

New records of *Sporophila nigrorufa* (D'Orbigny & Lafresnaye, 1837) in Brazilian Cerrado and Pantanal

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ABSTRACT: The Black-and-tawny Seedeater, *Sporophila nigrorufa*, is an endangered species and one of the rarest seedeaters found in Brazil's Pantanal and Cerrado. Although its distribution range encompasses Bolivia and Brazil, few sites harbor this species in both countries. In Brazilian territory, this species was recorded at only three sites. Here, we report on two new documented observations from Mato Grosso do Sul State, in the Pantanal and easternmost Brazilian Cerrado.

KEY-WORDS: Conservation, native grasslands, range extension, seedeater, Thraupidae.

From the 32 *Sporophila* Brazilian species, 17 are found in the Pantanal and Cerrado domains (Sigrist 2009, Nunes 2011, CBRO 2014). These Thraupidae are usually associated with natural grasslands where they feed and breed. These habitats are threatened by conversion to agriculture or conversion of natural vegetation into exotic pasture. As a consequence of these landscape alterations, nearly 50% of *Sporophila* species inhabiting these environments are, to some degree, threatened (Nunes 2010, ICMBIO 2014).

One of the least known *Sporophila* species is the Black-and-tawny Seedeater, *Sporophila nigrorufa* (D'Orbigny & Lafresnaye 1837), categorized as Vulnerable (ICMBIO 2014, IUCN 2014). The earliest records of this species date back to the 19th century when it was found in western Mato Grosso State and eastern Bolivian cerrados (Pelzeln 1868-1871). Its current distribution comprises eight localities in Bolivia and three in Brazil (Willis & Oniki 1990, Silveira & D'Horta 2002, Birdlife International 2014). In 2008, Güller (2008) published the first record to Argentina from the Parque Nacional Lihué Calel, La Pampa Province, rejected by Kirwan & Areta (2014) who considered it a Cooper Seedeater (*Sporophila bouvreuil*). Cestari (2006) presented the first record to Brazilian Pantanal, in the Nhecolândia subregion, but without any documentation. Here we present two new documented records for Mato Grosso do Sul State, in the Pantanal and easternmost Brazilian Cerrado.

Both records occurred in Mato Grosso do Sul State and the digital vouchers were first published in

the WikiAves website (Figure 1; Melo 2014, Severo-Neto 2014). A male in eclipse plumage (Figure 2A) was observed in the morning of 4 April 2014 in a pasture area with lagoons and marshes at Terenos (20°30'46"S, 54°48'34"W). The individual was foraging in a mixed flock of seedeaters, including *S. palustris*, *S. cinnamomea* and *S. pileata*. The species were recorded in a field with dominance of both native (*Andropogon* sp.) and exotic grasses (*Urochloa* sp.).

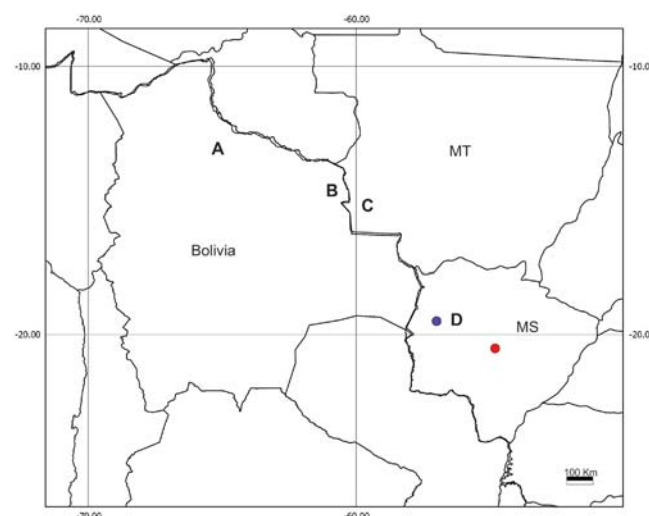


FIGURE 1. Records of *Sporophila nigrorufa* (Acronym of Brazilian states: MS-Mato Grosso do Sul; MT-Mato Grosso). Letters represent previous modern records (A - Herrera & Maillard 2007, B - Davis 1993, C - Silveira & D'Horta 2002, D - Cestari 2006) whereas colored circles represent the new records to Mato Grosso do Sul State (blue= Corumbá / red=Terenos).

A male with prenuptial plumage was photographed (Figure 2 B) in the morning of 4 November 2014 at São Bento Farm, Abobral Pantanal subregion, Corumbá (19°29'49"S, 56°59'32"W). As previously recorded

in Terenos, at this site both native and exotic grasses were present, and we recorded adults and juveniles of *Sporophila collaris* nearby.



FIGURE 2. Digital vouchers of *Sporophila nigrorufa* recorded in Mato Grosso do Sul State. (A) Male in eclipse plumage recorded in Terenos (A.L. Melo). (B) Male with partial prenuptial plumage recorded in Corumbá (F. L. Souza).

The record from Terenos extends the distribution range of *Sporophila nigrorufa* about 800 km in a straight line to the site with the highest density of *S. nigrorufa* in Brazil, Vila Bela da Santíssima Trindade city and 185 km from the nearest known record, made by Cestari (2006). It is noteworthy that this last record occurred during November, typically the end of the dry season in the Pantanal wetlands and the onset of rainfall. This record adds evidence to the previous undocumented record for the same period in the area and confirms the species to the Pantanal, reallocating it to the primary list (Tubelis & Tomas 2003, Cestari 2006, Nunes 2011).

Although this manuscript helped to elucidate the record of *S. nigrorufa* from the Pantanal and expanded its present range, more efforts, such as avian inventories in grasslands areas, banding and capture/recapture proceedings, are needed to clarify the *Sporophila nigrorufa* migratory movements in South America.

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