

FIRST DESCRIPTION OF NEST AND EGGS OF THE OCHRE-BREASTED ANTPITTA (*GRALLARICULA FLAVIROSTRIS*)

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Primera descripción del nido y huevos del Hormiguero Pecho Ocráceo (*Grallaricula flavirostris*).

Key words: Ochre-breasted Antpitta, *Grallaricula flavirostris*, Bolivia, nest, eggs.

The Ochre-breasted Antpitta (*Grallaricula flavirostris*) is restricted to dense under-story vegetation in humid montane forest and second growth (Fjeldsã & Krabbe 1990). Although the species occurs discontinuously from Costa Rica to western Bolivia (Ridgely & Tudor 1994), the following is apparently the first description of the nest and eggs of the species.

The nest was found by Edwin Rossell on 25 November 2001 in lower growth of montane forest along an old trail up a steep slope in the Palcabamba Valley above the Río Palcabamba, Parque Nacional y Área Natural de Manejo Integrado Apolobamba, prov. Franz Tamayo, depto. La Paz, Bolivia (14°49'40"S, 68°56'29"W, elevation 2452 m).

On 27 November, the nest (MNKMND 65) and eggs (MNKMHV 46) were collected. The nest was located 46 cm above the ground, and positioned between the leaves of

four epiphytes (*Tillandsia* sp., Bromeliaceae) that were growing on a dead branch of an unidentified tree. The nest was cup-shaped and contained living bryophytes and was constructed of plant fibers, dead leaves and fern rachis (Adiantaceae). The outer diameter of the nest was approximately 8 cm, the outer height of the cup was 5.5 cm, and the inner depth 6.8 cm.

The nest contained two fresh eggs of which the measurements were: (1) 20.3 x 16.8 mm and (2) 20.8 x 16.6 mm. Both were oval in shape and light coffee-brown in ground color with black and darker-brown blotches, densest at the base. The pattern of coloration of these eggs is very similar to eggs of the Hooded (*G. cucullata*) and Slate-crowned (*G. nana*) antpittas described by Schönwetter (1967) (cited by Wiedenfeld 1982).

The adult female Ochre-breasted Antpitta which was observed attending the nest was

collected (OMZ 136) using a sling, and prepared as a standard museum study skin. The granular ovary measured 7 x 6 mm, and the skull was completely ossified. The bird showed no molt but had a vascularized brood patch. The stomach contained caterpillars, and other arthropods.

The bird was observed with binoculars from a distance of approximately ten meters for two hours during which the sky was overcast and it rained. The bird's activity during this period may broadly be divided into two phases, presence and absence. During the absence phase the individual was noted leaving the nest several times during observation, perhaps due to the presence of the observer. The bird generally left the nest in the same direction and was absent for an interval of approximately five minutes. Once the bird had taken flight, the observer returned to the point of observation and remained still until the bird returned, as it did after each similar period of absence.

The bird's return to the nest was gradual and very cautious, and while doing so, it showed erratic, horizontal and vertical bobbing movements of its body. The bird approached the nest several times without ever reaching it. During the period of observation, the closest the bird was observed to approach the nest was to a distance of c. 20 cm. On appearing and when perched directly in front of the observer, the bird displayed a behavior not otherwise witnessed. This consisted of a short, rapid, cyclical series of incomplete circular movements of the breast as if around an axis, each cycle including three such movements. This behavior was always displayed when the bird was in front of the observer but at a short distance, indicating a reaction to the observer's presence. All periods of absence were caused by movements towards the bird by the observer with the intention of collecting the specimen for voucher purposes, but each time it returned

after a period of absence it would perform the behavior described.

We believe the behavior we have described was an attempt by the Ochre-breasted Antpitta to direct the attention of the observer away from the nest. These curious movements may compensate in for the bird's drab coloration.

The taxonomic status of the geographic forms of the Ochre-breasted Antpitta is unclear. According to Fjelds  & Krabbe (1990), *G. f. boliviana* occurs in Bolivia and southern Peru and is replaced in northern Peru by *G. f. similis*. However Ridgely & Tudor (1994) suggest the possibility that these two subspecies form just one species called Bolivian Antpitta (*G. boliviana*). Further study of the genetic relationships, ecology, behavior, and vocalizations of the forms are required to establish the taxonomic status of Bolivian populations. The holotype of the putative species *Grallaricula boliviana* Chapman 1919, collected in the locality of Incachaca, Cochabamba, Bolivia, is housed in the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH137177) (LeCroy & Sloss 2000).

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SHORT COMMUNICATIONS

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