

DORMILONA CARA NEGRA (*Muscisaxicola maclovianus*, Passeriformes, Tyrannidae): UNA NUEVA ESPECIE DE AVE REGISTRADA EN PARAGUAY

DARK-FACED GROUND TYRANT (*Muscisaxicola maclovianus*, PASSERIFORMES, TYRANNIDAE):
A NEW SPECIES FOR PARAGUAY

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RESUMEN: La Dormilona Cara Negra (*Muscisaxicola maclovianus*) es un ave principalmente terrestre que habita áreas abiertas en los Andes y Patagonia en temporadas de reproducción y zonas costeras y pastizales de menores elevaciones durante el invierno. Presentamos el primer registro de esta ave como un nuevo género y especie en Paraguay con fotografías de un individuo observado en cerro Tres Kandú, Departamento de Guairá, y comentarios de su comportamiento, dieta y distribución.

PALABRAS CLAVES: Tyrannidae, Dormilona Carinegra, distribución.

ABSTRACT: The Dark-faced Ground Tyrant (*Muscisaxicola maclovianus*) is a principally terrestrial tyrant that inhabits open areas of the Andes and Patagonia in breeding season and coastal, grassland areas of lower elevations during the winter. We present the first record of this genus and species in Paraguay with photographs from Cerro Tres Kandú, Department of Guairá and comments on its behavior, diet, and distribution.

KEYWORDS: Tyrannidae, distribution, distribution, vagrant.

INTRODUCTION

The Dark-faced Ground Tyrant (*Muscisaxicola maclovianus*) is one of the 12 species of the genus *Muscisaxicola* which are mainly terrestrial tyrants typical of open habitats of the Andes and Patagonia during breeding season and coastal, and grassland areas of lower elevations during the winter (Farnsworth et al. 2020; Pearman & Areta 2020). Two subspecies have been proposed, *M. maclovianus maclovianus* and *M. maclovianus mentalis* (Farnsworth et al. 2020). The first subspecies is an endemic resident of the

Malvinas-Falklands Islands, whereas *M. maclovianus mentalis* is a neotropical austral migrant. It breeds in open ranges frequently near water in the southern Andes of Argentina and Chile, and winters in northern Peru, central and eastern Argentina and Uruguay (Pearman & Areta 2020; Ridgely & Tudor 2009) and occasionally in southern Brazil (Schwertner et al. 2011). The two sightings of *M. maclovianus* in the state of Rio Grande do Sul (Brazil) were both along the Atlantic coast (Schwertner et al. 2011). Here we present the first report of *M. maclovianus* for Paraguay, which also represents the first record of the genus in the country.

METHODS AND RESULTS

On April 23, 2022, Claudia Villalba and Emma Walker photographed a possible adult individual at the peak of Cerro Tres Kandú, Guairá department (Fig. 1; 25°54'S, 56°09'W). Cerro Tres Kandú is situated in the Ybytyruzú mountain range and is the highest point of altitude in Paraguay (842 meters above sea level). In addition, it is part of the protected area "Reserva de Recursos Manejados Ybytyruzú", which protects a remnant of the semi-deciduous Atlantic Forest characterized by waterfalls and rocky outcrops rich in iron and aluminum. The observed individual showed a diagnostic blackish forehead, lores and cheeks typical of the species (pers. obs.). It was seen walking along rocks and grass near the mountaintop's lookout, then perched in a nearby tree for ~30 min, exhibiting no sudden movements or vocalizations. The individual also stood on one leg for several minutes, a potential sign of reducing energy use during possible fatigue. On April 22, the day before the bird was first reported, a hailstorm with strong northerly winds and rain passed through northern Argentina up to southern and central Paraguay (Meteoblue 2022). The same individual was seen again four days later on April 27, 2022 (Rios et al. 2022). It was observed for more than one hour, confidently hunting insects on the rocks and near the wall of the building on top of Tres Kandú

(Fig. 2). The insects it consumed included a grasshopper (Orthoptera, Acrididae), a froghopper (Hemiptera, Cercopidae) and an unidentified moth (Lepidoptera).

DISCUSSION

The genus *Muscisaxicola* was not previously included in any references of Paraguayan birds, including the national avifaunal list that included potential species records (Contreras et al. 1990; Hayes 1995; Guyra Paraguay 2004). Its presence in Paraguay is surprising considering the record's great distance of ~900km north from the beginning of its normal wintering range near Buenos Aires and ~1000km east of its range in the Andes (Ridgely & Tudor 2009). The closest previous record is the vagrant sighting in Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil, ~770km away (Schwertner et al. 2011). The Dark-faced Ground Tyrant should be considered a vagrant in Paraguay.

The storm could be the reason why the bird appeared several hundred kilometers outside of previously known wintering grounds, yet more evidence is needed to determine the true cause. The bird showed the typical, kneeling behavior of its genus on April 27th; the common name of *Muscisaxicola* in Spanish is *Dormilona*, or sleepyhead, due to these frequent kneeling rests.



Figure 1: Dark-faced Ground Tyrant (*Muscisaxicola maclovianus*) observed on April 23, 2022, perched on the railing of the lookout of Cerro Tres Kandú, Guairá department, Ybytyruzú, Paraguay. Picture: Villalba C.



Figure 2: Dark-faced Ground Tyrant (*Muscisaxicola maclovianus*) observed on April 27, 2022, hunting an Acrididae grasshopper on Cerro Tres Kandu, Guairá department, Ybytyruzú, Paraguay. Picture: Ríos SD.

Citizen science tools have a groundbreaking influence in the number of rare and vagrant bird reports in countries with few biological surveys (Sullivan et al. 2014). We strongly encourage all birdwatchers to submit their reports and images to data repositories such as eBird, check unusual sightings with other local birders and ornithologists, and publish findings in local scientific journals to further advance the knowledge of neotropical bird distribution and ecology.

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