

THE JUVENAL PLUMAGE OF *MUSCISAXICOLA ALBIFRONS*

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Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70803, U.S.A.*Key words:* *Muscisaxicola albifrons*, *White-fronted Ground-Tyrant*, *juvenal plumage*, *Tyrannidae*.

*Muscisaxicola* is a genus of ground-dwelling tyrant flycatchers (family Tyrannidae) found in western South America from Colombia south to Chile. Eleven of the twelve species are Andean in distribution, and many are migratory. The juvenal plumage of nine of these species, as described by Fjeldså & Krabbe (1990), characteristically differs from the corresponding adult plumage by rufous, cinnamon, or buffy edgings to the wings or wing-coverts, by absent or less distinctive head markings (usually a crown patch), and sometimes by a more buffy or streaked belly, breast, or throat. In this note I describe the previously undescribed juvenal plumage of *Muscisaxicola albifrons*, the White-fronted Ground-Tyrant, based primarily on a specimen housed at the American Museum of Natural History, New York (AMNH 803446), and supplemented by a specimen from the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia (ANSP 119686). Terminology follows Eisenmann (1965), who recommended use of the term "juvenal" for both the plumage and the bird in that plumage.

The AMNH specimen, a ♀, was collected on 25 January 1959 by R. Walsh in depto. La Paz, Bolivia, 65 km NE of Juana de Potosi, at an elevation of 15,000 feet. The bill of this bird is shorter and much narrower than the bill of an adult, measuring 14.1 mm long (length of exposed culmen;  $\bar{x}=18.7\pm 0.5$  for ten adults) and 4.0 mm wide (width at base of bill;  $\bar{x}=7.3\pm 0.4$  for ten adults). It is completing its molt into

juvenal plumage; primaries eight, nine, and ten are still sheathed (nine and ten incompletely grown), and all rectrices are sheathed. The ANSP specimen, a ♂, was collected on 12 January 1935, also in depto. La Paz, Bolivia, at La Cumbre, Yungas, 15,000 feet, by M. A. Carriker, Jr. It is a somewhat older bird; bill size more closely resembles that of adult birds (length of exposed culmen = 15.5 mm, and width at base = 6.2 mm), and the bird has completely molted. Except for the different stage of molt, the plumage of this specimen differs in no noticeable way from the AMNH bird. Both specimens appear to be slightly foxed, based on comparisons of concurrently collected adults with recently collected adults. Therefore, for the description of the juvenal, comparisons have been made principally with concurrently collected adults.

The juvenal plumage of *M. albifrons* differs from the basic adult plumage in the following features: all wing coverts are edged cinnamon (near color 123A in Smithe 1975); secondaries and inner primaries are edged buff (color 124), rather than the silvery gray of the adult; the white forehead, lores, and short superciliaries are present, but are duller overall and somewhat reduced in width; back is a deeper brown (exact color probably changed due to foxing), rather than dull brown or gray-brown; the outer webs of the outer pair of rectrices are drab-gray (color 119D), rather than the grayish white of the adult; and the pale flammulations on the underparts are slightly more pronounced. In all other aspects, the juvenal plumage agrees with the basic adult plumage and may be referred to the original description (Tschudi 1844) or to such

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general references as Goodall *et al.* (1946), Johnson (1967), or Fjeldså & Krabbe (1990). Soft part colors on the AMNH specimen were recorded as "iris: gray-brown", "feet: black", and "bill: black (orange-yellow)", the "orange-yellow" presumably referring to the basal portion of the lower mandible, which is yellow in some other juvenals of this genus (Chesser, pers. obs.). Soft part colors on the ANSP specimen were "iris brown" and "bill and feet black". Soft part colors on concurrently collected adult specimens at the ANSP were the same, and these colors agree well with those of a series of adults at the Louisiana State University Museum of Natural Science (LSUMZ), in which bill, feet, and tarsi are invariably noted as "black", and iris usually as "brown" or "army-brown".

The juvenal plumage of *M. albifrons* is typical of juvenals of the genus in its buffy or cinnamon wing and wing-covert edgings, its duller head markings, and its slightly more flammulated underparts. Back and tail color are not noted in Fjeldså & Krabbe (1990) as features distinguishing juvenal and adult plumages of other species of *Muscisaxicola*, but it is possible that these have been overlooked as distinctive characters, or simply not mentioned in light of more obvious differences. A specimen of a juvenal *M. rufivertex* (LSUMZ 124286), which is browner on the lower back and rump than adults of this species, suggests that distinctive back color may be a more widespread feature of juvenals of this genus.

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