

# The third known specimen of the Red-tailed *Newtonia fanovanae* (Family Sylviidae), a Malagasy endemic

by Steven M. Goodman

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In 1933 Gyldenstolpe named a new species, *Newtonia fanovanae*, on the basis of a single specimen taken in the Fanovana Forest (18°55'S, 48°34'E), east-central Madagascar. The forest near Fanovana has been subsequently cleared, and until recently there was no other record of this species on the island. *N. fanovanae* was found at two widely separated rainforest sites: (1) southeast portion of the Eastern Humid Forest, parcel 1 of the Réserve Naturelle Intégrale d'Andohahela (24°34'S, 46°49'E), where one specimen was collected and several individuals observed in late 1989 between 300 and 1300 m elevation (Goodman & Schulenberg 1991); and (2) in the northeastern part of the Eastern Humid Forest, Réserve Spéciale d'Ambatovaky (16°51'S, 49°08'E), where it was observed twice in February 1990 between 650 and 700 m elevation (Evans 1991). Further, this species has recently been reported at several other sites in the Réserve Naturelle Intégrale d'Andohahela (Goodman, Pidgeon & O'Connor pers. obs., Langrand & Sinclair 1994), and at Hiaraka (15°30'S, 49°56'E) on the Masoala Peninsula, southeast of Maroantsetra, at 250 m altitude (Langrand & Sinclair 1994).

Recently while examining Malagasy bird specimens in the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH), New York, I found a specimen of *Newtonia fanovanae* that had been mis-identified as a Red-tailed Vanga *Calicalicus madagascariensis*. The specimen (AMNH 413023), an adult female, was taken at "Maroantsetra, 40 km NW" on 22 May 1930 during the Mission Zoologique Franco-Anglo-Américaine. *N. fanovanae* had not been previously listed as a species collected during the mission (Delacour 1932, Rand 1936). This specimen represents the third known example of *N. fanovanae* in museum collections. The general plumage colouration and external measurements of this bird fit those of the other two known specimens (Goodman & Schulenberg 1991, Table 1).

In the mission's itinerary, Rand (1936, p. 183) states, "On May 5 . . . we stopped at Bevato (forty kilometers northwest of Maroantsetra), a little village [along the Vohemar River] . . . [and] collected until 26 May." The village of Bevato is close to sea-level and was near the edge of a tall humid forest with abundant epiphytic growth. The group collected birds near the village and up to 500 m altitude. The coordinates given by Dee (1986) for Bevato, 45 km NW of Maroantsetra, up Vohemar River, are in error and are for another village of the same name several hundred km further south. Jenkins (1987) listed the coordinates for the Bevato "40 km NW of Maroantsetra" as 15°19'S, 49°32'E. Both MacPhee (1987) and Carleton



TABLE 1  
Some measurements (mm) of the three known specimens of *Newtonia fanovanae*

	Fanovana type, SMNH	Andohahela FMNH 345890	SW Maroantsetra AMNH 413023
wing length	60	60	57
tail length	43	43	40
bill length from skull	14.5	14.8	15.1
length of exposed culmen	10.7	12.1	11.2
bill length from anterior edge of nostril	7.9	9.0	8.0
width of bill at anterior edge of nostril	3.0	2.8	3.1
tarsus length	16.3	16.9	17.4

Notes. SMNH—Swedish Museum of Natural History; FMNH—Field Museum of Natural History; AMNH—American Museum of Natural History.

& Schmidt (1990) have accepted the site of “40 km NW Maroantsetra” as near Hiaraka, and the latter authors have provided the coordinates of 15°10’S, 40°30’E. (This is a different Hiaraka from that mentioned by Langrand & Sinclair 1994.)

The discovery of this previously mis-identified specimen extends the range of *Newtonia fanovanae* further north, and it is now known from nearly the complete length of the island’s east side. To date all records of this species are from Eastern Humid Forest and below 1300 m altitude.

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## Canyon Wren *Catherpes mexicanus* in humid lowlands of Mexico, with notes on near sympatry with other rock-loving wrens

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The Canyon Wren *Catherpes mexicanus* is found from southern Canada to southern Mexico. In the latter country, it is usually considered to be absent from the humid, forested lowlands of the Atlantic (Gulf) slope. AOU (1983) mentions that this species occurs “usually in arid regions ... in the Mexican highlands to ... central Chiapas and western Veracruz” but not in the lowlands of these states. Peterson & Chalif (1973) state more explicitly “not on Gulf coastal slope” and Phillips (1986) notes “absent from coastal lowlands” (except extreme northwest).

Edwards (1989) lists the Atlantic lowlands of Nuevo León and Tamaulipas, but not farther south, in this species' range. Alcántara (1993: 193) notes one Veracruz record of the species from 100 m above sea level (asl) or lower, all other records from that state being above 1100 m. The Canyon Wren is usually common to abundant where found, and has a loud and often-repeated song. It is therefore unusual that there should be a gap of 1000 m in its altitudinal range in the state of Veracruz. More likely, the species is very localized and has been under-recorded in that state and perhaps elsewhere in the Atlantic lowlands of Mexico.

In recent travels to different parts of Mexico, I have recorded this species in the Atlantic lowlands of Chiapas and at two localities in the lowlands of Veracruz.

In central Veracruz, southeast of Jalapa, the Canyon Wren is common at approximately 800 m asl near the bottom of the Barranca de los Jiménez (19°26'N, 96°48'W) and at approximately 450 m asl in the Barranca de Zinacatla (19°20'N, 96°47'W). The other birds seen in these andesitic canyons are typical of the humid lowlands of Mexico's Atlantic slope, such as Little Hermit *Phaethornis longuemareus*, Sulphur-breasted Toucan *Ramphastos sulphuratus* and Giant Cowbird *Scaphidura oryzivora*.

In Chiapas, the Canyon Wren is found at 200 m asl in the limestone canyon of the lower Río La Venta (c. 17°2'N, 93°48'W) (Alvarez del



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