

The Grey-bellied Shrike Tyrant (*Agriornis micropterus*), a new tyrant flycatcher for Brazil

Gina Bellagamba¹, Danielle Bellagamba-Oliveira² and Rafael Antunes Dias^{3,4}

¹ Rua Domingos de Almeida, 1580, CEP 97500-002, Uruguaiana, RS, Brazil.

² Programa de Pós-Graduação de Zootecnia, Laboratório de Ecologia Vegetal Campestre, Universidade Federal de Pelotas, Campus Universitário Capão do Leão, CP 354, CEP 96010-610, Pelotas, RS, Brazil.

³ Departamento de Ecologia, Zoologia e Genética, Instituto de Biologia, Universidade Federal de Pelotas, Campus Universitário Capão do Leão, CP 354, CEP 96010-900, Pelotas, RS, Brazil.

⁴ Corresponding author: rafael.dias@ufpel.edu.br

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ABSTRACT: Here we report on the first record of the Grey-bellied Shrike Tyrant (*Agriornis micropterus*) for Brazil. An individual of this species was observed and photographed on 8 September 2012 at “Estância Tarumã”, Uruguaiana, state of Rio Grande do Sul. The individual observed probably belonged to populations nesting in central-southern Argentina and migrating to northern Argentina, Bolivia, and Paraguay during the austral winter. More records are necessary to determine the status of occurrence of this species in Brazil.

KEY-WORDS: Extralimital record, geographical distribution, migration, pseudo-vagrancy, Rio Grande do Sul, vagrancy.

The Grey-bellied Shrike Tyrant (*Agriornis micropterus*) breeds in open shrubby steppes and grasslands from southern Peru to the Argentinean province of Santa Cruz (Fitzpatrick 2004). Southernmost populations are migratory, leaving their breeding grounds in late summer and spending the austral autumn and winter in southern Bolivia, Paraguay, Uruguay, and most of northern Argentina (Fitzpatrick 2004). The species is rare in Paraguay and Uruguay, while in Brazil it has not yet been detected (Fitzpatrick 2004).

On 8 September 2012 at 08:15 h, GB and R. Oliveira de Oliveira observed and photographed an unidentified bird (Figure 1) at Estância Tarumã (30°00'16.40"S, 56°28'13.71"W), Uruguaiana, in extreme western of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil. The bird was atop a fencepost in a pasture near small patches of the bush *Aloysia virgata* (Ruiz & Pav.) Pers. along the BR 290 highway. Vegetation in the region comprises mainly of natural grasslands used for livestock raising.

The bird was later identified as a Grey-bellied Shrike Tyrant based on its strong and hooked bill, dark eye, prominent whitish supraloral, and dark tail with a narrow white tip and white outer web of the outer rectrix (Fjeldsá & Krabbe 1990, Ridgely & Tudor 1994). The overall brownish plumage, pale cinnamon-brown underparts and weak throat markings suggest a young individual (Fjeldsá & Krabbe 1990). C. E. Agne, A. Rocchi and A.

Azpiroz examined the photographs and confirmed the identity of the bird.

The Grey-bellied Shrike Tyrant can only be confused with three other large members of genus *Agriornis*. However, a series of field marks – all visible in Figure 1 – allow for a safe diagnosis. The dark tail readily separates it from both the Black-billed Shrike Tyrant (*A. montanus*) and the White-tailed Shrike Tyrant (*A. albicauda*), while the prominent supraloral and the more sharply and contrastingly white outer web of the outermost tail feather distinguish it from the larger Great Shrike Tyrant (*A. lividus*). Furthermore, all these three species are sedentary and largely restricted to the Andean and Patagonian regions (Fitzpatrick 2004), which makes their occurrence in Brazil unlikely.

This was the first time the species was recorded at Estância Tarumã in nearly three years of observations. The Grey-bellied Shrike Tyrant is also rare in adjacent northern Uruguay and northeastern Argentina (Fitzpatrick 2004, Narosky & Di Giacomo 1993). Distribution maps in Fjeldsá & Krabbe (1990), Ridgely & Tudor (1994) and Fitzpatrick (2004) indicate that populations breeding in southern Argentina migrate north to the Monte, Espinal and Chaco Zones, mostly west of the Paraná River. However, since the Espinal also fringes the Uruguay River in extreme western Rio Grande do Sul (Wächter 2002), the possibility that the

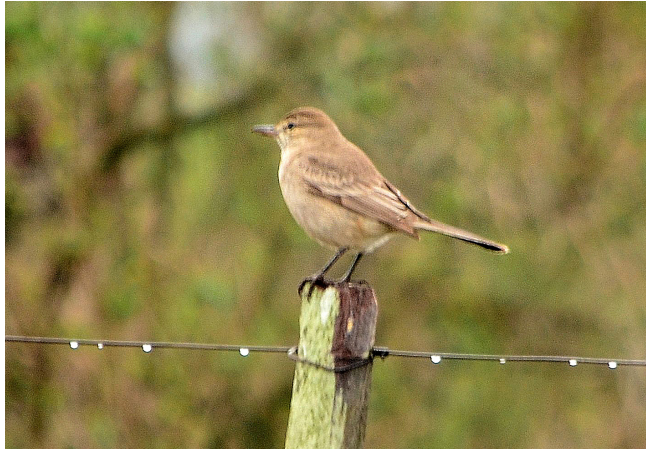


FIGURE 1. Grey-bellied Shrike Tyrant (*Agriornis micropterus*) photographed at Estância Tarumã, Uruguaiana, Rio Grande do Sul state, Brazil, on 8 September 2012. Note the diagnostic hooked bill, prominent supraloral, and the dark, white tipped tail with white outer web of the outer rectrix.

species is a regular, low-density migrant in Brazil cannot be ruled out. Western Rio Grande do Sul is one of the least explored areas of the state in ornithological terms. Not surprisingly, surveys conducted in this region in the past few years have produced a series of new state and country records (Bencke *et al.* 2010; Bellagamba & Oliveira 2012). Additional observations are therefore needed to elucidate if the occurrence of *A. micropterus* in southern Brazil is related to vagrancy or pseudo-vagrancy (see Gilroy & Lees 2003).

Considering that some southern migratory tyrannids have been named *gaúcho* in Brazil, including the congeneric Lesser Shrike-Tyrant (*Agriornis murinus*) (Dias *et al.* 2010), we propose the portuguese name of *gaúcho-de-barriga-cinza* (Grey-bellied Gaucho) for the species.

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