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A RECORD OF A HARPY EAGLE FROM EASTERN PARAGUAY

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KEY WORDS: *Harpy Eagle*; *Harpia harpyja*; *Paraguay*; *sight record*.

On 2 August 1995, I recorded an immature Harpy Eagle (*Harpia harpyja*) in rainforest at Reserva Privada Itabó (24°20'S, 54°35'W), Departamento Canindeyú, Paraguay. The Harpy Eagle is poorly known in Paraguay and has not been previously recorded at this site.

I first sighted the perched eagle in an emergent tree beside the main road through the reserve. It had been forced into the tree by a flock of seven White-eyed Parakeets (*Aratinga leucophthalmus*). After 10 min, the bird was again mobbed by the parakeet flock, causing it to fly off into the adjacent forest canopy.

There was no question that the bird was a Harpy Eagle. Its most obvious feature was its large, completely creamy-white facial disc. Its bill was dark grey and its eyes large and black. Several completely white feathers formed a crest on its head. Its breast and belly were a uniform creamy white except for a pale grey area across its breast. The undertail appeared dark brown and the underwings appeared pale with some dark barring. I hardly saw the upperparts but they appeared to be largely grey, at least

on the back, scapulars and wing coverts, with black lower on the wings. I did not see the upperwings or uppertail in flight.

Not all of the salient characters, notably the enormous tarsi and the divided crest could be seen due to the angle of observation. However, nothing about the bird indicated that it was a Crested Eagle (*Morphnus guianensis*). Immature Crested Eagles are distinguished from immature Harpy Eagles by their slimmer bodies, long tails, smaller bills, dark lores, black-tipped crests and long, relatively small tarsi. Light phase Crested Eagles also have white underwing coverts contrasting with barred remiges (Hilty and Brown 1986). Crested Eagles have not been recorded in Paraguay (Hayes 1995), although they have been historically recorded in Misiones Province, Argentina (Narosky and Yzurieta 1987).

I excluded other large raptors such as Mantled Hawk (*Leucopternis polionota*), Black-and-white Hawk-Eagle (*Spizastur melanoleucus*), Black Hawk-Eagle (*Spizaetus tyrannus*) and Ornate Hawk-Eagle (*S. ornatus*) based on the size and bulk of the bird alone and the plumage of the bird I observed did not match the plumages of any of these species (Narosky and Yzurieta 1987). The latter three species are known from Reserva Privada Itabó (Lowen et al. 1996).

The Harpy Eagle is rare throughout its range from Mexico to Argentina. It was considered Globally Threat-

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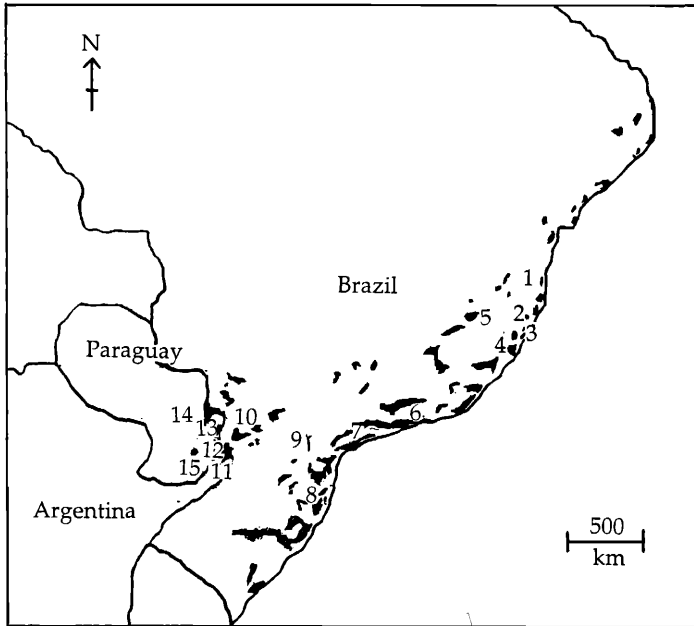


Figure 1. Forest cover and some recent records of Harpy Eagles in the Atlantic forests. Forest cover is shaded dark following Brown and Brown (1992). Recent records of Harpy Eagles are as follows: Brazil (1) Estação Experimental Pau-Brasil, Porto Seguro, Bahia, 1991 (Forrester 1993, Galetti et al. 1997), (2) probable at Sooretama Federal Biological Reserve, Espírito Santo, 1993 (Forrester 1993), (3) Companhia Vale do Rio Doce Reserve, Linhares, Espírito Santo, 1992 and 1995 (Forrester 1993, Galetti et al. 1997), (4) probable at Nova Lombardia Federal Biological Reserve, Espírito Santo, 1993 (Forrester 1993), (5) reported without details from Rio Doce State Park and Fazenda Montes Claros, Minas Gerais (Forrester 1993), (6) reported without details from Serra do Mar, Itatiaia National Park and Serra dos Orgãos, Rio de Janeiro (Forrester 1993), (7) Cananéia, São Paulo, 1989, 1990, 1991 and 1993 (Galetti et al. 1997), (8) Parqué Estadual da Serra do Tabuleiro, Santa Catarina, 1989 (Albuquerque 1995), (9) Turvo, Paraná, 1984–85 (Bornschein and Straube 1991), (10) Cascavel, Paraná, 1982–83 (Bornschein and Straube 1991); Argentina (11) Misiones, 1980–90s (Chebez et al. 1990, Chebez 1992, De Lucca et al. 1993, De Lucca 1996); Paraguay (12) Itaipú Biological Reserves, Alto Paraná, 1990s (Gill Morlis et al. 1995), (13) Reserva Privada Itabó, Canindeyú, 1995 (this record), (14) Reserva Natural del Bosque Mbaracayú, Canindeyú, 1994 (Madroño-Nieto and Esquivel 1995), and (15) Caaguazú, 1993 (Lowen et al. 1996).

ened (Collar and Andrew 1988) but it has now been downgraded to Near Threatened (Collar et al. 1992) due to the large amounts of habitat for the species in the Amazonian portion of its range. In southeastern Brazil, it is very rare (Scott and Brooke 1985) and recent records from this region (Fig. 1) range from Bahia (Galetti et al. 1997) south to Santa Catarina (Albuquerque 1995, do Rosário 1996), with scattered sightings in between (Bornschein and Straube 1991, Forrester 1993, Tobias et al. 1993, Sick 1993, Scherer-Neto and Straube 1995, do Rosário 1996, Galetti et al. 1997).

The extensive deforestation of Paraná State (Albuquerque 1995) has probably now permanently separated these coastal populations of Harpy Eagles from the inland Paranáense forest of Iguazú National Park, Paraná State (Brazil), Misiones Province (Argentina) and eastern Paraguay. Forrester (1993) did not list any records for

Iguaçu National Park, Paraná State, Brazil and Saibene et al. (1996) did not list the species for Iguazú National Park, Misiones Province (Argentina). However, Harpy Eagles have recently been found nesting at higher altitude sites elsewhere in the province, in Departamentos San Pedro, Eldorado and Iguazú (Chebez et al. 1990, Chebez 1992, De Lucca et al. 1993, De Lucca 1996).

Hayes (1995) lists seven records of Harpy Eagles from a wide range of locations in Paraguay, although none of these are supported by published descriptions or specimens. In addition, there is a recent sight record from the Itaipú Biological Reserves in Departamento Alto Paraná (Gill Morlis et al. 1995, Scherer-Neto and Straube 1995). Madroño-Nieto and Esquivel (1995) recorded an immature Harpy Eagle at Lagunita in the Reserva Natural del Bosque Mbaracayú, Departamento Canindeyú in 1994 and an eagle was reported in Caaguazú in 1993 (Lowen

et al. 1996). The species is considered Endangered in Paraguay (CDC 1990).

The Reserva Privada Itabó covers 3000 ha of forest which is sustainably harvested for palmito hearts of palm (Brooks et al. 1993). The concentration of fruiting palms at the site attracts large numbers of frugivorous birds and mammals, which in turn support high densities of carnivores (Lowen et al. 1995). Presence of an immature Harpy Eagle potentially indicates that the species breeds at Itabó. However, the lack of other records at the site (Lowen et al. 1996) suggests that this bird was more probably a wandering individual attracted to the site by the abundance of food. Albuquerque (1995) similarly felt that individual Harpy Eagles move between *Araucaria* groves with the seasonal abundance of prey, and until 1958 "migrant individuals" occurred in summer in Rio Grande do Sul State, Brazil (Sick 1993). Whatever the explanation for the presence of the individual at Itabó, this record supports the conclusion that Reserva Privada Itabó is of key importance for bird conservation in Paraguay (Lowen et al. 1995).

RESUMEN.—El 2 de agosto de 1995 registré un ejemplar juvenil del águila harpía (*Harpia harpyja*) en la selva de la Reserva Privada Itabó (24°20'S, 54°35'W), Departamento Canindeyú, Paraguay.

[Traducción de Autor]

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