

Short communication

First record of a Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres* in Paraguay

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The Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres* is a common migrant to South America, where it is most numerous along the north coast (Morrison & Ross 1989). There are, however, a few records from the interior of the continent (Canevari *et al.* 1991, Sick 1993). On 7 October 2000, the authors found a juvenile Ruddy Turnstone with a flock of six American Golden-plover *Pluvialis dominica* on the west side of the Bahía de Asunción, Central Department, Paraguay, the first documented record of this species in the country. The bird was clearly identifiable as a Ruddy Turnstone by the characteristic *Arenaria* wing pattern combined with a white chin, and as a juvenile by the brown upperpart feathers clearly fringed buffish, and the presence of extensive pale patches on the sides of the head.

The *Arenaria interpres* was present until 13 October 2000, during which time it was seen by other observers including Hugo del Castillo, Francis Fragano, German Pugnali, Lucía Bartrina and Myriam Velázquez, and record photographs were obtained by F. Fragano on 13 October. Throughout its stay, the bird remained associated with *Pluvialis dominica*, which increased in numbers from six on 7 October to 52 on 10 October. Its departure coincided with that of most of the *P. dominica*.

The Bahía de Asunción, 900 km inland from the coast of Brazil, is a 375 ha shallow bay located along the northern outskirts of Asunción, and separated from the Paraguay River by a narrow peninsula of low-lying land. During high water levels (primarily during the austral winter) most of the

bay is under water, but as the water level drops, mudflats and sandy beaches appear. Hayes & Fox (1990) documented records in the Bahía de Asunción of four species of Nearctic shorebirds considered as rare vagrants to Paraguay, and the addition of Ruddy Turnstone was perhaps to be expected. The bay would appear to be an important stopover site for shorebirds migrating along the Paraguay River. During September–November 2000, internationally significant numbers of the near-threatened Buff-breasted Sandpiper *Tryngites subruficollis* were recorded in the bay, while locally important numbers of at least three other species of Nearctic migrant shorebird were also recorded (Lesterhuis & Clay 2001).

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