

PROPOSAL FOR INCLUSION OF SPECIES ON THE APPENDICES OF THE CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF MIGRATORY SPECIES OF WILD ANIMALS

A. PROPOSAL: Listing of the Strange-tailed Tyrant *Alecturus risora* in **Appendix I** of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals.

B. PROPONENT: **Government of the Argentine Republic.**

C. SUPPORTING STATEMENT

4. Taxonomic group

- 4.1_ Class: Aves
- 4.2_ Order: Passeriformes
- 4.3_ Family: Tyrannidae
- 4.4_ Genus & species: *Alecturus rissora* (Viellot, 1824)¹
- 4.5_ Common names: Yetapá de Collar, Tijereta de las Pajas, Yetapá Coludo, Cola Extraña, Guira Yetapá (in Guaraní), Bandeira do Campo, Tesouro do Campo (in Portuguese), Strange-tailed tyrant (in English).

5. Biological data

2.1 Historical distribution

South-eastern Brazil, Central and Eastern Paraguay, Uruguay, North-eastern and Central Argentina.

Present distribution

Paraguay: Central Region, Southern Chaco and Neembucú, in the Central, Cordillera, Misiones, Neembucú, and Presidente Hayes departments (Collar et al. 1992, Hayes 1995, Lowen et al. 996, Wege & Long 1995).

Argentina: North-eastern part of the eastern side of the provinces of Formosa, Chaco and Central Corrientes, with a recent record in Eastern Entre Ríos (Bertonatti & Di Giacomo 1998, Collar et al. 1992, Di Giacomo 1996 a and b, Wege & Long 1995)

Details of present and historical distribution

Brazil: Known through old records in Mato Grosso, Sao Paulo and Rio Grande do Sul, where, according to Collar *et al.* (1992) there is no concrete data since 1914. Pacheco & Gonzaga (1994) mention a 1914 record for Mato Grosso do Sul and one sighting between July and August 1974 for the coastal zone of Rio de Janeiro.

Paraguay: Presidente Hayes, Alto Paraná (no records since 1939), Paraguari (no records since 1910), Gaurá (no records since 1924), Central, Cordillera, Neembucú and

Misiones.

Uruguay: Paysandú (no records since 1895), Soriano (no records since 1955), Flores (no records since 1920), San José (one record since 1987), and Maldonado (no records since 1841).

Argentina: Misiones (no records since 1961), Corrientes, Formosa, Chaco, Entre Ríos (with records for 1803 and 1909 and a recent sighting), Santa Fe (no records since 1937 in the north and since 1926 in the south of the province), North-eastern Santiago del Estero (no records since 1927), Southern Córdoba (no records since 1861), Central South San Luis (no records since 1861) and North and Central Buenos Aires (no records since 1920).

2.2 Population

According to Collar *et al.* (1992) the species is presently very rare and has practically disappeared from large areas where it ranged. No data is known as to the situation of its population at present, as distributed in the south of Paraguay and the north of Argentina.

In Southern Paraguay (Misiones) between 12 and 47 individuals were recorded between March and June, during the years 1990 and 1991 (Collar *et al.* 1992, Lowen *et al.* 1996).

Pearman & Abadie (1993) have estimated the present population in Central Corrientes, North-eastern Argentina, to be of some 23,000 individuals, by extrapolation from a transectional counting carried out in the Iberá marshes.

2.3 Habitat

The species distinguishes itself by inhabiting natural grasslands. Preliminary observations in Corrientes and Paraguay would seem to indicate that it requires grass of between 1-1.5 metres height (Pearman & Abadie, 1993, Lowen *et al.* 1996). In Eastern Formosa the species inhabits both dry and wet grasslands (flood-prone and not flood-prone) with grasses over one metre tall (Di Giacomo 1996b). These habitats are used both during the breeding season and after.

The species is seen as providing a good indicator of the degree of conservation of the nature areas where it is found (Collar *et al.* 1992). In Corrientes and Formosa it is found together with other threatened or endangered pasture species such as the tordo amarillo (*Xanthopsar flavus*), several species of Capuchinos (*Sporophila* genus), the Tachurí Coludo (*Culicivora caudacuta*), or the Tachurí Canela (*Polystictus pectoralis*) (Pearman & Abadie 1993, Di Giacomo 1996 a and b).

2.4 Migrations

The seasonal or migratory movements of the species are little known and there is scarce documentation in this respect. (Stotz *et al.* 1996, Lowen *et al.* 1996).

In the southernmost areas of its old distribution the species was considered to be migratory, as stated by Holland (1893) for Buenos Aires, and Pereyra (1938) for North-eastern Santa Fe and the border of Santiago del Estero. It used to be turned up

between September and October, would breed there and then migrated north in February and March.

By studying the remainder of the information available for the Argentine one can see that the known data for the province of Misiones refers to the winter months (May to September), for the provinces of Santiago del Estero and Entre Rios for spring and summer (September, October, January, February and April). For the province of Chaco there is data for December and May, and for Corrientes the records cover practically the full year (Collar et al. 1992 compilation). In the province of Formosa the species is present throughout the year (Di Giacomo 1996b).

Azara considered it seasonal for Paraguay (1802-1805) and according to Lowen et al. (1996), the situation there needs to be clarified. The authors mention a probable migrating group passing over Cordillera, recorded in August 1995, but think that the wintering area is further north, in Concepción, or in the Brazilian Centre-South. This would find confirmation in the fact that the few known records for Brazil refer to the winter months (June and July, Collar et al. 1992). Pacheco & Gonzaga (1994) think that the species migrates from the south, and visits the state of Rio de Janeiro during the winter (July and August).

Observation, outside the breeding period, of groups of youngsters, generally of more than 40 individuals, such as those recorded in Eastern Formosa and other areas in the vicinity of the border with Paraguay (Collar et al. 1992, Di Giacomo 1996 and unpublished information) might point to important regional seasonal movements.

Finally, Chasser (1994) includes the species in a list of southern migrants in South America, i.e. species which, according to the author's definition, make their nests in temperate zones and then migrate to the North during the southern winter.

3. Threat data

3.1 Direct threats

The scanty information available on the subject points to the fact that the destruction of habitat is the main cause of danger for the species. Habitat loss occurs in all the present range of the species, affecting the breeding grounds and the likely wintering grounds.

3.2 Habitat destruction

Changes in the native grasslands and their conversion into agricultural lands, forests or cattle grazing pastures have been suggested as the main causes for the loss of habitat for the species.

3.3 Indirect threats

The use of pesticides in the habitats of the species has been mentioned as a threat but not evaluated (Collar *et al.* 1992, 1994).

3.4 Threats connected especially with migrations

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Fragmentation of the remaining native grasslands of Southern Paraguay and neighbouring areas in the provinces of Chaco and Formosa in Argentina might severely alter the habitat continuity that the species requires.

3.5 National and International Utilisation

None.

4. Protection status and needs

4.1 National protection status

In the Argentine the species is listed as "rare" in Resolution 144/83 of the Agriculture Ministry (Bertonati & González 1993). Fraga thinks it is "vulnerable" at national scale (1997). It is protected in the Mburucuyá National Park and the Provincial Iberá Park, both in Corrientes. It also receives protection in private reserves, such as the wild life refuge of San Juan Porhiaú (Corrientes), and Cachapé (Chaco).

In Paraguay, according to Lowen *et al.* (1996), it has been recorded in the Yparacáí National Park (Central and Cordillera departments), and in private reserves, such as the Sombrero Private Natural Reserve, and the Golondrina Private Natural Reserve (Presidente Hayes department). We are not aware of any legal protection in Paraguay.

In Brazil the species is protected by law (Collar *et al.* 1992)

4.2 International protection status

There is a need for:

Identification, monitoring and protection of populations in occupied areas in the province of Santa Fe (Argentina) and new areas in the eastern section of Chaco, Formosa and near-by sites in Paraguay.

Protection of nature areas in a good state of conservation allowing the survival of the species in Eastern Chaco and Formosa and Southern Paraguay, where agriculture and cattle raising make important inroads.

Identification and protection of potential wintering spaces in Northern Paraguay and Central and Southern Brazil.

Implementing management plans for natural grasslands in cattle raising establishments in the area, taking account of the different aspects of the biological cycle of the species, such as breeding season, possible wintering sites, fire management, etc.

5. Range States

Brazil: the species was recorded in the states of Mato Grosso do Sul, Sao Paulo, Rio Grande do Sul and Rio de Janeiro. All dated records refer to winter months. No nest making has been

recorded.

Paraguay: recorded in the departments of Presidente Hayes, Alto Paraná, Paraguairí, Guairá, Central, Cordillera, Neembucú and Misiones. It nests in this country and it is also possible that it winters further north, in the department of Concepción and others (Lowen *et al.* 1996).

Uruguay: recorded in the departments of Paysandú, Soriano, Flores, San José and Maldonado. The species also nests here (Gibson 1885) and there seem to be no records for the winter months.

Argentina: the species has been recorded in the provinces of Misiones, Corrientes, Formosa, Chaco, Entre Ríos, Santa Fe, Santiago del Estero, Córdoba, San Luis and Buenos Aires. It nidifies (or nidified) in Corrientes, Formosa, Chaco, Santa Fe and Buenos Aires (Holland 1893, Pereyra 1938, Narosky & Di Giacomo 1993), where it used to turn up in spring ready to reproduce. Known records for Misiones all refer to the winter months. Those for Santiago del Estero and Entre Ríos refer to the spring and summer months.

6. Comments by the Range States

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7. Other comments

The species is little known to science. Presently diverse biological and ecological aspects are being studied by the Asociación Ornitológica del Plata, in the Bagual ecological reserve, a protected area in the province of Formosa. Some preliminary data has been presented by Di Giacomo (1996b).

8. References

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