

## An extra-limital record of Ocellated Crake *Micropygia schomburgkii* from coastal São Paulo, Brazil

Juan Mazar Barnett

Av. Forest 1531 1°B, 1430 Buenos Aires, Argentina. E-mail: j.mazar.barnett@uea.ac.uk

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**RESUMO.** Um registro fora da área de ocorrência de Maxalalagá *Micropygia schomburgkii* na região costeira de São Paulo, Brasil. Em 3 de abril de 1997 um exemplar vivo de Maxalalagá foi encontrado na floresta de restinga da Ilha Comprida, São Paulo. Este é o primeiro registro para este especialista de regiões de campo neste tipo de habitat e representa a localidade mais ao sul conhecida. A ave era um suposto indivíduo errante e foi coletado.

Palavras-Chave: *Micropygia schomburgkii*, indivíduo errante de Maxalalagá, Ilha Comprida, São Paulo.

Early in the morning of 3 April 1997, during a visit to Ilha Comprida, São Paulo, Brazil, I unexpectedly encountered an Ocellated Crake *Micropygia schomburgkii* while walking through an area of humid *restinga* forest, near Jardim Europa, in the SW corner of the island (25°01'S, 47°54'W; coordinates from Willis and Oniki 1992). The bird had surprisingly been caught alive, by hand, and from inside a school van that normally traveled through this area. Still surprisingly, the bird was found perched 1-2 m high in some exotic bamboo right at the edge of the road. This person caught the crane purposely, as she knew I was working with birds, and presented it to me only minutes after capturing it from the exotic bamboo.

The bird was apparently an immature, or subadult, as it nearly lacked spots in the centre of crown, and the rufous forehead was not as strongly defined as usual. It was found in a forested area of the island, with abundant terrestrial bromeliads covering patches of ground, in a sector described by Willis and Oniki (1992) as tall forest with epiphyte-laden trees.

The Ocellated Crake usually frequents open areas such as tall and dry grasslands and seasonally wet grasslands (Negret and Teixeira 1984, Parker *et al.* 1996, Sick 1997), mostly in the cerrado of central South America, where it is considered an indicator species of its habitat (Parker *et al.* 1996). It has been recorded only recently for the first time in Paraguay (Lowen *et al.* 1997) and Peru (Graham *et al.* 1980). The Ocellated Crake was considered Near-threatened (Collar *et al.* 1994) but recently reclassified as a species of Least Concern (BirdLife International 2000). Although under immediate threat in the state of São Paulo due to conversion of its natural habitat (Willis and Oniki 1988), the species is known to occur in the natural *campo* grasslands over a wide area but in scattered localities throughout the central and western portions of the state.

There are specimens and records from Itatiba (23°00'S, 46°50'W), Caieiras (23°21'S, 46°44'W), (Pinto 1938; coordinates from L.P. Gonzaga *in litt.* 1998), both in the vicinity of the city of São Paulo, Itapetininga (23°35'S, 48°03'W) at the Museu de História Natural, Minas Gerais, Instituto Adolfo Lutz, São Paulo and Museu de Zoologia, São Paulo (L.P. Gonzaga *in litt.* 1998), and Itirapina (22°15'S, 47°49'W) where it has been recorded during the Christmas Bird Counts since 1992 (E.O. Willis *in litt.* 1998 and Anonymous 1994, 1996). All these localities lie within the interior plateau and the present record seems to be the first along the coastal region (the Ocellated Crake was not previously known from the island). Furthermore, this represents the southernmost record of the species.

The individual found at Ilha Comprida clearly represents a vagrant, which could have arrived from the cerrado grasslands of interior São Paulo. Remsen and Parker (1990) treated the aspect of vagrancy in rallids, but mentioned no case for this particular species. The circumstances in which the bird was caught seem to indicate that the bird was exhausted after a long flight, since it apparently did not attempt to escape. It is well known that such birds can be taken in the hand when they escape from fires that frequently affect their grassland habitat, as they get intoxicated with the smoke. In fact, this method is usually practiced by indigenous tribes in Central Brazil (Negret and Teixeira 1984, see photo in Taylor 1996: 136; a specimen at MZUSP was also caught at a fire, L.P. Gonzaga *in litt.* 1998).

The individual was kept alive for about 20 hs. Unlike what has been reported for the Speckled Crake *Coturnicops notatus* (Teixeira and Puga 1984) the captive bird did not vocalize during that period and did not reply to playback of the vocalizations of the species recorded elsewhere. While in captivity the bird walked with a bent-over posture,

with the head and neck pulled downwards and the rear of the body up. This is probably the way in which they usually walk at their natural habitat, in order to facilitate the locomotion through the dense grass cover (e.g. photographs published by Mayer [2000]).

The specimen was sacrificed and will be preserved as a full skeleton, with partial skin and tissue samples of this poorly known species. There is virtually no anatomical material representing *Micropygia* (Negret and Teixeira 1984, Taylor 1996). The frozen specimen is currently held privately by M. Bornschein and will be deposited at the Museu Capão de Imbuia, Curitiba, Paraná, Brazil.

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