

FIRST DOCUMENTED RECORD OF THE BROWN-AND-YELLOW MARSHBIRD (*PSEUDOLEISTES VIRESCENS*) FOR PARAGUAY, WITH COMMENTS ON ITS SYMPATRY WITH THE YELLOW-RUMPED MARSHBIRD (*P. GUIRAHURO*) IN ARGENTINA AND PARAGUAY

Rosendo M. Fraga¹, Mariano Codesido¹, Hernán Povedano², Alejandro Jurado³ & Rodrigo Zárate¹

¹Asociación Guyrá Paraguay, Cte. Franco 381 c/ L. Prieto, Asunción, Paraguay.
E-mail: chfraga@yahoo.com

²Centro de Investigaciones Científicas y TTP-CONICET, Materi y España, (3105) Diamante, Entre Ríos, Argentina.

³Calle 10 N° 1285, 3 A, (1900) La Plata, Argentina.

Primer registro documentado del Dragón (*Pseudoleistes virescens*) para Paraguay, con comentarios sobre su simpatria con el Guirahuró (*P. guirahuro*) en Argentina y Paraguay.

Key words: *Pseudoleistes virescens*, *P. guirahuro*, Paraguay, Argentina, Brown-and-yellow Marshbird, Yellow-rumped Marshbird.

Some checklists and reference books (e.g., Narosky & Yzurieta 1987, the map in Ridgely & Tudor 1989) include Paraguay in the range of Brown-and-yellow Marshbirds (*Pseudoleistes virescens*), but other sources do not (e.g., Short 1975, Olrog 1979). After reviewing the available evidence, Hayes (1995) placed this icterid in the list of hypothetical Paraguayan species. The reasons were simple: there were no specimens of the species collected in Paraguay, or Paraguayan records properly documented with photographs, films or tape recordings.

On 6 March 2002, while conducting an ornithological survey, we obtained a documented record of the presence of Brown-and-yellow Marshbirds in Paraguay. We

observed and filmed a small flock of 11 individuals in the site known as Isla Ro' y, Departamento Ñeembucú, Paraguay (27°13'24"S, 57°53'22"W). A copy of the film was deposited in the archives of Guyrá Paraguay, the ornithological society of that country. The observation site is located 15 km north of the Río Paraná, the international border between Argentina (Corrientes province) and Paraguay. The Brown-and-yellow Marshbirds were found in a marshy pasture, grazed by cattle and horses. We showed the birds to a local peasant, who recognized the birds as different from the Yellow-rumped Marshbird (*Pseudoleistes guirahuro*), giving it a different vernacular Guaraní name ("guyrá-u-choré" vs "guyrá-u-ro"). Both species differ in size and color-

tion, particularly in the diagnostic rump color, brown in the Brown-and-yellow Marshbird, yellow in the other species. The vocalizations of both marshbirds are distinctive and easy to recognize.

Throughout eastern Paraguay the Yellow-rumped Marshbird is a common and widespread bird (Hayes 1995, pers. observ.), whereas its congeneric relative is at best rare and local. The Asociación Guyrá Paraguay keeps a database with more than 40,000 bird records for hundreds of localities in the country, and up to now the database contained only four undocumented observations of the Brown-and-yellow Marshbird. These previous observations were in the Bajo Chaco, Central Paraguay and Ñeembucú geographical regions (as defined in Hayes 1995). The fact that the Brown-and-yellow Marshbird has a vernacular Paraguayan name suggests that it is not accidental in the country, but this needs verification.

Besides Paraguay, both marshbird species have been reported in sympatry in southern Brazil (Rio Grande do Sul and Santa Catarina), eastern Uruguay, and eastern Argentina (Belton 1985, Sick 1993, Azpiroz 1997). We briefly discuss here the Argentinian area of sympatry, based on our field records (including tape recordings) and literature searches, including specimen labels in museums (compiled by Camperi 1989). The maps for both *Pseudoleistes* species in Ridgely & Tudor (1989) suggest an extensive area of sympatry in eastern Argentina (Corrientes, Entre Ríos and northeastern Buenos Aires provinces). The corresponding maps in Jaramillo & Burke (1999) show a more reduced overlap, as Buenos Aires and most of Entre Ríos provinces are excluded from the range of the Yellow-rumped Marshbird. The maps in De la Peña (1999) go even further, showing the two species overlapping only in the northern half of Corrientes and southern Misiones, and west of the Paraná river locally in northern Santa

Fe, eastern Chaco and Formosa. Our data agrees closely with this last author.

The unique sight record of the Yellow-rumped Marshbird for Buenos Aires is undocumented and questionable (Hellmayr 1937, Narosky & Di Giacomo 1993). We found two sight records of the Yellow-rumped Marshbird for Entre Ríos (one published: Serié & Smyth 1923), and no collected specimens (Camperi 1989). Throughout this area *virescens* is a common species in marshes and grasslands (pers. observ.). In Corrientes north of the 29°30'S, the Yellow-rumped Marshbird is regularly present; at Estancia San Juan Poriahú (27°42'S, 57°11'W), 20 km south of the Paraná river, both marshbirds are common and breed in sympatry (Fraga 2001). Further north, on the Argentinian Isla Apipé Grande in the Paraná river, both species occur, but the Brown-and-yellow Marshbird is rare (R. Fraga & A. Bodrati pers. observ.); in the adjacent Isla Yacyretá in Paraguay, only the Yellow-rumped Marshbird has been so far reported (Lowen *et al.* 1996, pers. observ.).

Distributional data from Río Grande do Sul, Brazil (Belton 1985), suggest a habitat segregation of both marshbirds along an altitudinal gradient (sea level to 1300 m): the Yellow-rumped Marshbird was found mostly near wetlands in hilly country, and the other species in wet meadows and marshes in the lowlands. A similar situation may exist in Uruguay (A. Azpiroz pers. comm.). However, similar topographical gradients do not occur in northeastern Argentina and southern Paraguay. In the area of sympatry in Corrientes, for instance, the altitudinal range is only 30 to 80 m (Carnevali 1994). At Estancia San Juan Poriahú, both marshbirds foraged, roosted and nested in the same marshes (Fraga 2001). As Sick (1993) noticed, however, the two species usually did not associate. A detailed study of their ecological relationships in sympatry would be rewarding (Short 1975).

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