

## THE OCCURRENCE OF THE EUROPEAN GOLDFINCH *CARDUELIS CARDUELIS* IN BRAZIL

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From its Eurasian and North African homeland, the European Goldfinch (*Carduelis carduelis*) has been introduced successfully to the Azores, Cape Verde Islands, Australia, New Zealand and offshore islands, Uruguay, Argentina, Bermuda, and USA, and unsuccessfully in Canada and South Africa (Long 1981). In Uruguay, the European Goldfinch was deliberately introduced in Montevideo, possibly at Parque Rodó, in 1913, by Juan Soriano Galiana, who brought some 50 pairs from Spain (Vaz-Ferreira & Gerzenstein 1961). Curiously, this information was later omitted by Cuello & Gerzenstein (1962), who claimed that the species was introduced in Uruguay on an unknown date. The same is valid for Gore & Gepp (1978), who stated that the European Goldfinch was probably introduced in the beginning of the 20th century in the area of Montevideo. Up to the early 1960s, records in Uruguay were restricted to the Departments of Montevideo and Canelones, breeding being confirmed (Vaz-Ferreira & Gerzenstein 1961, Cuello & Gerzenstein 1962). Posteriorly, Gore & Gepp (1978) considered it a common resident in the region of Montevideo and stated that, from this locality, it had spread eastward beyond

Punta del Leste (Department of Maldonado) and westward to the Department of Colonia. E. Arballo and J. Cravino (in litt. 1998) claim that the species is expanding its range in Uruguay and has been recorded practically throughout the whole country, with the exception of the northwestern Departments of Artigas and Salto. In Argentina, the European Goldfinch was considered common in Buenos Aires Province early in the 20th century (Hartert & Venturi 1909), and generally regarded as an escaped cage bird (Olrog 1963). More recently, a group of ten birds was seen in 17 September 1985 at General Pacheco, Buenos Aires (Delius 1986). Besides the above mentioned records, Narosky & Di Giacomo (1993) also report additional records from Hudson, Bernal and Costanera Sur, all in Buenos Aires Province. These authors also state that the status of the European Goldfinch in Argentina needs to be clarified. J. M. Barnett (in litt. 1998) informs that there are some two or three recent sightings of pairs or lone individuals from parks in the city of Buenos Aires and from Costanera Sur, and also states that the species is not well established in Argentina. Although records from Argentina have been usually related to

escaped cage birds (Olrog 1963, J. M. Barnett in litt. 1998), E. Arballo (in litt. 1998) is convinced that recent Argentine records are consequence of natural range expansion from Uruguay, since birds may use a series of islands in the Rio Paraná delta next to Carmelo, Uruguay, as a path leading directly to Buenos Aires, notably close to General Pacheco, where the record of Delius (1986) was made. There are no previous published records of the European Goldfinch from Brazil (Sick 1997).

On 23 February 1998, at the Brazilian side of the Brazil-Uruguay border along Ruta 19, c. 5 km westward of the town of Chuí (33° 41'S, 53° 27'W), state of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil, I saw an individual and subsequently a pair of European Goldfinches. Posteriorly, on 24 February 1998, at the Brazilian side of Chuí, I observed two birds feeding on the seeds of a Bull Thistle *Cirsium vulgare* (Compositae) in an abandoned lot. Additionally, on 12 October 1998, I observed an individual among a group of c. five Hooded Siskins (*Carduelis magellanicus*) in pine trees scattered in fields alongside Arroio Chuí's southernmost bend, at Barra do Chuí (33° 45'S, 53° 22'W), Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil. On 18 February 1999, at the same place, a male was observed amidst a group of c. twelve Hooded Siskins in pine trees. This individual was apparently paired with a female Hooded Siskin, both calling simultaneously from the topmost branches for approximately ten minutes after detection, being, together with another silent female Siskin hidden in the leaves, the only members of the group which remained on the tree as I approached and tape-recorded them (copy will be archived at Arquivo Sonoro Prof. Elias P. Coelho, Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro, RJ). These records were the only obtained in 170 hours of observations in the area, carried out between 22–24 February, 10–12 April, 04–08 July, 10–14 October 1998

and 16–20 February 1999, concentrated (135 hours) at Barra do Chuí. A transect of approximately 10 km was walked along the Brazil-Uruguay border (mainly on Ruta 19) on 23 February, 10 April, 04 July, 13 October 1998 and 19 February 1999, and only the three above mentioned February 1998 individuals were detected.

The first record of the European Goldfinch for Brazil was obtained at Chuí by E. Arballo on 29 July 1994, and, from then on, other records were obtained by him and J. Cravino on several occasions at the same locality (E. Arballo and J. Cravino in litt. 1998). E. Arballo (in litt. 1998) also points out that the European Goldfinch wanders considerably along the edges of its present distribution, stating, in view of his recent records from the Uruguayan departments of Cerro Largo and Rivera, some very close to the Brazilian border (e.g., Paso La Puente and Paso Manzagano, Department of Rivera, and Isidoro Noblía, Department of Cerro Largo), that the species will probably be recorded in Rio Grande do Sul at other localities.

The Brazilian records of the European Goldfinch suggest natural processes of range expansion from Uruguay taking into account its historical distribution in Uruguay and its complete absence in bird markets of Brazil's extreme south.

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