

Two notable bird records from Chilean Patagonia

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From 7 to 30 November 1989 an expedition to southern Chile from the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH) conducted studies of speciation phenomena in Patagonian birds, especially *Geositta* (Furnariidae) and *Phrygilus* (Emberizidae) on both sides of the Strait of Magellan, Provincia de Magallanes, southern Chile (see Vuilleumier 1991a, 1991b). During that trip we also studied the rest of the avifauna, as time permitted. Two notable specimens were obtained on the mainland side of the Strait of Magellan during our survey: (1) the first specimen of *Eremobius phoenicurus* (Furnariidae) for Chile, and (2) a southward range extension of 1500 km for *Riparia riparia* (Hirundinidae). Both specimens are now catalogued at AMNH but will eventually be transferred to a museum in Chile. Tissue samples from these birds are stored at the Museum of Natural Science, Louisiana State University.

BAND-TAILED EARTHCREEPER, BANDURRILLA TURCA *Eremobius phoenicurus*

This first record for Chile is one individual (AMNH 826127) collected on 28 November 1988 c. 4 km southeast of O'Higgins, along the road from O'Higgins to Buque Quemado and Punta Delgada (approx. 52°18'S, 69°35'W). O'Higgins is a small village located on Route 255 about 34 km by road southwest of the town of Monte Aymond on the border between Argentina and Chile. The individual was damaged during collecting and the sex, skull ossification, and irides colour could not be determined. The damaged bill showed a black maxilla and a pale mandible with a black tip. The legs and feet were dark grey with the soles paler. The predominantly grey plumage was damaged, precluding finer analysis or preservation. The specimen consists mostly of a flat skin type of preparation with the undamaged rectrices still attached to the pygostyle. Although this specimen is an incomplete skin, the species can be identified with certainty because the colour pattern of the tail-feathers is diagnostic. The central rectrices are brown and the others are reddish chestnut at the proximal half and blackish brown at the distal half. By comparison with other furnariids at AMNH we verified that this pattern is unique to *Eremobius phoenicurus*.

The bird was collected in a patch of *mata negra* (*Verbena tridens*) in a very open, gently rolling area of grassy *Festuca* steppe (see Pisano 1977). Other birds noted in the *mata negra* included *Zonotrichia capensis* (abundant), *Lessonia rufa* (several), *Upucerthia dumetaria* (one) and *Phrygilus fruticeti* (at least one).

This species is not included in works treating the avifauna of Tierra del Fuego, including its Chilean part (Humphrey *et al.* 1970, Clark 1986), or in lists of the birds of Chile (Hellmayr 1932, Araya *et al.* 1986, Venegas 1986) or in more general distributional lists (Hellmayr 1925,

Peters 1951, Meyer de Schauensee 1982, Sibley & Monroe 1990). A specimen previously attributed to the island of Tierra del Fuego was reassigned to Santa Cruz, Argentina, by Vaurie (1980: 221–222).

It is surprising that this species is not mentioned in the standard faunistic lists for Chile considering the fact that it is widely distributed in Argentine Patagonia. The possibility exists that it was observed but not collected on Chilean territory previously. In his paper on the avifauna of Tierra del Fuego and Chile, Olrog (1948: 507) stated the following: “En Punta Dungenes [sic], cerca de la frontera argentino chilena (Santa Cruz-Magallanes) en la entrada del Estrecho de Magallanes, se vio una pareja en marzo.” He added: “Muy probablemente esta ave se encuentra — todavía no citada para Chile — también en otras partes de la Magallanes [sic] y en el norte de Tierra del Fuego.” In his itinerary and on his map of collecting localities Olrog (1948) did not mention Punta Dungeness. He cited a male specimen collected at Puerto Gallegos, Santa Cruz, on 14 January. Presumably this is the same as Río Gallegos, a town about 60 km north of the border in Argentina. In his book on the birds of Chile, Johnson (1967: 156), citing Olrog (1948), stated that *Eremobius phoenicurus* was “Not yet recorded from Chile but virtually certain to occur in Patagonian zone of Magallanes”. Our collecting site is about 85 km west of Punta Dungeness and about 85 km south of Río Gallegos.

Wetmore (1926: 253) wrote that “Near Zapala [Neuquén, Argentina] these birds were found amid patches of low thorny brush that grew on the slopes of rolling hills, where the soil was composed of sand and stones”. He also stated that “they worked secretively under cover or ran along on the ground with the tail cocked at an angle over the back”. One of us (F.V.) has recently been able to study *Eremobius phoenicurus* in Chubut where he found it in a variety of shrub-steppes ranging from relatively dense to quite open, but usually without grassy cover on the ground. Vuilleumier’s observations closely match Wetmore’s cited above. The specimen we collected in Chile was found in scrub that is patchily distributed on the leeward hillsides of the northwestern shore of the Strait of Magellan and that is physiognomically similar to the habitat it was found to occupy in Chubut.

BANK SWALLOW/SAND MARTIN, GOLONDRINA BARRANQUERA *Riparia riparia*

One adult ♂ (AMNH 826149; skull 100% ossified; left testis 2×1 mm) was collected 12 November 1989 from a flock of four species of swallows that were foraging very low over the mouth of the Río Santa María and over nearby sandbars and a gravel beach, about 2 km south of San Juan on the Brunswick Peninsula (approx. $53^{\circ}40'S$, $70^{\circ}58'W$). This area is about 65 km south of Punta Arenas. Besides the one *Riparia riparia* collected, the flock included about 50 *Tachycineta leucopyga*, 2 *Notiochelidon cyanoleuca* and 1 *Hirundo rustica*. The 12-gram individual *Riparia riparia* had moderate fat along the sides and in the abdominal cavity. No body, wing or tail moult was apparent. Its stomach contained insects. Other specimen data: irides dark brown, bill black, mouth lining yellow, tarsi and toes flesh-coloured.

This species has never been recorded south of central Chile (Valdivia) or central Argentina (Buenos Aires) (Ridgely & Tudor 1990). Most records are from east of the Andes. Therefore the most likely route that this individual took was down through Argentine Patagonia to the Brunswick Peninsula in Chilean Patagonia. Future observations are needed to determine if this species is a rare but regular visitor to the Strait of Magellan.

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