SHORT COMMUNICATIONS

On the Status of *Xolmis dominicana*

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The Black-and-white Monjita (*Xolmis dominicana*), a striking flycatcher endemic to south-central South America from coastal southern Brazil (Paraná and Rio Grande do Sul) and central Paraguay south through the more mesic chaco of Argentina to the province of Buenos Aires (Meyer de Schauensee, 1970, A Guide to the Birds of South America, Wynnewood, Pa., Livingston Pub. Co.; Olrog 1959, Las Aves Argentinas, Tucumán, Universidad Nacional de Tucumán, Instituto "Miguel Lillo"; Short, 1975, Bull. Amer. Mus. Nat. Hist. 165:167), is a poorly known bird. While studying marsh breeding blackbirds near Pinamar on the coast of Buenos Aires Province, I observed monjitas regularly throughout my stay from early October to late November 1973, but encountered them only within 1 km of the inward edge of the large coastal sand dunes. They were fairly common between Pinamar and Villa Gessell, a distance of 10 km, but probably occur both south and north of this section where there are no access roads to the coast. I found foraging monjitas in the swales among the dunes and the sedge meadows joining the dunes with large marshes behind them, where the vegetation ranged from clumps of pampas grass (*Cordateria selloana*) with relatively open space between them to low sedge-rush-grass meadows with clumps of low dense vegetation interspersed with more open patches. Often there was standing water up to 10–15 cm deep. Though I worked extensively in all other marsh vegetation types in the region and regularly traversed upland habitats, I never encountered the species elsewhere.

Monjitas hunted by sitting on low perches, usually less than 2 m high but always higher than the prevailing vegetation, affording views of the ground. Favored perches included pampas grass inflorescences, fence posts and wires, and weedy composite stalks protruding above the grasses and sedges. I witnessed only a few captures, but in all cases prey were taken from the ground by dropping from an elevated perch as is typical also of the more open-country *Xolmis irupero*. One bird observed on a high telephone wire was preening rather than hunting.

At one sedge-rush meadow I regularly observed three monjitas during November. Two of them, presumably adults, were pure white dorsally. The third, with brownish-gray tips to feathers on the nape of the neck and back, was probably a fledged young of the year, already foraging entirely for itself.

Common breeding birds in the same habitats with *Xolmis* were the Spectacled Tyrant (*Hymenops perspicillata*), Great Kiskadee (*Pitangus sulphuratus*), Freckle-faced Thornbird (*Phacellodomus striaticollis*), Lesser Canastero (*Asthenes pyrrholeuca*), Bay-capped Wren-spinetail (*Spartanoica maluroides*), Correndera Pipit (*Anthus correndera*), Yellow-winged Blackbird (*Agelaius thilius*), Brown-and-yellow Marshbird (*Pseudoleistes virescens*), Great Pampa-finch (*Embernagra platensis*), Grassland Yellow-finch (*Sicalis luteola*), and Rufous-collared Sparrow (*Zonotrichia capensis*).

The apparent rarity of *Xolmis dominicana* is probably due to its rather restricted habitat requirements. Within the chaco it is confined to bushy growth in open country and edges of gallery forest (Short, op. cit.). It appears to require open areas in seasonally wet habitats where the ground is readily visible from low perches. These conditions are not obviously as restricted as the range and habitat distribution of the species seem to imply, and its hunting methods are similar to other members of its genus, some of which are much more common and widespread. Whether competition with these species is partly responsible for its restricted range can only be conjectured.

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Auditory Censusing of Greater Sandhill Cranes

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The use of tape recorded avian vocalizations has recently proven to be a valuable aid in the censusing and capture of many species. Bohl (1956) used a taped assembly call to locate and census Chukars (*Alectoris chukar*) in New Mexico. Stirling and Bendell (1966) have used recorded calls of the

female to census Blue Grouse (*Dendragapus obscurus*). Dow (1970) used tape recorded calls to index population densities of cardinals (*Cardinalis cardinalis*). Several researchers have used recorded calls to attract or capture birds for banding (Artmann 1971, Levy et al. 1966, Silvy and Robel 1966). More recently, recorded calls have been used by Glahn (1974) to study the breeding ecology of several species of rails in Colorado, and by Marion (1974) to determine the status of the Chachalaca (*Ortalis vetula*) in south Texas.

I used tape recorded calls to census and locate breeding pairs of Greater Sandhill Cranes (*Grus canadensis tabida*) in southeastern Wisconsin. Crane vocalizations were obtained by tape recording the calls of captive birds, and from calls transcribed from collections of the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology. A Craig model 2626 cassette tape player and Vanco PH-5 speaker-horn were used to record and broadcast the calls. Three different crane vocalizations were used: a single crane calling from the ground, unison calls (given by a pair of cranes on the ground), and flight calls from a pair of cranes. The calls were played on the edge of wetlands during the first 2 h after sunrise and at sunset.

A total of 38 different breeding pairs of sandhill cranes was located by auditory censusing during the summer of 1976. Cranes generally responded to the recorded calls within 2 min by answering with their unison call or flying to the playback location. Twenty-six pairs (68%) responded by giving their unison call from the ground while 12 pairs (32%) responded by both calling and flying to the location of the recorded calls. The cranes flew directly to where the calls originated and frequently circled several times before landing nearby. Subsequent visits produced similar responses from each pair. One pair responded 23 times over a 5-week period by both calling from the ground and flying to the location of the recorded calls. On two occasions a single crane responded by flying to the calls. Later observations revealed that both of these birds had mates that were incubating at the time of census. Flight calls were most successful for consistently eliciting a response from a breeding pair of cranes. When more than one pair was within hearing distance, flight calls generated a response from all pairs while unison or single calls produced variable results. If cranes were present on a wetland they generally responded by the third morning visit.

I could not determine the proportion of all breeding cranes that responded to the recorded calls. However, calls were played on 68 occasions to pairs within view and known hearing range. Of these, 59 pairs (88%) responded to the calls. Many factors affect this census technique and the individual responsiveness of breeding cranes. Dow (1970) found that the time of day, noise level, and wind velocity were important considerations when using auditory censusing. These factors were very important in censusing sandhill cranes where calls frequently must be broadcast a kilometer or more from a pair. Auditory censusing was most effective during the first hour after sunrise while cranes were still on the roost. Cranes rarely responded during mid-day while feeding or loafing on upland fields. Glahn (1974) found the stage of incubation and relative breeding densities very important for eliciting individual response in rails. Sandhill cranes were most responsive to recorded calls before nesting. Cranes in the later stages of incubation and immediately after hatching rarely responded to recorded calls. Responsiveness was regained later in the summer after the chicks were several weeks old. Territory size and proximity of other breeding pairs were also important in crane responsiveness. Breeding pairs with the smallest territories and those visually or audibly remote from other pairs responded most frequently, usually by both calling and flying to the recorded calls.

When compared to the other ground census techniques I employed, such as visual observations or listening for calls at sunrise, auditory censusing revealed the greatest number of crane locations in the least amount of time. This method was particularly valuable on inaccessible wetlands or those not having a prominent vantage point for visual observations.

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Supplementary List of New Birds for Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil

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As an addition to previous lists of new species for Rio Grande do Sul that have come to light during the course of my distributional study of the birds of the state (Belton 1973, Auk 90: 94–99; Auk 90: 680; 1974, Auk 91: 429–32; Auk 91: 820; 1974, Bird-Banding 45: 59), 27 previously unrecorded species are listed here. Some are old specimens or sightings just revealed, while others are the result of recent field work. The Macaroni Penguin may be new for the South American continent as well as for Brazil, while the Rockhopper Penguin, Baird's Sandpiper, and the White-tipped Plantcutter are new for Brazil. Information herein on the closest previously known area of occurrence is taken, if not otherwise specified, from R. Meyer de Schauensee (1966, Species of birds of South America, Philadelphia, Acad. Nat. Sci.). Numbers in parentheses after sexual designation identify birds in my personal collection.

ROCKHOPPER PENGUIN (*Eudyptes crestatus*). An unsexed specimen is on display at the Museum of the University of Pelotas, Pelotas, Rio Grande do Sul, labeled as *E. chrysolophus* and as having been acquired from a small zoo in the city park in 1956. Dr. Dirceu Pires Terres, Director of the Museum, has informed me that the bird was found some time before 1956 on the beach between Cassino and the Uruguayan border and taken to the park where it was kept until it died. The species is found occasionally along the adjacent coast of Uruguay, so its occurrence on this southernmost Brazilian beach is not surprising.

MACARONI PENGUIN (*Eudyptes chrysolophus*). Helmut Sick informs me (*in litt.*) that a specimen in the Zoology Museum of the University of São Paulo was collected at the mouth of the Rio Chuí, at the southeastern tip of Brazil, as 1 of a group of 11 exhausted birds found there on 5 July 1964. This may be the first record for this species in continental South America.

YELLOW-NOSED ALBATROSS (*Diomedea chlororhynchos*). Female (880) collected about 12 km off the Rio Grande do Sul coast near 30°51′S, 50°25′W on 17 April 1973. This was 1 of 25–30 individuals of this species flying around the Brazilian Navy Oceanographic vessel 'Almirante Saldanha' at about 1500 that day.

CORY'S SHEARWATER (*Puffinis diomedea borealis*). Sick has informed me (*in litt.* quoting Zino *in litt.*) that a banded bird of this species was found dead on the beach at Tramandaí, about 29°59′S, 50°06′W, on 16 February 1971. A specimen of the same species was found dead on the beach at Garopaba, Santa Catarina in December 1973 (Silva, F. 1975, Iheringia, Zoologia 46: 54).

GREEN IBIS (*Mesembrinibis cayennensis*). Sick (*in litt.*) saw an individual of this tropical species on 19 January 1966 near the mouth of the Arroio del Rei where it enters the Lagoa Mirim at 32°52′S, 52°56′W. A specimen in the University of Pelotas Museum lacks data on its origin. Previously recorded in São Paulo and in Misiones, Argentina.

BLUE-WINGED TEAL (*Anas discors*). A less-than-year-old male banded in Saskatchewan on 20 August 1971 was reported to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as having been found near Viamão, 30°05′S, 51°02′W, in November 1972. Present location of the specimen is unknown.

HARPY EAGLE (*Harpia harpyja*). An unsexed specimen on display in the museum of the Colegio Anchieta, Porto Alegre, was captured alive during the mid-1930s at what was then Fazenda Progresso, near the present town of Cachoeirinha, 29°57′S, 51°06′W, on the outskirts of Porto Alegre, according to information obtained from Sr. Roberto Bins, grandson of the owner of Fazenda Progresso. Another specimen, in the Museu Riograndense de Ciencias Naturais at Porto Alegre, was collected in the southern hemisphere summer of 1923 by Theodomiro Lehn within 6 km of Taquara, 29°39′S, 50°47′W.

LAUGHING FALCON (*Herpetotheres cachinnans*). On 5 August 1973 near Garruchos, Municipality of São Borja, at 28°10′S, 55°35′W, I recorded a voice coming from an area of broken forest leading down to the banks of the Rio Uruguay. It was then unknown to me, but has been identified by Sick as of this species. Comparison of my recording with that reproduced by Paul Schwartz in his record, "Bird Songs from the Tropics," confirms the identification. There is no record of the species having been sighted in the state yet, nor south of São Paulo in southeastern Brazil, although it has been taken in Misiones, Argentina.