

First documented record of the Rufous-tailed Attila (Tyrannidae) for Corrientes, Argentina

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ABSTRACT: We report on the capture of an adult male Rufous-tailed Attila (*Attila phoenicurus*) in Mburucuyá National Park, Corrientes, Argentina. This is the first record for this protected area, and also the first record for the province. Records for this species are scarce in Argentina, where it had been registered previously only in Misiones province. Populations of this species are believed to be declining, and it is considered a “threatened species” in Argentina. If confirmed, the regular presence and perhaps even breeding of the Rufous-tailed Attila in Mburucuyá National Park would extend the species’ distribution range approximately 200 km to the southwest, implying that this threatened species occurs in at least one large protected area of Argentina.

KEY-WORDS: *Attila phoenicurus*, documented record, Mburucuyá National Park.

Attila is a Neotropical genus composed of seven species (Clements *et al.* 2014). The only representative of the genus in Argentina is the Rufous-tailed Attila, *Attila phoenicurus*. It can be found in the canopy and middle level of humid forests and secondary woodland (Ridgely & Tudor 1994). It breeds in southeastern Brazil, eastern Paraguay and extreme northeastern Argentina (Fitzpatrick 2004, Figure 1), where it has only been recorded in Misiones province (Chebez 1994, Bodrati & Cockle 2006, Narosky & Yzurieta 2010). During winter it migrates north up to the Brazilian Amazon and southwestern Venezuela (Fitzpatrick 2004, Figure 1). Our objective is to report the first record of the Rufous-tailed Attila in the province of Corrientes, Argentina.

During 24–29 January 2015 we conducted a field trip in Mburucuyá National Park, Corrientes, Argentina. Mist nets were set up in areas restricted to the public, including an internal road located a few meters from the *Seccional* D’Orbigny (28°00’45.9”S; 58°01’20.6”W) within the park. The area is dominated by humid forest (Saibene & Montanelli 1997). In the morning of 28 May 2015 we captured an adult male Rufous-tailed Attila (Figures 2A and B), which was collected and deposited in the Museo Argentino de Ciencias Naturales “Bernardino Rivadavia” (Buenos Aires, Argentina), under catalogue number MACN-Or-73447 (Figures 3A–C). Although this species is known to readily respond to playback (Ridgely & Tudor 1994),

subsequent efforts failed to attract other birds using pre-recorded vocalizations (from López-Lanús 2010) at the collecting site.

We cannot rule out the possibility that this was a vagrant individual. However, the patches of Atlantic forest that can be found in the Mburucuyá National Park would make the presence and perhaps even breeding of this species in the area viable. The Rufous-tailed Attila is an uncommon species and probably overlooked by many surveys (Ridgely & Tudor 1994), possibly due to its similarity with the female of the Crested Becard (*Pachyramphus validus*) (Narosky & Yzurieta 2006, Figure 3). The female of the Crested Becard has a stouter bill, an overall less brilliant plumage, with no dark grey plumage on its cheeks and no blackish primaries (Ridgely & Tudor 1994, 2009; Figures 3D–F). Even though we did not capture or see any Crested Becard during this trip, it is considered a common species in the Mburucuyá National Park (Chatellenaz *et al.* 2010). Thus, the Rufous-tailed Attila could have been misidentified in the area as a female Crested Becard in the past.

Mburucuyá is the only national park in Corrientes and it is one of the 16 Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas (IBAs) in this province (Di Giacomo 2005). It is located in an ecotone with elements from Paranaense, Chaco and Espinal phytogeographical provinces (Cabrera 1976). Due to this environmental diversity, Mburucuyá is among the top-five national parks in Argentina in terms

of avian species richness, as it includes 62% of all bird species recorded for Corrientes (Chatellenaz *et al.* 2010)

and ~31% of the species recorded for Argentina (Mazar-Barnett & Pearman 2001).



FIGURE 1. Distribution of the Rufous-tailed Attila (*Attila phoenicurus*). The point indicates the collecting site of the specimen reported here. Modified from BirdLife International and NatureServe (2014).



FIGURE 2. The Rufous-tailed Attila individual captured at Mburucuyá National Park after it was removed from the mist net.

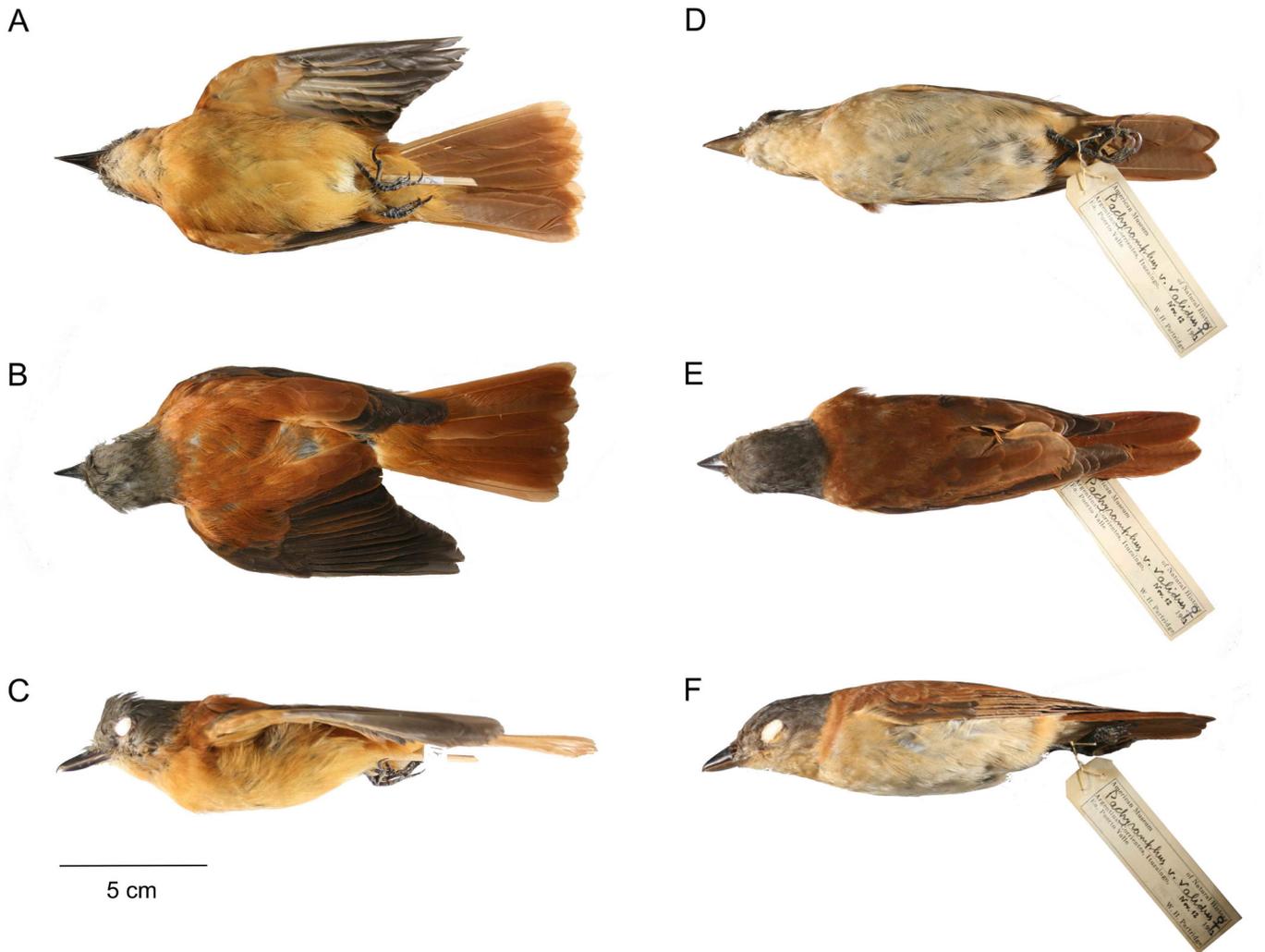


FIGURE 3. The Rufous-tailed Attila captured at Mburucuyá National Park (A, B and C: ventral, dorsal and lateral views, respectively) compared to a female Crested Becard from the Colección Nacional de Ornitología, Museo Argentino de Ciencias Naturales “Bernardino Rivadavia”, catalogue number MACN-Or- 46929 (D, E and F: ventral, dorsal and lateral views, respectively).

Although the Rufous-tailed Attila is not considered globally threatened with extinction by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), it is classified as “threatened” in Argentina (López-Lanús *et al.* 2008). Its global population size has not yet been quantified, and according to BirdLife International (2012) it may be decreasing. Its inclusion in Argentina Red List was based on several criteria, including that the species has been recorded in five or less localities during the last 10 years, and that it has not been registered in any protected area larger than 3000 ha (although there is an uncertain record for the Iguazú National Park, see Chebez 2009, and two other records in the Reserva de la Biósfera Yabotí, see Di Giacomo 2005 and Bodrati & Cockle 2006). Therefore, confirming the regular presence of the Rufous-tailed Attila in Mburucuyá National Park would represent not only a distributional range expansion, but would also imply that this threatened species in Argentina is included in at least one large protected area in the country (Mburucuyá National Park has 17,660 ha, Administración de Parques Nacionales of Argentina, www.parquesnacionales.gob.ar).

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