

Rediscovery of *Xenerpestes singularis* (Furnariidae)

THEODORE A. PARKER, III AND SUSAN ALLEN PARKER
 Museum of Zoology, Louisiana State University
 Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70893 USA

The Equatorial Graytail, *Xenerpestes singularis*, is one of two species in a genus of peculiar, warblerlike furnariids. As the specific name implies, this bird was described from a single specimen collected by Stolzmann at Mapoto, Provincia Ampato (=Ambato), at 7,000 ft (2,134 m) in the eastern Andes of Ecuador (Taczanowski and Berlepsch 1885). To our knowledge, the species was not found again until September 1977 when, while working for the Louisiana State University Museum of Zoology, we collected three specimens in Upper Tropical-Subtropical Zone cloud forest in the Department of San Martín, northern Peru. This area, which is nearly 500 km south of the type locality, is about 80 km by road northwest of Rioja, along the recently opened Bagua-Pomacochas-Rioja road. Our campsite here was near an abandoned road-workers' camp known to local people as "Afluente" (05°44'S, 77°31'W). Trees in the surrounding forest were 25–35 m tall with broad crowns. Most were heavily laden with epiphytes such as mosses and bromeliads.

In this area *Xenerpestes singularis* was an inconspicuous member of mixed-species flocks in the canopy and subcanopy of trees at the forest edge. Between 30 August and 15 September 1977, we repeatedly saw 3–4 individuals, possibly representing family groups, in each of 4 different mixed-species flocks at elevations of 1,035 to 1,370 m. As noted by Griscom (1927) for *X. minlosi* in Panama, *X. singularis* behaved like a parulid warbler. All individuals seen by us were gleaning small leaves at or near the ends of limbs 7–15 m above ground. Occasionally the birds hung from the undersides of leaf clusters and probed at bases of leaves. No vocalizations were heard. Typical flocking associates included *Cranioleuca curtata*, *Anabacerthia striaticollis*, *Xenops rutilans*, *Siptornis striaticollis* (in Cajamarca; see below), *Phylidor rufus*, *Terenura callinota*, *Odontorchilus branickii* and several *Tangara* species.

In 1978 several additional sightings of the species were made in the Department of Cajamarca, northern Peru. On 21 June, T. Parker saw two individuals in Subtropical Zone cloud forest at 1,675 m, ca. 2 km south of Carmen on the Sapalache-Namballe mule trail (05°03'S, 79°22'W); a third was noted on the same day, several km farther west at 1,700 m. On 10 July, G. R. Graves (pers. comm.) observed the species in the Carmen locality at ca. 1,675 m. All were in mixed-species flocks with the above-mentioned associates. Finally R. S. Ridgely (pers. comm.) saw an individual on 26 July in southern Ecuador near Zamora (Provincia Santiago-Zamora) in the valley of the Río Jamboe. This bird was in a mixed-species flock in cloud forest between 1,200 and 1,300 m.

Apparently the elevational range of *Xenerpestes singularis* extends over at least 670 m, from 1,030 to 1,700 m. Considering differences in the structure of forest and bird communities between 1,675 and 2,135 m in the Peruvian Andes (pers. obs., and see Terborgh 1971 and Terborgh and Weske 1975), the

TABLE 1. Data from three LSUMZ specimens and holotype of *Xenerpestes singularis*.

	LSUMZ number			Holotype
	84690	84691	84692	
Sex	♀?	♂	♂	
Skull ossification	unossified	50% ossified	50% ossified	—
Gonads (mm)	2.0 × 1.0	2.2 × 1.5	2.0 × 1.0	—
Exposed culmen (mm)	9.4	9.9	9.9	10 ^a
Wing chord (mm)	54.1	57.9	57.4	59.5 ^a
Tail (mm)	47.7	48.5	50.5	52 ^a
Tarsus (mm)	16.9	17.8	17.1	16 ^b
Weight (g)	12.0	11.5	12.0	—
Iris color	gray-brown	chestnut-brown	chestnut-brown	"reddish-brown" ^c
Bill color	max. slate mand. flesh	max. black mand. pale gray	max. slate mand. flesh	max. "dark gray-horn" mand. "flesh"
Leg color	olive-green	olive-green	olive-green	"grayish-olive"

^a From Cory and Hellmayr 1925.

^b From Vaurie 1971.

^c Soft-part colors of type assumed to have been taken from fresh specimen.

elevation given for the type locality (7,000 ft, or 2,134 m) seems rather high and may be an error. None of the flocking associates of *Xenerpestes* given earlier was observed above 1,800 m in either Peruvian locality.

Our three birds agree closely with the type in measurements (see Table 1) and also, except where noted, agree with the plate in Taczanowski and Berlepsch (1885). Because the type is in Warsaw and could not be examined, we briefly describe below one of our recently obtained specimens (LSUMZ #84692, adult [?] ♂): skull more than 50% ossified; total length 113 mm; fore-crown buffy-chestnut [slightly less intense in color than depicted in the copy of Taczanowski and Berlepsch (1885) available to us], feathers narrowly edged with black; rear crown dark olive-gray, feathers indistinctly edged with black; back, rump, and upper tail coverts light gray with slight olive suffusion; primaries and secondaries gray-brown and edged with olive; primary coverts dark slate-gray; middle and greater secondary coverts gray with small white tips on some feathers; rectrices gray, outer two edged whitish on inner web; lores buffy-ochraceous, some feathers tipped black, others with blackish center stripes; prominent superciliary white with pale yellow suffusion; side of head grayish, most feathers with pale yellowish-white shaft streaks; underparts whitish with pale buffy-yellow suffusion, feathers tipped and edged blackish-gray to pale gray posteriorly giving a streaked appearance (streaking somewhat heavier than depicted in the plate in Taczanowski and Berlepsch); belly and undertail coverts buff; bend of wing and underwing coverts pale whitish-yellow, the latter with some blackish-edged (striped) feathers near bend. (For soft-part colors see Table 1.) Another of our specimens (LSUMZ #84690) is an immature with gray-tipped feathers on the posterior underparts that cause the bird to appear lightly barred. The description above was styled after and compared directly to that of Wetmore (1972) for *X. minlosi*.

The two members of the genus *Xenerpestes* are similar in size and overall color pattern. Cory and Hellmayr (1925) state that *X. singularis* "differs chiefly from *minlosi* by rufous (instead of blackish, white streaked) forehead; distinct rufous streaks on anterior portions of crown; more olivaceous (less grayish) back, tail and wings; dingy buff underparts, with conspicuous blackish streaks, becoming evanescent on the abdomen; decidedly buffy under-tail coverts; finally by white edges to the median and greater upper wing-coverts being barely suggested." Our specimens show all of these differences.

Xenerpestes minlosi is a bird of Tropical Zone forests, from the Bayano River Valley of eastern Panama (Ridgely, pers. comm.) east to the lowlands of northern Colombia, south to the valley of the Río San Juan (in the west) and western Boyacá on the east slope of the Andes (Meyer de Schauensee 1970). In contrast *X. singularis* appears to occur exclusively in montane Upper Tropical-Subtropical Zone forests of the eastern Andes in Ecuador and Peru. Perhaps the latter replaces the former elevationally as well as geographically.

Vaurie (1971a) stated that "*Xenerpestes* is probably monotypic." We feel, however, that because of existing differences in plumage and elevational distribution, *X. singularis* and *X. minlosi* should be treated as distinct species until specimens of *Xenerpestes* from the vast area between Boyacá, Colombia, and Ampato, Ecuador are obtained. Vaurie (1971b) did mention, however, that the two forms differ in tail shape and in the relative graduations of the rectrices. We find that the tails of our two adult specimens of *singularis* closely match the diagram that Vaurie gives for *X. minlosi*, while our immature bird has a tail shape similar to that Vaurie diagrammed for *X. singularis*. Further, John Farrand of the American Museum of Natural History looked at the tails of three *X. minlosi* in that collection and found that the tails of these birds also did not really match Vaurie's diagram. The drawings in Vaurie's paper may have gotten switched, or, more likely, the collecting of more specimens of *X. singularis* shows that the tail shape and rectrix graduation is not a good character by which to separate the two species and that it may be age-related.

We are grateful to John S. McIlhenny and Babette M. Odom for their support of LSUMZ field work in Peru. We also thank Antonio Brack E., Marc Dourojeanni R., Susana Moller H., and Carlos Ponce P. of the Dirección General Forestal y de Fauna of the Ministerio de Agricultura, Lima, Peru, who continue to support the field studies of LSUMZ and issued the necessary permits for them. John Farrand, Jr., Gary R. Graves, H. Douglas Pratt, John P. O'Neill, J. V. Remsen, and Thomas S. Schulenberg kindly read and commented on the manuscript, and Farrand supplied information on the specimens of *Xenerpestes minlosi* in the AMNH.

LITERATURE CITED

- CORY, C. B., & C. E. HELLMAYR. 1925. Catalogue of birds of the Americas. Field Mus. Nat. Hist., Zool. Ser., vol. 13, part 4.
- GRISCOM, L. 1927. An ornithological reconnaissance in eastern Panamá in 1927. Amer. Mus. Novitates No. 282.

- MEYER DE SCHAUENSEE, R. 1970. A guide to the birds of South America. Wynnewood, Pennsylvania, Livingston Publ. Co.
- TACZANOWSKI, L., & H. V. BERLEPSCH. 1885. Troisième liste des oiseaux recueillis par M. Stolzmann dans l'Écuador. Proc. Zool. Soc. London, 1885.
- TERBORGH, J. 1971. Distribution on environmental gradients: theory and a preliminary interpretation of distributional patterns in the avifauna of the Cordillera Vilcabamba, Peru. Ecology 52: 23–40.
- , & J. S. WESKE. 1975. The role of competition in the distribution of Andean birds. Ecology 56: 562–576.
- VAURIE, C. 1971a. Classification of the ovenbirds (Furnariidae). London, H. F. and G. Witherby.
- . 1971b. Notes systématiques sur des Furnariides rares des genres *Phylidor* et *Xenerpestes*, et parallélisme de la forme du bec au (< type *Xenops* >). Oiseau 41: 117–126.
- WETMORE, A. 1972. The birds of the republic of Panamá. Smithsonian Misc. Coll., vol. 150, part 3.

Received 2 April 1979, accepted 27 August 1979.

Cocked-tail Display and Evasive Behavior of American Oystercatchers

LAWRENCE KILHAM

Department of Microbiology, Dartmouth Medical School,
Hanover, New Hampshire 03755 USA

This report describes two patterns of behavior of the American Oystercatcher (*Haematopus palliatus*) that apparently have not been described. I made the observations in April of 1978 and 1979 while staying on Sapelo Island, Georgia as a guest at the Marine Institute of the University of Georgia.

Cocked-tail display.—Although I have encountered no description of this display for *H. palliatus*, Cobb (1933, Birds of Falkland Islands, London, H. F. and G. Witherby), and Maclean (1972, Zool. Africana 7: 57) have described it for the Magellanic Oystercatcher (*H. leucopodus*). Kenyon (1949, Condor 51: 193) describes the same display as being performed by both members of a mixed pair of *H. bachmani* and *H. palliatus* following an attack on a Common Raven (*Corvus corax*). The descriptions of these authors are brief, giving little information on the context of the display. I saw the display performed 47 times, either by a single bird or, more rarely, by both members of a pair. Thirty-two of the performances were in relation to conflicts where the birds were anticipating an attack from a neighboring pair. The remaining 15 were associated with courtship, when the members of pairs were alone with no threat from neighbors. The contexts of these courtship displays were nest scrapes ($n = 8$), no special occasion noted ($n = 4$), and return of one member of a pair after the two had been separated ($n = 3$).

Evasive behavior in conflicts.—In this performance, one or both members of a pair threw itself sideways against the sand when trying to dodge the long bill of an opponent swooping down from above. I saw this only in severe territorial conflicts. I saw the evasive behavior of the oystercatchers performed on 4 different days without apparent provocation. For example, the members of one pair were idling about the upper beach on 14 April, when one of them suddenly ran a few steps to flop awkwardly against the sand. It then started to walk to the water edge 20 m away, breaking its progress five times to swerve to the side or rear in similar fashion. The beach was bare and free of other birds. It is difficult to interpret such apparently evasive behavior when done *in vacuo*. All of the oystercatchers that did so were ones that had been engaged in severe territorial conflicts for several weeks. Mathiessen (1973, The wind birds, New York, Viking Press), describing the lifting-of-one-wing display of the Buff-breasted Sandpiper (*Tryngites subruficollis*), wrote that it sometimes “displays in solitude, in silence, as if practising for some dread fray that awaits it in the future.” Received 25 June 1979, accepted 15 October 1979.