

## NOTES ON THE FEEDING HABITS OF THE ANDEAN COCK-OF-THE-ROCK (*RUPICOLA PERUVIANA*)

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The Andean Cock-of-the-Rock (*Rupicola peruviana*) is a rare species in Venezuela. It has been reported only in the State of Táchira on the South-West region of the country (Phelps & Meyer de Schauensee 1979). Previous collections in Venezuela date back to the 19th century, when two males from the locality "Mérida" were deposited at the British Museum of Natural History (Snow 1982).

In the 70s, Paul Schwartz found a lek of *R. peruviana* in the area known as Camino de San Isidro, State of Barinas (8°50'00"N/70°33'35"W) (M.L. Goodwin, pers. com.), which has been used lately as a bird-watching site by local and foreign tourists (see Cole 1988).

*R. peruviana* is a mainly frugivorous species, although the young are also fed small vertebrates (Snow 1982, Benalcazar & Benalcazar 1984, Hilty & Brown 1986). Birds in captivity eat fruits as well as insects (Snow 1982).

As part of our work for the Venezuelan Wildlife Service (Servicio Autónomo de Fauna — Ministerio del Ambiente y de los Recursos Naturales Renovables), on January 14 and 15, 1989, we made a survey of the Camino de San Isidro area, due to reports of illegal deforestations that were also affecting a small resident population of *R. peruviana*. An adult male was captured in a mist-net, which defecated during manipulation. The feces were preserved in 75% alcohol and later analyzed. In the feces we found seeds of only one plant species, identified as *Hedyosmun glabratum* (Chlorantaceae).

Fruit of this plant are drupe type, with a pulpy pericarp, crystal white-colored and aromatic. The genus *Hedyosmun* is widely spread in the Neotropics (Heywood 1978), and its fruit is consumed by non-specialist frugivores (Snow 1981).

Previous studies on feeding habits of *R. peruviana* in the wild show that it prefers fruit with high protein content, such as those of the families Lauraceae, Annonaceae and Rubiaceae (Benalcazar & Benalcazar 1984, Schuchmann *et al.* 1989). In Colombia, Benalcazar & Benalcazar (1984) found that the proportion of net weight of seedless fruit in feces was 21.61% Lauraceae, 16.97% Annonaceae, 13.94% Rubiaceae and 10.94% of an unknown species. The remaining 36.54% was represented by 13 additional families: Musaceae, Solanaceae, Cucurbitaceae, Myrtaceae, Palmae, Myrsinaceae, Araliaceae, Acanthaceae, Caprifoliaceae, Rhamnaceae, Sthaphyleaceae, Simeroubaceae and Sabaceae. In contrast, Erard *et al.* (1989), found a much more diverse diet in *Rupicola rupicola* consisting of 65 plant species of 31 families.

According to available data, this is the first report of feeding on a Chlorantaceae by *R. peruviana*. Considering their distribution (Heywood 1978, Hilty & Brown 1986), the genus *Hedyosmun* could be an important fruit resource for *R. peruviana*.

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