

## SHORT COMMUNICATIONS

ORNITOLOGIA NEOTROPICAL 5: 105–107, 1994  
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### THE NEST OF THE CRESTED FOLIAGE-GLEANER *AUTOMOLUS DORSALIS*

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*Key words:* *Automolus dorsalis*, Peru, nesting biology, bamboo specialization.

On 15 July 1993, I discovered a nest of *Automolus dorsalis* in lowland tropical forest at the Ccollpa de Guacamayos, on the west bank of the Río Tambopata, 75 km SSW of Puerto Maldonado, Dept. Madre de Dios, southeastern Peru. The nest, previously undescribed, was placed inside a dead bamboo stem about 2 m above the ground. The placement of the nest, inside a plant "cavity", raises doubts about the taxonomic position of *A. dorsalis*, because all other species of *Automolus*, as far as known, nest in terrestrial burrows (Vaurie 1980).

*Automolus dorsalis* is restricted to humid forests along the eastern base of the Andes, from Colombia south to southeastern Peru (Sibley & Monroe 1990); the species has also recently been found in northern Bolivia (Parker & Bailey 1991) and away from the Andes in northern Mato Grosso, Brazil (T. A. Parker, *unpubl. data*). At least in the southern part of its range, *Automolus dorsalis* is restricted to bamboo thickets (Parker *et al.*, in press; *pers. obs.*); its habitat in Colombia is stated as "along rivers" (which could presumably include bamboo thickets) or "várzea" (= seasonally flooded forest), predominantly in "hill country" (Hilty & Brown 1986).

The adult bird(s) were flushed from the nest hole at least ten times between 15 July and 9 August, spanning all daylight hours; the sexes could not be distinguished. The bird(s) were easily identified as *Automolus dorsalis* (a common species at the site, *pers. obs.*) by their chestnut-brown back, wings, and tail, bright white postocular stripe and throat, and dingy grayish un-

derparts. On my approach, the adult bird(s) could be heard shuffling up the inside of the stem to the nest hole, where they could be seen briefly, before they would flush long distances. Five voucher specimens of *Automolus dorsalis* were collected within 1 km of the nest site in 1992 (specimens at Louisiana State University Museum of Natural Science and Museo de Historia Natural Javier Prado de la Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos in Lima, Peru).

The nest of *A. dorsalis* was in a vast bamboo (*Bambusa* [*Guadua*] *weberbaueri*) thicket that stretched for 2.5 km along a bluff over the Río Tambopata and a small tributary stream, and then for approximately 10 km inland. The immediate vicinity of the nest, approximately 150 m from the river, was dominated by tall (4–10 m) bamboo with few canopy trees overhead (Fig. 1). On five 15-m vegetation transects near the nest, bamboo cover averaged 96 %; only 23 % of the canopy cover was greater than 20 m and 72 % was less than 10 m. The understory was composed of a rather dense (64 % cover) layer of herbaceous vegetation within 1 m of the ground, but above this was more open to the level at which the first bamboo foliage was reached, approximately 4 m up (Fig. 1).

The birds were allowed to complete the nest cycle before the interior of the stem was examined on 30 August; therefore, the eggs and chicks were not seen. The entrance to the hollow bamboo stem was a jagged natural hole (3.5 × 7.0 cm) at the top of a 120-cm internode of the bamboo stem; the hole was 2.8 m above the ground. The



FIG. 1. Dense bamboo habitat near nest site of *Automolus dorsalis*.

entire stem was a 3-m tall, broken-off piece of dead bamboo, propped up vertically against other nearby stems, and somewhat wedged into the ground. The actual nest (Fig. 2) was 90 cm lower than the hole in the internode and was an open cup nest composed mainly of dried grass-like material; the bottom of the nest was cemented together with mud and what appeared to be woody chips from the bamboo stem. The nest was 15 cm deep and fit snugly within the 6.8-cm-diameter stem.

Of the eight species (Peters 1951) of *Automolus* (excluding *Automolus ruficollis*, which probably belongs in the genus *Syndactyla*; Parker *et al.*, 1985), the nests have been described for four species (*A. infuscatus*, *A. ochrolaemus*, *A. leucophthalmus*, *A. rubiginosus*); all were broad shallow cups of plants fibers at the end of long (usually over 50 cm) terrestrial burrows, usually dug in earthen banks (Vaurie 1980, and references therein). *Hylocryptus rectirostris*, included by Vaurie (1980) in *Automolus*, also nests in subterranean burrows (Sick 1988).

Within the subfamily Philydorinae, Vaurie (1971, 1980) placed *Automolus* (including *ruficollis* and the two species of *Hylocryptus*) with *Sclerurus* and *Thripadectes*. Both of these other genera, as far as known, also nest only in terrestrial burrows (Vaurie 1971, 1980), which was Vaurie's main character in grouping these genera. Many other foliage-gleaner genera (e.g., *Pseudocolaptes* and *Philydor*) in the subfamily, however, nest in tree cavities (Vaurie 1980), although none have been described as nesting in bamboo stems.

The nest of *Automolus dorsalis* raises doubts about the species' placement within the genus *Automolus*, or even with the closest relatives of *Automolus* as proposed by Vaurie (1980), unless there has been convergence in nest site between *dorsalis* and other genera within the Philydorinae. Parker *et al.*, (in press) stated that *dorsalis* is vocally similar to *Anabazenops fuscus* (placed by Vaurie, 1980, in *Philydor*). *Anabazenops* nests in tree cavities and is also a bamboo specialist (Sick 1988, Rodrigues *et al.* 1994). In a separate paper



FIG. 2. Nest of *Automolus dorsalis* (removed from nest site), with the bamboo stem cut away to show the nest cup.

the relationships of *Automolus dorsalis* will be examined using a suite of other characters along with nest site and vocalizations.

Given the affinity of *Automolus dorsalis* for bamboo thickets, it may not seem surprising that this species nests in bamboo stems, although I have not found reference to bamboo stems as nest sites for any other bird species. In south-eastern Peru, bamboo stems tend to have many large holes, mainly from breakage and from foraging brown capuchin monkeys (*Cebus apella*), Amazon bamboo rats (*Dactylomys dactylinus*), and woodpeckers, particularly *Celeus spectabilis* (Emmons 1981; pers. obs.). Because all bamboo stems are hollow and holes are abundant, large bamboo thickets would have abundant nest sites for species selecting bamboo stems as nest sites. Populations of cavity nesting species are often cited as being limited by nest sites (e.g., Haartman 1971). The abundance of nest sites in bamboo stems may free *Automolus dorsalis* from such pressures, but also may limit the species to bamboo thickets, as is the case in southeastern Peru and southwestern Brazil (T. A. Parker, unpubl. data; pers. obs.).

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The late Ted Parker initiated study of avian specialization on bamboo in Neotropical birds and introduced me to the birds in this fascinating habitat. My field work in Peru was funded by a Frank m. Chapman grant from the American Museum of Natural History, a Grants-in-Aid research award from Sigma Xi, Alexander Wetmore and AOU Council awards from the American Ornithologists' Union, and a Fugler Fellowship in Tropical Biology from the Museum

of Natural Science, Louisiana State University. J. V. Remsen and M. Marín A. made many useful criticisms of this manuscript.

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*Accepted 7 March 1994.*