 m), also Parque Nacional Huascarán, in early July 1999 (J. Barrio pers. comm.).

Peruvian Plantcutter *Phytotoma raimondii*

On 19 July, we observed at least 10 in c.1.5 hours at the known locality of Rafán (07°02'S 79°41'W), Chiclayo, dpto. Lambayeque. It appears to require a specific habitat given that the species is absent from apparently suitable forest (14). Repeatedly observed on and vocalising from *Maytenus* bushes. This scrub type, with *Prosopis* (mesquite) trees, may provide suitable habitat for the species. Understanding of the factors limiting its occurrence within seemingly suitable habitat is needed to establish the species' status. *Prosopis* is cut for firewood and the roots of older trees are used in wooden art craft.

Grey-winged Inca-finch *Incaspiza ortizi*

One in scrub above Hacienda Limón, dpto. Cajamarca, at c.2,000 m, was higher than previously known. Two were seen in similar scrub above Palambia (1,600 m), north of Huancabamba, dpto. Piura.

Rufous-breasted Warbling-finch *Poospiza rubecula*

We failed to find it at known localities, on 4–5 July, near San Pedro de Casta, upper Santa Eulalia Valley (above Huinco), dpto. Lima (c.2,000–2,600 m), on 15–18 July, at Bosque San Damian (09°55'S 77°41'W), dpto. Ancash, and in montane scrub above Celendin (c.2,350 m), dpto. Cajamarca, on 24–25 July. Repeated visits to Bosque de Zarate, in several months, have only yielded observations, of singing birds, in May–June (J. Barrio pers. comm.), when perhaps breeding. Aside from being naturally rare, it may undertake seasonal movements.

Plain-tailed Warbling-finch *Poospiza alticola*

Restricted to west Peru (south Cajamarca, west La Libertad and east Ancash). A pair was in

mixed *Polylepis* woodland near Lago Llanganuco (c.3,500 m), dpto. Ancash, on 12 July. In addition, two groups of three (one with a begging juvenile) were in *Polylepis/Gynoxis* woodland at Portachuelo, above Yurac Corral, Parque Nacional Huascarán, on 13 July. Another group was at El Molino (07°45'S 77°46'W), dpto. La Libertad, on 23 July. Core members of accompanying flocks were Black-crested Tit-tyrant *Anairetes nigrocristatus*, Baron's Spinetail *Cranioleuca baroni*, White-throated Tyrannulet *Mecocerculus leucophrys* and Rusty-crowned Tit-spinetail *Leptasthenura pileata cajabambae*. Other flock members were Blue-and-yellow Tanager *Thraupis bonariensis*, Black-crested Warbler *Basileuterus nigrocristatus*, Jelki's Chat-tyrant *Ochthoeca jekii* and Rufous-chested Tanager *Thlypopsis ornata*. Flock membership is perhaps significant, thus core species may be an important indicator of the occurrence and habitat selection of Plain-tailed Warbling-finch.

Buff-bellied Tanager *Thlypopsis inornata*

This poorly known species was searched for without success in scrub at 1,800 m above Balsas in the east Marañón Valley, dpto. Amazonas, despite previous reports from this area. We found it uncommon in deciduous forest near Tamborapa (05°24'S 78°51'W), 43 km north of Jaén, on 18 August. On two occasions, individuals were observed within mixed-species flocks composing *Euphonia chlorotica*, *Xenops rutilans*, *Piranga flava*, *Vireo olivaceus*, *Tolmomyias sulphurescens*, *Piaya cayana*, *Polioptila plumbea* and *Hemithraupis guira*. Buff-bellied Tanager perch-gleans at the tip of branches, usually within the flock centre. Its movements are rather lethargic when foraging.

Guira Tanager *Hemithraupis guira*

A pair was observed near Tamborapa, 43 km north of Jaén, dpto. Cajamarca, and an immature male was in mangrove forest in Manglares de Tumbes Reserve Zone. Both records represent minor range extensions for this widespread species (12).

Orange-throated Tanager *Wetmorethraupis sterrhopteron*

We were unable to spend more than two hours searching for the species at Peñas Blancas, dpto. Amazonas. However, two birdwatching groups, one prior and one after our visit observed the species, and one was observed within a mixed-species flock at a forest edge surrounding a cropland, near the village of Tupac Amaru II, on the road to Urakuza, dpto. Amazonas (Frank Rheindt pers. comm.). Additionally, during a previous visit, TV tape-recorded call notes and full song of one that persistently sang during early morning from a tall dead tree at Peñas Blancas. The forest here appears intact, except for minor roadside clearance. While not formally protected, most areas, on both sides of the road, belong to Aguaruna Indians, who do not permit colonists within their territory and live at relatively low densities. Thus, the species may enjoy unofficial protection from habitat loss. However, its future is uncertain due to the construction of a bi-national Peru/Ecuador port on the río Marañón. A new road will become the most important access route to the port and Aguaruna land may come under greater development pressure.

Plumbeous Euphonia *Euphonia plumbea*

Previously, TV and others observed and tape-recorded a male at 900 m, along the road between Tarapoto and Yurimaguas, the first record for Peru ([Cotinga 11](#): 103). The species occurs in open country in Venezuela and Guyana. The site of observation was not open country but areas below are heavily deforested and it is likely that it is more common in this habitat. On 12–13 August, we failed to find the species in the area where it had been previously observed.

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