

**An Ornithological Survey of the Southernmost
Cordillera del Cóndor, depto. Cajamarca, Perú
(7 June – 10 September, 2006)
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Most of the Cordillera del Cóndor runs in a north-south direction and straddles the Perú-Ecuador border, but at approximately 04°53'44" S, 78°53'32" W, the border takes a turn to the west with the ridges of the Cóndor continuing south into Perú. The northern portion of the Cordillera was visited by a Rapid Assessment Program (RAP) team sponsored by Conservation International (Schulenberg and Awbrey, 1998), but the group spent only about three weeks in the area and because of logistical difficulties, was only able to spend about four days at higher elevations (Cerro Machinaza, ca. 2400 m). The area they visited is unique for Peru because of the flat-topped, Tepui-like ridges in the area. Nevertheless, the RAP group found five species of birds not previously recorded in Peru but most were not collected (Barred Hawk, *Leucopternis princeps* (sight record), White-chested Swift, *Cypseloides lemosi* (tape recorded), Coppery-chested Jacamar, *Galbula pastazae* (tape recorded), White-streaked Antwreio, *Dysithamnus leucostictus* (specimens, tape recorded), and Rufous-browed Tyrannulet, *Phylloscartes superciliaris* (sight record). In addition to the five species new for Peru, the RAP group also recorded the following 7 species not found by our team: Cinnamon Screech-Owl *Otus petersoni* (sight record), White-tailed Hillstar, *Urochroa bougueri* (tape recorded), Ecuadorean Pied-tail, *Phlogophilus hemileucurus* (tape recorded), Bar-winged Wood-Wren, *Henicorhina leucoptera* (tape recorded), Andean Tyrant, *Knipolegus signatus* (sight record), Napo Sabrewing, *Campylopterus villavicensio* (specimen), and Plain-backed Antpitta, *Grallaria haplonota* (tape recorded). We suspect that the lack of much scrubby habitat was the reason we did not record these species, but with additional time and work at lower elevations we could still find them. O'Neill wanted to spend more time in the Cóndor, but wanted to visit a different area so as not to repeat the Conservation International group's efforts. Additionally, Cerro Machinaza had land mines placed on it during the 1995 war between Perú and Ecuador and was deemed unsafe to visit.

After consulting maps and satellite images, O'Neill was confident that the southernmost part of the range could be reached without helicopter support and began making arrangements to reach the ridges south of the Peru-Ecuador border. Financial support was forthcoming from the National Geographic Society's Committee for Research and Exploration, as well as from Paul Dickson, a friend and supporter of the LSU Museum of Natural Science. The expedition was planned for the summer of 2005, but with the need to be in the US to finish the Birds of Peru book, O'Neill postponed the trip until 2006. This postponement was fortuitous as it allowed O'Neill's friend and colleague, Todd Mark, to make a visit to the area to check out trails, people, and the possibilities for reaching a 3,000 meter area some 25 km north of the main area to be visited. Mark reported that all was favorable and a June 7, 2006 departure was planned. The necessary permits for our work and for the collection of specimens (Authorization

053-2006-INRENA-IFFS-DCB) was issued by the Instituto Nacional de Recursos Naturales (INRENA) on 6 June 2006.

O'Neill, his wife Leticia A. Alamía, and LSU doctoral student Santiago Claramunt arrived in Lima on 7 June and were joined on the 8th by Manuel and Marta Sanchez, Abraham Urbay, Demetrio Huachaca, and Samuel Huaylla. They checked out and cleaned equipment stored in Lima, purchased needed supplies and food and departed Lima, via rented bus, on June 14, arriving in the north-Peruvian town of Jaen in the morning of the 15th. That day was spent procuring the remainder of the supplies and obtaining a truck for the following morning to go north almost to the border of Ecuador, cross the Río Chinchipe, and arrive in the town of Siete de Agosto (4°58'57"S, 78°59'54"W, 826 meters), the last place one could reach with a large vehicle.

From Siete de Agosto we would go about 4 hours north via Toyota trucks fitted with oversize tires. The entire area is now cutover and planted with coffee. Being there during coffee harvest time meant that the roads were extremely muddy and deeply rutted – a normal vehicle simply could not use them. We soon experienced the rains that would plague the entire expedition. It took us almost a week to get our three Toyota truckloads of people and gear to the village of Misa Cantora (4°55'.498" S, 78°59'.408"W, 1242 meters) where the road ended and all travel north and east would be via mules or on foot. Under normal circumstances we should have been able to reach the end of the mule trail in about 6 hours, but we had a lot of equipment and many people needed their mules for coffee and would not rent them. Our initial plans had been to get to the end of the mule trail and then have workers carry equipment and supplies up to a proposed campsite at approximately 2200 meters. Because of the problems in getting mules and the amount of equipment, as well as the incessant rains, we decided to make our base camp at the end of the mule trail approximately an hour past the pueblo of La Cumbre (4°53'92"S, 78°57'407 W, 1690 meters). At this point the trail ended at a moderate sized clearing with scattered tall trees. There was a suitable area with good water in the subtropical forest next to the clearing, so we decided to establish our base camp at this point. All work at higher elevations would be in small, minimal camps, with most specimen preparation taking place at the base camp (4°53'40"S, 78°54'54", 1800 meters) This camp was established 23 June. and was physically located approximately 2 km WSW Hito (border marker) Jesús.

Within a couple of days the camp was set up and functioning, about 6 mist nets were put up, and a team was organized to go to a site that had been chosen for a second camp. Specimens began to come in from the nets and researchers started making observations and doing some collecting of canopy species, most of which had to be obtained with shotguns. Camp life has been revolutionized with the development of small generators weighing approximately 29 pounds and with an output of 1000 watts. We now have fluorescent lighting in work areas and can charge batteries, work on computers, and be much more comfortable and efficient than in the past.

By 26 June a small camp was set up along the existing trail headed in roughly a northerly direction; this site was located approximately 1 km S. Hito Jesús, 4°53'42" S, 78°53'43" W, ca. 2250 meters. At this site there was a small *quebrada* (stream) with a steep slope above, a good area of *Chusquea* bamboo, and with the incessant rains everything was extremely wet. When Todd Mark had scouted the area he saw and

tape-recorded the Jocotoco Antpitta, *Grallaria ridgelyi*, a species new for Peru, on this bamboo covered slope near the stream. This large and striking antpitta was only described in 1999, and previously known only from southern Ecuador (Krabbe, et al., 1999). On the first day that members of our team were in the area the antpitta was heard and briefly seen, but we would wait until later in the expedition to actually collect the two specimens we obtained as the first records for Peru.

Another species that Mark saw at lower elevations, but which was known only from Peru on the basis of sight records was the White-breasted Parakeet, *Pyrhura albipectus*. On the first day that we had our base camp established we began to hear and see small groups (4-8) of this Parakeet flying through the canopy in the quick and twisting flight so characteristic of members of the genus. One morning about a week after the camp was established, Santiago Claramunt encountered a group perched in the lower canopy and collected two specimens, the first for Peru of this previously Ecuadorian endemic.

The area around the base camp (1750-1850 m) was exceedingly rich in tanagers (Thraupidae), especially those of the brightly colored genus *Tangara*, of which we recorded 14 species in the area (see camp list). Possibly because of a tall tree with bean-pod-like fruits, large numbers (at times near 50 or more) Red-billed Parrots, *Pionus sordidus corallinus* were around camp most of each day. We also delighted in seeing numbers of Andean Cock-of-the-Rock, *Rupicola peruviana*. One of the hoped for species, the Equatorial Graytail, *Xenerpestes singularis*, a small member of the family Furnariidae, was collected here and represents one of the few specimens accompanied by samples of tissue (frozen in liquid nitrogen) available for genetics studies

On 30 June the remainder of the field crew arrived. This included Greg and Donna Schmitt and their son Jonathon, LSUMZ research Associates, two students from the Museo de Historia Natural in Lima, Fernando Takano and Sonia Salazar, and videographer/photographer Sandesh Kadur. They were all exhausted from their 8-hour hike in the mud, but with a brief rest they were at work preparing specimens and getting photographic gear ready to go. Additionally we were aided by the expertise of Barry Walker, a resident of Cuzco who is Peru's premiere tour leader and is extremely knowledgeable on the birds of Peru. He arrived on July 6, but unfortunately was able to stay only about a week and lost some of his valuable field time to the incessant rains. He spent a lot of his time making tape recordings that will be analyzed as time permits. His sightings are listed in the first column of the camp lists at the end of the report.

We experimented with a pair of long-range (7 mile) "walkie-talkie" radios and were surprised that they worked quite well. On most days we were able to talk three times a day to people in the upper camps and not only had news of interesting birds, but could receive their list of needed supplies and have these ready when someone came down to get them and to bring specimens to be prepared. Once the Schmitts arrived we had a full complement of specimen preparators and the routines between camps settled in. The group in the upper camp was continuing their daily task of extending the trail northward with the goal of reaching the 3000 meter area some 12-15 km away. As they advanced they went higher in elevation and the weather was at its worst with very few periods in which it was not raining or misting and very few times when the wind was not blowing. In order not to have to make a long trek back to a camp they established small, limited camps along the way. These were known mainly

by their elevations and not really named. They included a camp essentially at Hito Jesús, ca. 2500 m. – (5°53'44" S, 78°53'32" W); a camp ca. 1.5 km N Hito Jesús, ca. 2600 m. (4°52'32" S, 78°53'22" W); a camp ca. 2.5 km NNW Hito Jesús, ca. 2530 m. (4°51'55" S, 78°54'16" W); and a camp ca. 4.5 km NNW Hito Jesús, ca. 2875 m. (4°51'20" S, 78°54'40" W). As the workers went back and forth to the end of the trail to continue lengthening it, they set up nets and did some hunting. This allowed for birds to be sampled over almost all of the elevational gradient from below 1800 meters to the highest point reached, approximately 2950 meters. Regrettably we did not have time to work much below 1800 meters and had a very limited time to be at the highest elevations. There were a number of species that were either very uncommon or missing from the higher elevations. We do not know if we were not finding them because of the severe weather and the relatively short time we had for sampling, or if they were truly absent from this particular ridge system. We also expected to find certain species known from nearby in Ecuador, but did not. These included *Atlapetes leucopis*, *Doliornis remseni*, and *Tangara heinei*. The last of these occurs lower than we were able to work, so we may have missed it for that reason.

Materials and Methods

Although we would normally have tried to set up some sort of daily routine to do point counts along repeated portions of the trails, this was not possible. We never knew from one day to the next what the weather would be like the following day. We decided that it was best to make our main goal to get a well-documented collection to understand what species were present and to get an idea of their elevational distribution. We also wanted to cover the elevational gradient from our base camp up to the 3000 m level, so making the trail to the highest area was placed at the top of the list of things to do. Having no idea that the weather would be so overwhelming, we did not have the necessary clothing and camping equipment for the large number of people needed to get the trail cut. Also, a large group necessitated that O'Neill spend most of his time at the base camp directing the entire operation. Aside from the information on birds netted at the upper elevations, the data collected by the Schmitt's and Claramunt was essentially all that we would get from the upper areas aside from that from the mist nets. Claramunt did some tape recording, but even this was minimal because he was never sure he should take his equipment out into the unpredictable weather. Whoever went out or walked to another camp, always carried a shotgun and many species not normally captured in mist nets were added to the list. Some of our long-term workers, especially Manuel Sanchez and Abraham Urbay, are familiar enough with the birds of the upper elevations of Peru that they are aware of species that need to be collected, especially those of the canopy that do not regularly enter nets.

Conservation

From a conservation standpoint it is obvious that protection of the Peruvian population of *Grallaria ridgelyi* is important. We found only one pair, but knowing their habitat and seeking them out is a priority for future work. We suspect that the species is widely scattered over the ridges of the area in the proper habitat and that the total known population of the species should be at least doubled by searching for them. We were very pleased that Todd mark returned to the area in December of 2006 and reported that a bird responded from the same spot where the species was collected in

July. In that short period the territory had been filled with a second pair. From the second camp (2350 m) the view towards the north and east is essentially unbroken and almost virgin forest. The Sábanas valley on the northeast side of the ridge where Camp 2 is located is under local review as a place to grow more coffee, but the land is presently titled to the Aguaruna-Jivaro people and they must decide if they will allow peruvian colonists to come in and clear the area for coffee. Probably the most important feature from a conservation standpoint is that the region still supports a fairly large area of untouched forest in the lower elevational range (900-1500 m), and this forest is continuous with the intact ridges above. An effort should be made to at least conserve the ridgetops for their watershed value, but also the lower elevation forest for its natural history value. There are very few large areas of lower elevation Andean forest still intact and so some form of protection is highly desirable. The region is vast and we only scratched the surface as far as understanding even the avifauna. There is a great deal left to do, but the inclement weather will always be a major factor in trying to carry out additional studies.

Epilogue

When Todd Mark made his second trip to the region in December of 2006 he was accompanied by Constantino Aucá of the NGO ECOAN. Tino now knows the importance of this area and has plans to get local communities involved in conserving forest, especially at the lower elevations and in the range of the Jocotoco Antpitta.

Literature Cited

1999. Krabbe, N., D.J. Agro, N.H. Rice, M. Jacome, L. Navarette, and M.F. Sornoza, A new species of antpitta (Formicariidae: Grallaria) from the southern Ecuadorian Andes. *Auk* 116: 882-890
1998. Schulenberg, Thomas S. and Kim Awbrey, editors **The Cordillera del Condor Region of Ecuador and Peru: A Biological Assessment**. Conservation International. 232 pp.

Camp Lists

Lists of the birds found at camps, localities, and areas in the region follow:

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Aburria aburri		X							
Penelope barbata				X					
CATHARTIDAE									
Coragyps atratus	X	X							
Cathartes aura	X								
ACCIPITRIDAE									
Elanoides forficatus	X		X						
Buteo leucorrhous*	X		X						
Buteo magnirostris			X						
FALCONIDAE									
Micraстер buckleyi*			X						
Falco Sparverius	X								
COLUMBIDAE									
Columba livia	X								
Leptotila verreauxi	X								
Geotrygon frenata*	X		X		X				
Columba subvinacea*	X	X	X	X					
Columba fasciata*	X	X	X	X					
PSITTACIDAE									
Pyrrhura albipectus*	X		X						
Pionus sordidus*	X	X	X	X	X				
Aratinga leucophthalmus	X	X	X	X					
Amazona mercenaria*			X	X	X		X		
Bolborhynchus lineola				X	X				
CUCULIDAE									
Piaya cayana*	X	X	X						
Tapera naevia	X	X							
STRIGIDAE									
Glaucidium jardiinii*				X		X			
G. parkeri ?			X?				X	X	
Otus albogularis								X	
Pulsatrix melanota			X						
STEATORNITHIDAE									
Steatornis caripensis*				X			X	X	
CAPRIMULGIDAE									
Uropsalis segmentata*			X	X				X	

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
? Nighthawk sp.*			X						
Caprimulgus longirostris			X						
APODIDAE									
Aeronautes montivagus	X	X							
Streptoprocne zonaris	X	X		X					
Cypseloides rutilans	X			X					
TROCHILIDAE									
Adelomyia melanogenys*			X	X	X	X			
Heliangelus amethysticollis *				X	X	X	X	X	X
Heliangelus micraster*				X		X	X	X	
Coeligena torquata*				X	X	X	X	X	X
Coeligena coeligena*			X	X					
Coeligena lutetiae*						X			
Heliodoxa leadbeateri*			X	X		X			
Heliodoxa rubinoides*							X		
Doryfera ludovicae*				X	X		X		
Boissonneaua matthewsii*				X			X	X	
Amazilia franciae*	X		X						
Agelaiocercus kingi*			X	X	X	X			
Eutoxeres aquila*			X	X	X	X	X		
Phaethornis syrmatophorus*			X	X					
Colibri thalassinus*							X		
Metallura tyrianthina*			X			X			
Chalcostigma ruficeps*				X					
Eriocnemis vestitus*					X	X	X		
Haplophaedia aureliae*				X		X			
Schistes geoffroyi*			X			X			
Ocreatus underwoodii*	X		X						
TROGONIDAE									
Trogon personatus*			X	X					
Pharomachrus auriceps*				X					
P. antisianus				X					
BUCCONIDAE									
Malacoptila fulvogularis*			X						
CAPITONIDAE									
Eubucco bourcierii*	X	X	X						
RAMPHASTIDAE									
Aulacorhynchus derbianus	X								
A. prasinus*		X	X						

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
<i>T. tenuipunctatus</i>	X	X							
<i>T. unicolor</i> *			X						
<i>Pyriglena leuconota</i> *	X	X	X						
<i>Dysithamnus mentalis</i> *			X	X					
<i>D. occidentalis</i> *			X	X					
<i>Drymophila caudate</i> *			X	X					
<i>Myrmotherula schisticolor</i> *			X	X					
<i>M. longicauda</i>	X								
<i>Herpsilochmus axillaris</i>			X						
<i>Cercomacra nigrescens</i>	X								
FORMICARIIDAE									
<i>Grallaria rufula</i> *				X	X				
<i>G. ridgelyi</i> *				X					
<i>G. nuchalis</i>				X				X	
<i>G. squamigera</i> *					X				
<i>G. hypoleuca</i>				X					
<i>Grallaricula nana</i> *			X	X	X		X		
<i>G. flavirostris</i> *			X	X			X		
<i>Chamaeza mollissima</i> *				X	X				
<i>Conopophaga castaneiceps</i> *			X			X			
RHINOCRYPTIDAE									
<i>Myornis similes</i> *				X					
<i>Scythalopus parkeri</i> *			X	X					
<i>Scythalopus unicolor</i> *				X					
<i>S. atratus</i> *			X						
<i>S. micropterus</i> *			X	X					
<i>Acropternis orthonyx</i>				X					
TYRANNIDAE									
<i>Silvicultrix diadema</i> *			X	X		X			
<i>Ochthoeca rufipectoralis</i> *			X			X			
<i>O. cinnamomeiventris</i> *				X	X	X			
<i>O. leucophrys</i>									
<i>O. thoracica</i> *									
<i>Mionectes striaticollis</i> *		X	X	X	X				
<i>M. olivaceus</i> *	X		X						
<i>M. oleaginous</i> *			X						
<i>Lophotriccus pileatus</i> *			X						
<i>Platyrhynchus mystaceus</i> *			X						
<i>Myiophobus cryptoxanthus</i>	X								
<i>M. lintoni</i> *					X	X	X	X	
<i>Pseudotriccus ruficeps</i> *				X	X				
<i>P. pelzelni</i> *			X	X			X		

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
<i>Hemitriccus rufigularis</i> *				X					
<i>H. granadenseis</i> *				X	X				
<i>H. cinnamomeipectus</i>			X						
<i>Todirostrum cinereum</i> *	X	X	X						
<i>Phyllomyias nigrocapillus</i> *				X					
<i>P. plumbeiceps</i>			X						
<i>Phyllomyias uropygialis</i> *					X				
<i>Zimmerius chrysops</i> *	X		X	X					
<i>Z. flavidifrons</i>			X						
<i>Camptostoma obsoletum</i>	X								
<i>Poecilotriccus ruficeps</i> *			X	X		X			
<i>Elaenia flavogaster</i>	X								
<i>E. albiceps</i>	X								
<i>Contopus fumigatus</i> *	X	X	X	X					
<i>Pachyramphus versicolor</i> *			X						
<i>P. xanthogenys</i>									
<i>P. albogriseus</i> *	X		X						
<i>Pyrrhomias cinnamomea</i> *			X	X		X			
<i>Sayornis nigricans</i>	X								
<i>Pyrocephalus rubinus</i>	X								
<i>Knipolegus attrimus</i>	X								
<i>Myiotheretes fumigatus</i> *					X	X			
<i>Myiarchus cephalotes</i> *			X						
<i>M. tuberculifer</i> *			X						
<i>Conopias cinchoneti</i> *			X						
<i>Lathria cryptolophus</i> *			X	X					
<i>Tyrannus melancholicus</i> *	X	X	X						
<i>Colonia colonus</i> *		X	X						
<i>Phylloscartes ophthalmicus</i> *			X						
<i>Leptopogon rufipectus</i> *	X		X						
<i>L. superciliaris</i> *			X						
<i>Rhynchocyclus fulvipectus</i> *			X						
<i>Myiodynastes chrysocephalus</i> *	X		X						
<i>Pitangus sulfuratus</i>	X								
<i>Myizetetes similis</i>	X	X							
<i>Myiobius villosus</i> *									
<i>Tityra semifasciata</i>	X								
COTINGIDAE									
<i>Pipreola riefferii</i> *			X	X	X	X			
<i>Pipreola frontalis</i> *			X						
<i>Pipreola arcuata</i> *								X	
<i>Ampelion rufaxila</i>		X	X						
<i>Lipaugus fuscocinereus</i> *				X					

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
PARULIDAE									
<i>Myioborus melanocephalus</i> *			X	X	X	X		X	
<i>M. miniatus</i> *	X	X	X	X					
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
<i>Geothlypis auricularis</i>	X								
<i>Basileuterus luteoviridis</i> *				X	X				
<i>B. nigrocristatus</i> *					X	X	X		
<i>B. coronatus</i> *			X	X		X			
<i>B. tristriatus</i> *			X	X					
<i>Parula pitayumi</i> *	X	X	X						
COEREBIDAE									
<i>Coereba flaveola</i>	X	X							
THRAUPIDAE									
<i>Catamblyrhynchus diadema</i> *						X		X	
<i>Diglossa albilatera</i> *					X	X			
<i>D. humeralis</i> *									
<i>D. lafresnayii</i> *				X	X	X	X	X	X
<i>Diglossopsis cyanea</i> *				X	X	X	X	X	X
<i>D. caerulescens</i> *					X	X	X	X	
<i>Conirostrum sitticolor</i> *						X			
<i>Tangara arthus</i> *			X						
<i>T. xanthocephala</i> *			X	X					
<i>T. labradorides</i> *			X						
<i>T. vassorii</i> *				X	X	X	X		
<i>T. viridicollis</i> *			X						
<i>T. chrysotis</i> *			X						
<i>T. parzudakii</i>			X	X					
<i>T. cyanotis</i> *			X						
<i>T. cyanicollis</i> *	X		X	X					
<i>T. nigrocincta</i> *				X					
<i>T. nigroviridis</i> *			X	X					
<i>T. chilensis</i> *		X	X	X					
<i>T. punctata</i> *			X						
<i>T. gyrola</i> *			X						
<i>T. ruficervix</i> *			X						
<i>Anisognathus somptuosus</i> *			X	X					
<i>A. lacrymosus</i> *			X	X	X	X	X	X	
<i>A. igniventris</i>								X	
<i>Iridosornis rufivertex</i> *				X	X	X		X	
<i>I. analis</i> *				X					
<i>Creurgops verticalis</i> *			X						
<i>Chlorornis riefferii</i> *				X					

