

DESCRIPTION OF THE YOUNG OF THE GRAY-BELLIED SPINETAIL (*SYNALLAXIS CINERASCENS*)

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The Gray-bellied Spinetail (*Synallaxis cinerascens*) is a monotypic forest species distributed from Rio de Janeiro and eastern Minas Gerais in Brazil, south to northern Uruguay, eastern Paraguay and northeastern Argentina (Ridgely & Tudor 1994). Its nest and eggs are well known (Narosky *et al.* 1983, Belton 1984, Simon & Pacheco 1996), but its juvenile plumage has apparently not been described.

A ♂ *S. cinerascens* specimen (Museu de História Natural Capão da Imbuia — MHNCI 4102) collected on 28 December 1991 at Palmeiral, municipality of Cruz Machado, state of Paraná, Brazil (25°51'S, 51°10'W), differs greatly from Vaurie's (1980) description of this species, possibly because it is a young bird. We compared it with 12 specimens, all apparently adults, in the MHNCI collection. Color designations given here are based on those of Kornerup & Wanscher (1978).

The dorsal surface, wings, rectrices, lores, and sides of the head of the presumed juvenile specimen agree in color with that of adult *S. cinerascens* (see Vaurie 1980, Ridgely & Tudor 1994). The white moustachial streak and throat feathers have medium-grey (5, E–1) bases, contrary to those of the adults, which have a similar pattern only in the gular patch. In some of the specimens examined this patch is entirely black, and more conspicuous than in the juvenile because of the contrast with the grey background. The breast feathers are greyish-white (5, B–1) with light brown (= "clay"; 5, D–5) tips and whitish rachises, forming a striated pattern. The flanks are light brown, similar to that of the adults, and the center of the abdomen is buffy white

with light brown on some feather tips. Iris color of the juvenile specimen was not recorded on the label. The bill color is described a black with rosy basal half of the mandible, and the tarsus color is given as greyish-brown. Label notes of the specimens examined indicate variable colors of bill and tarsus, which are similar to the juvenile, except by the basal half of the mandible.

The Museu de Zoologia da Universidade de São Paulo collection contains a ♂ specimen (MZUSP 8912) from Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil, which probably is a subadult. This specimen has a striated breast pattern similar to the MHNCI bird, but the rest of the plumage is like that of an adult.

Knowledge of the juvenile plumage in *Synallaxis* is not only important for identification purposes, but it may also have taxonomic implications (see Mees 1987). In general, there are four plumage patterns in juveniles in this genus: (1) juvenile plumage is similar to that of the adult (*S. ruficapilla*, *S. macconnelli*); (2) juvenile plumage is sharply distinct from that of the adult (*S. moesta*, *S. cabanisi*, *S. albigularis*, *S. albescens*, *S. spixi*); (3) juveniles have different dorsal coloration from the adult (*S. subpudica*); (4) juvenile plumage differ from the adult plumage in the underparts (*S. cinerascens*) (Vaurie 1980, Mees 1987, this study).

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