

First record of Yellow-collared Chlorophonia for Middle America



Side view of adult male Yellow-collared Chlorophonia (*Chlorophonia flavirostris*). Photo/Robert J. Baker.

A. P. Capparella

THE YELLOW-COLLARED CHLOROPHONIA (*Chlorophonia flavirostris*) is one of the rarest and least known of South American passerines. It is represented in museum collections by only 19 study skins and mounted birds, of which just six have exact collecting locality data (Ingels 1979). Until now, the species was known from a limited area

A rare South American passerine makes its first recorded appearance in North America.

in northwestern Ecuador and southwestern Colombia (Hilty 1977). This note reports a new locality, the first for North America as defined by the A.O.U. Check-list of 1983, and extends this species' range over 400 kilometers north

In January 1984, while examining some of Robert J. Baker's slides from an expedition to Panama, I encountered four slides of an unidentified bird. Failing to find the species in any of the

Middle American field guides, I consulted J.V. Remsen, who recognized the bird as *Chlorophonia flavirostris*. Subsequently, Baker clarified the circumstances under which the birds were photographed.

On January 31, 1983, mammalogists Robert J. Baker of Texas Tech University and David J. Hafner of the New Mexico Museum of Natural History set up mist nets at approximately 1200 meters elevation on the eastern slope of Cerro Pirre, about 6 kilometers northwest of Cana, Province of Darién, Panama. The nets were raised before dusk in a 20-meter wide cut through old second-growth forest along the crest of a ridge. About one hour before sunset, three individuals of a bright-colored bird species were netted. Photographs were taken of the two most colorful individuals before their release.

Figures 1 and 2 show different portions of the bird. The overall grass-green coloration, broken by a golden-yellow collar on the hindneck, golden-yellow center of the breast and belly, and narrow partial chestnut band between the golden breast and green throat, is diagnostic for the Yellow-collared Chlorophonia. The white iris, orangish bill, and yellow upper tail coverts complete the description of an adult male (Meyer de Schauensee 1970).

The photographs of the Cerro Pirre birds do not reveal any previously undescribed geographic variation in this species. The yellowish-orange to orangish-red bill, dark-tipped maxilla, and orangish-yellow feet of the Panamanian birds fit descriptions of South American specimens and aviary birds for which soft part colors were recorded from life (Ingels 1979).

Cerro Pirre is over 400 kilometers north of Queremal, Depto. Valle del Cauca, Colombia, the northernmost locality previously known for this species (Hilty 1977). It has not been recorded from the intervening Department of Chocó, Colombia. Cerro Pirre has been frequently visited by ornithological expeditions through the years, most recently by Louisiana State University Museum of Zoology (Robbins *et al.* 1985), and birdwatching tours. The latter include ornithologists aware of this record who have subsequently searched unsuccessfully for this species (Ridgely, *pers. comm.*). While it is possible that the Yellow-collared Chlorophonia is increasing in numbers



Dorsal view of adult male Yellow-collared Chlorophonia. Photo/Robert J. Baker.

and range (Ridgely 1980), other explanations for its presence in Panama may be that the species occurs in extremely low densities, occurs seasonally, or is a true vagrant. Further fieldwork will be necessary to determine the status of this species in Panama.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The expedition to Panama was sponsored by NSF grant DEB-8107039 to M.S. Hafner. Expedition members were R.J. Baker, L.J. Barkley, D.J. Hafner, and M.S. Hafner. I am grateful to R.J. Baker for permission to publish his photographs and to J.V. Remsen and R.S. Ridgely for comments on the manuscript.

LITERATURE CITED

HILTY, S. L. 1977. *Chlorospingus flavirostris* rediscovered, with notes on other

Pacific Colombian and Cauca Valley birds. *Auk* 94:44-49.

INGELS, J. 1979. Remarks on specimens, holotype, description and subspecies of *Chlorophonia flavirostris* Sclater. *Bull. B. O. C.* 99:77-80.

MEYER DE SCHAUENSEE, R. 1970. A Guide to the Birds of South America. Livingston Publishing Co., Wynnewood, Pa.

RIDGELY, R. S. 1980. Notes on some rare or previously unrecorded birds in Ecuador. *Am. Birds* 34:242-248.

ROBBINS, M. B., T. A. PARKER, III and S. E. ALLEN. 1985. The avifauna of Cerro Pirre, Darién, eastern Panama. Pp. 198-232. *in*: P. A. Buckley, M. S. Foster, E. S. Morton, R. S. Ridgely, and F. G. Buckley (eds.). Neotropical Ornithology. Ornithol. Monogr. No. 36.

—Museum of Zoology and Department of Zoology and Physiology, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA 70803