

First records of *Caprimulgus hirundinaceus vielliardi* for Minas Gerais State, Brazil

Marcelo Ferreira de Vasconcelos¹ and Lívia Vanucci Lins²

¹Departamento de Zoologia, Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais, Av. Antônio Carlos, 6627, 31270-110, Belo Horizonte, MG, Brazil. E-mail: bacurau@mono.icb.ufmg.br

²Fundação Biodiversitas, Av. Contorno, 9155, 11º andar, 30110-130, Belo Horizonte, MG, Brazil. E-mail: cdc@gold.horizontes.com.br

Recebido em 03 de novembro de 1997; aceito em 30 de março de 1998

RESUMO. Primeiros registros de *Caprimulgus hirundinaceus vielliardi* para o estado de Minas Gerais, Brasil. Em julho e setembro de 1997 foram registrados alguns indivíduos de *Caprimulgus hirundinaceus vielliardi* em habitats xéricos de afloramentos rochosos no município de Aimorés, estado de Minas Gerais, Sudeste do Brasil. Estes são os primeiros registros desta ave em Minas Gerais.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: *Caprimulgus hirundinaceus*, Caprimulgidae, bacurauzinho-da-caatinga, Minas Gerais, distribuição geográfica.

KEY WORDS: *Caprimulgus hirundinaceus*, Caprimulgidae, Pygmy Nightjar, Minas Gerais, geographic distribution.

Because of the cryptic plumage and nocturnal activities of the goatsuckers, biological knowledge concerning the family Caprimulgidae in Brazil is minimal. The Pygmy Nightjar, *Caprimulgus hirundinaceus*, is endemic to Brazil (Sick 1997) and was considered to be restricted to the northeastern Brazilian "caatinga" until the discovery of a new subspecies, *C. h. vielliardi*, in Colatina (19°32'S, 40°37'W), Espírito Santo State (Ribon 1995).

During field work in Aimorés (19°29'S, 41°03'W, elevation: 80 m), Minas Gerais State, we searched rocky outcrops for *C. h. vielliardi*, because Ribon (1995) mentioned the occurrence of this species in this type of rocky formation. These searches were conducted over several days in 1997: 7th and 8th July, 18:00-19:30 h; 12th September, 18:30 h; 13th September, 16:30-17:30 h; 14th September, 10:00 h. We used a mist-net on 13th September to capture one bird.

In spite of being in the Atlantic Forest domain, the rocky outcrops in the Aimorés region are very peculiar, of a black color (figure 1) and covered by xeric vegetation that resembles the northeastern Brazilian "caatinga", with the occurrence of cacti (Cactaceae: *Opuntia brasiliensis*, *Pereskia aculeata*, *Pilosocereus* sp.), bromeliads (Bromeliaceae: *Encholirium* sp.), "canela-de-ema" (Velloziaceae: *Nanuza plicata*), "pinhão" (Euphorbiaceae: *Jatropha* sp.), "eufórbia" (Euphorbiaceae: *Euphorbia phosphorea*), ferns (Pteridaceae: *Notholaena eriophora*, Selaginellaceae: *Selaginella sellowi*), and other species of trees and shrubs of the families Anacardiaceae, Bignoniaceae, Bombacaceae, Clusiaceae, Fabaceae, and Myrtaceae.

In July, *C. h. vielliardi* was recorded on a rocky outcrop in Aimorés, called Pedra do Resplendor (19°25'S, 41°06'W, elevation: 358 m), near Rio Doce. At dusk (18:00 h) a hoarse alarm call ("kurral") was heard, and one bird was flushed from a rock. A call of this type was recorded for the

subspecies of northeastern Brazil (M. F. V. pers. obs., Vasconcelos and Figueiredo 1996). This voice is not mentioned by Hardy (1980). The other voices recorded were very similar to those in Hardy (1980) for *C. hirundinaceus*. A male on the dark rock among *Nanuza plicata* shrubs and *Pilosocereus* sp. cacti was observed vocalizing "fuiil". While vocalizing, the bird's throat swelled, showing an evident white mark. The bird responded to the playback by moving toward the observers. Another bird was seen on the rock, from which it sallied to a height of about 3 m, probably to capture insects, and returned to the same point (N = 5). Vocalizations diminished as dusk progressed, stopping with total darkness (19:00 h). Although individuals of this species were observed vocalizing through all full-moon nights in Aiuaba, Ceará State in northeastern Brazil (M.F.V. pers. obs., Vasconcelos and Figueiredo 1996), on July 07 there was no moonlight, which may be related to the few vocalizations heard on that night (Mills 1986). A day later, in another outcrop adjacent to Pedra do Resplendor named Pedra Lorena (19°27'S, 41°06'W, elevation: 389 m) (figure 1), three birds were recorded vocalizing at dusk.

In September, a bird was heard calling "fuiil" at Pedra do Resplendor at dusk. On another day, at the same site, two nightjars (a male and a female) that were roosting in the afternoon were flushed, making it possible to identify the sexes by the plumage. These birds were protected from the sun by roosting in the shade of a rock projection. Against the black rocky substrate, the dark plumage of these birds resulted in effective camouflage. Generally, when the male was driven away, it gave the alarm call, followed by quick walks or low and short jumps upon the rocky surface, or by low flights. In flight the white marks on its wing and tail were very obvious, producing a "flash" effect. This male was captured and the specimen was prepared and taken to the Department of Zoology of UFMG (DZUFMG no. 2,464),

REFERENCES



Figure 1. Pedra Lorena, a characteristic rocky outcrop in Aimorés region, Minas Gerais, where *Caprimulgus hirundinaceus vielliardi* was recorded.

Belo Horizonte, Brazil. The body mass of this bird was 27 g and its measurements were: wing, 131 mm; tail, 89 mm; bill (exposed culmen), 8 mm; tarsus, 18 mm. The bill was black and the iris color was dark. This specimen's features are very similar to that described for the holotype by Ribon (1995). A day later, a female was observed roosting in the morning exactly at the same site where the birds were seen the day before, probably indicating fidelity to a roosting site.

These are the first records of *C. hirundinaceus* in Minas Gerais State, according to Mattos *et al.* (1993). No records of *C. h. vielliardi* have been reported since its description from Colatina, Espírito Santo State (Ribon 1995, Sick 1997). Thus, our records are very important in determining the geographic distribution of this nightjar. However, Ribon (1995) reports the occurrence of a specimen from Jequitinhonha (Minas Gerais) in Museu Nacional do Rio de Janeiro (MNRJ no. 31,357), identified by H. Sick as *Caprimulgus nigrescens*, which perhaps could be *C. h. vielliardi*, and which should be re-evaluated.

In spite of recording *C. h. vielliardi* in only two rocky outcrops in Aimorés, this bird may live in similar formations in the region. Although these rocky outcrops are common in the area, they are being destroyed by rock extractions for buildings.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would like to thank Alexandre Salino and Julio A. Lombardi for identification of the plants collected in the rocky outcrops in Aimorés, Márcio P. de Rezende and Regina H. F. Macedo for correcting the English version of this paper, and two anonymous reviewers for their helpful comments on the manuscript. This work was supported by IESA/CEMIG.

- Hardy, J. M. (1980) *Voices of New World nightbirds*. Gainesville: Ara.
- Mattos, G. T., M. A. Andrade and M.V. Freitas (1993) *Nova lista de aves do estado de Minas Gerais*. Belo Horizonte: Fundação Acangaú.
- Mills, A. M. (1986) The influence of moonlight on the behavior of goatsuckers (Caprimulgidae). *Auk* 103:370-378.
- Ribon, R. (1995) Nova subespécie de *Caprimulgus* (Linnaeus) (Aves, Caprimulgidae) do Espírito Santo, Brasil. *Rev. Bras. Zool.* 12:333-337.
- Sick, H. (1997) *Ornitologia brasileira*. Rio de Janeiro: Ed. Nova Fronteira.
- Vasconcelos, M. F. and C. C. Figueiredo (1996) Observações preliminares sobre o comportamento do bacurauzinho-da-caatinga (*Caprimulgus hirundinaceus*) na Estação Ecológica de Aiuaba-CE. *Atualidades Orn.* 73:13.