HOODED ANTPITTA (*GRALLARICULA CUCULLATA*) IN THE EASTERN ANDES OF COLOMBIA

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Many avian species in the Andes of Colombia are restricted in range to one or two of the three cordilleras (Meyer de Schauensee, The birds of Colombia, Livingston Publ. Co., 1964:242). The known range of the Hooded Antpitta (*Grallaricula cucullata*) in Colombia was restricted to the subtropical zone of the eastern slopes of the Western and Central Cordilleras, though it was also suspected by that author to occur in the Eastern Cordillera (Meyer de Schauensee, The species of birds of South America and their distribution, Livingston Publ. Co., 1966: 299).

Observations and collection in the Parque Nacional Cueva de los Guácharos (Cave of the Oilbirds National Park, Huila, Southern Colombia 1°60′N, 75° 93′W) have verified the presence of this species on the western slope of the Eastern Cordillera. The Eastern Cordillera bends to the west in the park area and in approximately 30 km merges with the Central Cordillera. One male Hooded Antpitta was netted and collected in primary forest at an altitude of approximately 1900 m on 21 September 1975. Three more specimens were collected in the park in June and July 1976. The skins are in the bird collection of the Instituto de Ciéncias Naturales (Institute of Natural Sciences) of the Universidad Nacional in Bogotá.

I observed a single Hooded Antpitta at close range for approximately 20 min on 8 October 1975. The bird appeared to be very curious as it hopped from perch to perch, from ground level to 1.5 m above ground, in a circle around me. It rocked laterally when perched, moving only its body and keeping both legs and head stationary. This behavior was performed continuously.

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COMMENTS ON THE EXTINCTION OF *LOXIGILLA PORTORICENSIS GRANDIS* IN ST. KITTS, LESSER ANTILLES

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To aid in perceiving potential threats to endangered species it is valuable to understand the causes of endangerment of vanishing species or those recently believed to have become extinct. In the case of most species no evidence establishes the cause of extinction, but frequently, some alterations in the animal's environment suggest a possible cause. Such is the situation with *Loxigilla portoricensis grandis* a subspecies of the Puerto Rican Bullfinch endemic to St. Kitts and last reported there in 1880 when it was found to be "not uncommon in the forest on Mt. Misery," (Bond 1956). It has not been observed since that date and is presently considered extinct.

The only explanation yet put forward for the extinction of *L. p. grandis* is that of Bond (1936, 1956), who suggested the bird's demise resulted from heavy predation by Green Monkeys (*Cercopithecus aethiops*) which were introduced on St. Kitts. Greenway (1958) noted that this hypothesis appears weak because the related Lesser Antillean Bullfinch (*L. noctis*) has survived disturbance by the same monkeys on Barbados (indeed, *L. noctis* thrives on St. Kitts itself); he further suggested that "Other unknown factors may have been involved." Greenway, however, did not propose an alternative hypothesis. I shall examine the often-quoted monkey hypothesis and suggest an alternative explanation.

One point difficult to reconcile with the monkey hypothesis is why *L. p. grandis* should have become extinct so long after the introduction of the monkeys, and then so suddenly. Green Monkeys have been wild on St. Kitts for approximately 300 years and have been established pests from about the year 1700 to the present day (McGuire 1973). It seems odd that after coexisting with a bird that even in 1880 was reasonably common high on the flanks of Mt. Misery, the monkeys should suddenly eliminate it.

Presently Green Monkeys thrive in the mountain ravines of St. Kitts, while their density appears to be relatively low high up in the mountains (McGuire 1973). On the basis of available evidence, McGuire believed that the population of *C. aethiops* became stable early in the 18th century, indicating a long residency in the mountains. In line with Greenway's reasoning, considering the abundance of Green Monkeys in the ravines and the fact that bird eggs and young are common prey items (McGuire, pers. comm.) it is striking that the Lesser Antillean Bullfinch, and other forest birds are relatively common in these ravines and throughout the forest at least to an elevation of 700 m (Bond 1956, Raffaele, pers. observ.). It would seem plausible that the monkeys should have had a greater effect on these species than on the endemic bullfinch, which occupied a habitat where monkeys are relatively uncommon.

An alternate explanation for the extinction of *L. p. grandis* is based on the species' limited distribution on the higher slopes of Mt. Misery, the most restricted range of any forest bird on St. Kitts (Bond 1956, Raffaele, pers. observ.). How the bird's range came to be so restricted is not entirely germane to this discussion though the form's large size (⅓ larger than *L. p. portoricensis*) may suggest an answer. *Loxigilla p. grandis* may have acquired its large size and restricted distribution as a result of character displacement fostered by interaction with *L. noctis* on St. Kitts. Such interaction and resultant range restriction is similar to that presently taking place between the Yellow-bellied Elaenia (*Elaenia flavogaster*) and Caribbean Elaenia (*E. martinica*) in the southern Lesser Antilles (Bond 1948, Crowell 1968).

On 7 August 1899 a major hurricane struck St. Kitts, the eye passing only 35 miles south of the island (Cry 1965). Its impact on St. Kitts was devastating as described by Salivia (1972), "sus efectos desastrosos se