

REGISTROS NOVEDOSOS

PRIMER REPORTE DE CAZA EN VUELO DEL RAYADITO (*Aphrastura spinicauda*)

FIRST REPORT OF AERIAL-FORAGING IN THORN-TAILED RAYADITO (*Aphrastura spinicauda*)

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RESUMEN: Entre septiembre y enero de las temporadas reproductivas 2015-2016, 2016-17 y 2017-18 realizamos 305 observaciones *Ad-libitum* de ejemplares de Rayadito (*Aphrastura spinicauda*) forrajeando en bosques de Ñire (*Nothofagus antarctica*) del centro-oeste de Chubut, Argentina, sujetos a diferentes manejos silvo-pastoriles. El 3 de diciembre de 2017 en un ñirantal con extracción de leña moderada observamos un Rayadito que, mientras se desplazaba entre dos manchones de árboles, capturó en vuelo un lepidóptero no identificado. Este es el primer registro de esta estrategia de forrajeo para la especie. PALABRAS CLAVES: Rayadito (*Aphrastura spinicauda*), Furnariidae, Ñire (*Nothofagus antarctica*), dieta, forrajeo al vuelo.

ABSTRACT: Between September and January of the 2015-16, 2016-17 and 2017-18 breeding seasons, we performed 305 *Ad-libitum* observations of Thorn-tailed Rayadito (*Aphrastura spinicauda*) specimens foraging in various treatments of Ñire (*Nothofagus antarctica*) forest in mid-western Chubut, Argentina. On 3 December 2017 we observed a Thorn-Tailed Rayadito that, while moving between two patches of Ñire affected by moderate firewood extraction, caught an unidentified lepidopteran in flight. This is the first record aerial foraging for the species.

KEYWORDS: Thorn-tailed Rayadito (*Aphrastura spinicauda*), Furnariidae, Ñire (*Nothofagus antarctica*), diet, aerial foraging.

The Thorn-tailed Rayadito (*Aphrastura spinicauda*) is a Passerine belonging to the Furnariidae family and is endemic to the Andean-Patagonian forests of South America (Godoy Guinao 2013; Remsen & Bonan 2020). This species belongs to the group of secondary cavity nesters (Cornelius 2006). Due to its role in forest pest regulation (see Gunnarsson 1996; De la Maza 2013), it is considered an important species for forest processes (Lantschner & Rusch 2007), and of special interest since it is one of the southernmost Passerines in the world (Moreno et al. 2005). Although Thorn-tailed rayaditos are considered to be primarily insectivorous (Vuilleumier 1967; De la Maza 2013; Espíndola-Hernández 2017), recently they have been reported feeding on seeds of *Pinus radiata* (Estades 2001) and *Maytenus magellanica* (McGehee 2007), as well as fruits of *Berberis* sp., *Ribes* sp. and *Gunnera* sp. (Remsen & Bonan 2020). For this reason, it should be considered an insectivorous species, and secondarily granivorous and frugivorous (see also Jaksic & Feinsinger 1991; Estades 1997; González-Gómez et al. 2006). This species has been observed feeding almost exclusively on trees, especially on trunks and secondly on tree foliage (Vuilleumier 1967; De la Maza 2013; García Betoño 2021), and occasionally on shrubs or on the ground (Remsen Jr. & Bonan 2020). In this work, a new feeding strategy for the species is described, which was observed in the framework of a study of its reproductive and feeding biology. Between September and January of the 2015-2016, 2016-17 and 2017-18 reproductive seasons, we made 305 *Ad-libitum* observations (Altmann 1974) of Thorn-tailed Rayadito individuals foraging in Ñire forests (*Nothofagus antarctica*) subject to different management regimes in central-western Chubut province, Argentina. We recorded the instantaneous behavior of each foraging individual, along with the feeding substrate (tree, bush or soil) and vertical position of the individual if it was on a tree (trunk, high foliage, etc.). To achieve sample independence, we observed birds that were ≥ 50 m distant apart (De La Maza 2013). In a Ñire forest with

moderate firewood extraction on 3 December 2017, we observed a Thorn-tailed Rayadito capture an unidentified lepidopteran in flight while moving between two patches of trees. The Thorn-tailed Rayadito usually uses “hanging” and “subsurface” maneuvers (Remsen & Robinson 1990) as foraging behavior (Pers. Obs.). However, the flight maneuver here observed can be described as “sally” (Remsen & Robinson 1990) where the bird flies from a perch to the prey and usually return to the same perch or even “dart” (Greenberg 1984 quoted by Remsen & Robinson 1990) in which case the bird doesn’t return to the perch and continues in the same direction. The distance between trees was 20 m with a diagonal-down sally-angle (Remsen & Robinson 1990), with a differential high estimated in to 4 to 2 m between the start of the attack and the end of it when the individual land in a trunk of Ñire healthy tree, with the prey still in its beak. It is important to consider that aerial maneuvers are the foraging strategies with more categories described (see Remsen & Robinson 1990). Although this is the first record of this foraging strategy for the species, it cannot be determined whether it was an occasional event, or just a frequent strategy for the species not previously described due to its concealing nature. The in-flight foraging event was observed in a cleared forest patch. Perhaps, this strategy is an adaptation of the species to avoid competition. Although, this would be the result of less food availability, which may result in new forms of feeding in Ñire forest with firewood extraction. These processes would work together to permit Thorn-tailed Rayadito to develop greater aerial activity.

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