

GENERAL NOTES

Photographic confirmation of Giant Snipe in Argentina.— On 24 October 1974, while on an ornithological tour of Argentina, I saw two Giant Snipe (*Gallinago* [= *Capella*] *undulata*) in a grassy field at the edge of a pond near the airport at Rio Grande, Tierra del Fuego. The general appearance suggested that of a Common Snipe (*Gallinago* [= *Capella*] *gallinago*), but their bills were much longer and the profile was flatter than that of the Common Snipe. The belly was white and heavy barring extended down the breast and along the flanks. The central tail feathers were bright rusty, but other tail feathers had no rusty on them. The overall color was paler and the legs were brighter yellow than those of the Common Snipe. In flight the greater wing coverts appeared pale. The behavior also differed, in that they did not flush readily and when flushed flew only a few yards in a straight line before landing. They were flushed repeatedly and uttered a two-noted call deeper in pitch than the Common Snipe.

It was also apparent that they did not resemble the description of the Cordilleran Snipe (*Gallinago* [= *Capella*] *stricklandii*) in Meyer de Schauensee (1970) which is more extensively barred beneath and lacks rusty on the tail. The Cordilleran Snipe is the only other snipe species that had previously been recorded in Tierra del Fuego according to Humphrey et al. (1970).

Several photographs were taken and sent to Phillip S. Humphrey and Leslie M. Tuck for their comments regarding the identity of the birds. Tuck stated, "These are very clear photographs of *Capella undulata*. Your description of flight, calls and lack of rusty coloring on the outer tail feathers all fit perfectly. Moreover, the long bill relative to the body length makes it a good example of the subspecies *gigantea*—as I would expect from the location." Photographs have been deposited with the National Photoduplicate File, Patuxent Wildlife Research Center, Laurel, Maryland, with Accession Numbers 229.1-1Ba and 229.1-1Bb.

The Giant Snipe consists of two populations with highly disjunct ranges, the northern nominate *undulata* from northern South America chiefly east of the Andes and north of the Amazon River, and the larger *gigantea*, definitely known from southern Brazil, Bolivia, Paraguay, and reported from Uruguay and Argentina.

Early authors included *gigantea* as found in Argentina in the Chaco and Buenos Aires, and the British Museum Catalogue (Sharpe, 1896) lists two specimens from the Seebohm Collection taken in "Buenos Ayres" in April 1886, the authenticity of which may be open to question, according to Hellmayr and Conover (1948). Olrog (1958, 1963) mentions the species in his Argentina check-list only in a footnote with the comment that it had been recorded for the country probably as a result of confusion with the Eskimo Curlew (*Numenius borealis*). Meyer de Schauensee (1966) cites Olrog's opinion, but later (1970) does not include Argentina within the range of this species. Consequently, these photographs appear to be the first recent confirmation of the Giant Snipe in Argentina.

Other observers who saw the birds were: Maurice Rumboll (an experienced Argentine naturalist and leader of our group), Robert Crofts (who kindly supplied the photographs for me), Norman Chesterfield, Harvey and Marion Mudd, Herbert and Betty Cutler, John Danzenbaker, William J. Weiss, Jr., Robert Loehning, and Paul DuMont. I would like to express my appreciation to Phillip Humphrey and Leslie M. Tuck for their kindness in examining the photographs.

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