

A new location in Peru for the poorly-known Acre Antshrike *Thamnophilus divisorius* endemic of Serra do Divisor

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ABSTRACT: We provide a documented record for the Acre Antshrike *Thamnophilus divisorius*, an endemic species of Serra do Divisor, in the Amazon Forest of Peru. Four birds responded to playback and a female was captured in mist-nets. This is the fourth documented record of this species in the world, 28 km north of the nearest previous record. We comment on the current distribution of this species between Peru and Brazil and the possible threats that it might face in the near future.

KEY-WORDS: Amazon Forest, conservation, distribution, endemic species, new records, Thamnophilidae.

The Acre Antshrike *Thamnophilus divisorius* is a passeriform bird of the antbird family (Thamnophilidae). It is endemic of Serra do Divisor, a mountain chain in the western Amazon located in the border between Peru (south of department of Loreto and north of department of Ucayali) and Brazil (west of state of Acre). This mountain chain (200–600 m a.s.l) is protected in both Peru and Brazil, as National Parks in each country (Fig. 1) because of its high biodiversity and endemism (Vriesendorp *et al.* 2006). The Acre Antshrike was first discovered in Brazil in 1996 (Whitney *et al.* 2004) in the southeast part of the mountain chain and in Peru in 2005, almost 100 km west of its discovery location (Tovar *et al.* 2009). A third record was located in the Contaya Mountains, also in Peru, which is 80 km west of this other place. These three locations were the only records for this species until now. BirdLife International (2017) categorizes Acre Antshrike as “Least Concern” (LC).

Vriesendorp *et al.* (2006) and Tovar *et al.* (2009) stated that most of Acre Antshrike's population is to be found in Peru because it was found in two locations. Therefore, it was expected that this species would be also located in North Sierra do Divisor. In 2009, during a biodiversity evaluation in the province of Requena in Loreto department, Peru, we recorded a new location for Acre Antshrike in a mountain ridge at the headwaters of Rio Blanco, inside Sierra del Divisor National Park

(73°52'0.48"W; 6°57'29.02"S; 393 m a.s.l.; Fig. 1). This was a remote and unexplored place only accessible by helicopter. The mountain summit is covered by stunted forest with steep slopes, similar to the location where this species was first discovered (Whitney *et al.* 2004, Vriesendorp *et al.* 2006). This place showed little perturbation in comparison with the lowlands, where we found areas that suffered the impact of illegal logging activities. The vegetation composition of this stunted forest was made of small trees (less than 10 m) and the common species were *Anaueria brasiliensis* (Lecythidaceae), *Parkia nitida* (Fabaceae), *Cecropia membranaceae* (Cecropiaceae) and *Anaxagorea brachicarpa* (Anonaceae). There were also several bushes that mostly belong to the families Ericaceae, Piperaceae and Rubiaceae, as well as epiphytes covering their trunks - mainly Bromeliaceae and Orchidaceae.

We carried out our bird evaluation through five point counts, setting 14 mist nets of different sizes, and playback. We achieved a total of 189 net-h from 17–18 March 2009 in a 4 km-transect area; from dawn to dusk. The nets were closed ~3 h each day due to rain. The song of the Acre Antshrike was taken from the Xeno-canto database (Rojas 2005). In 17 March 2009 we detected four individuals of this species responding to the playback. We captured an adult female in one of the mist nets (Fig. 2). There was a singing male close-by, however it was undistinguishable by sight from *Thamnophilus*

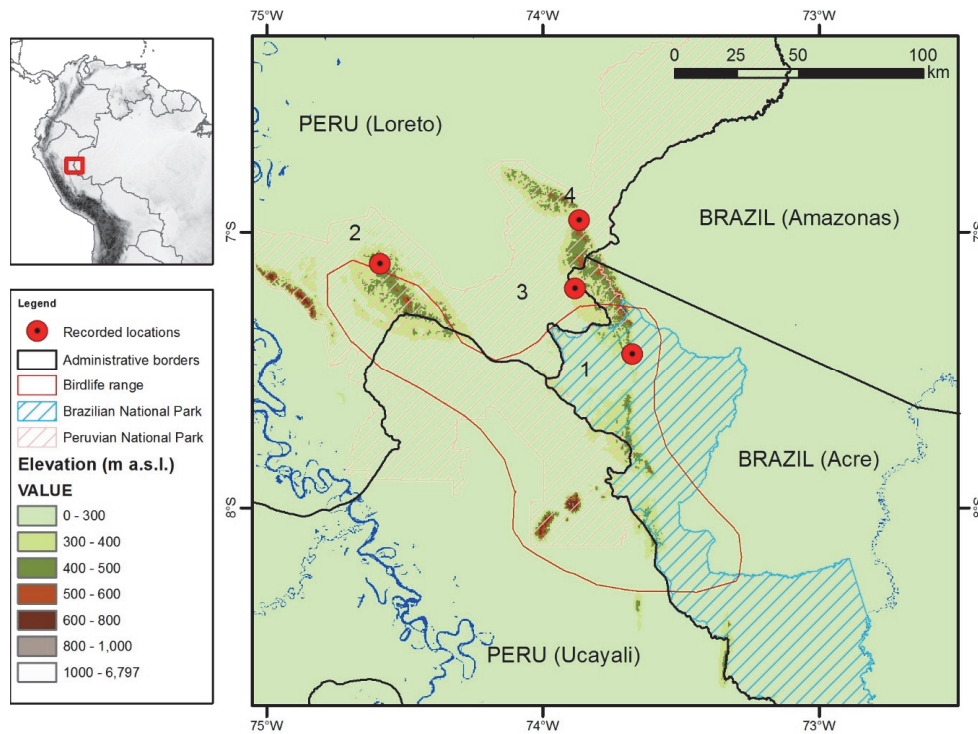


Figure 1. Serra do Divisor mountains and recorded locations for the Acre Antshrike *Thamnophilus divisorius*: 1 - Type locality in Brazil; 2 - record at Ojo de Contaya (Vriesendorp *et al.* 2006); 3 - record at Divisor (Vriesendorp *et al.* 2006); 4 - This study.



Figure 2. Female Acre Antshrike *Thamnophilus divisorius* mist-netted at Sierra del Divisor National Park, Loreto, Peru, on 17 March 2009. Photo author: M. Acuy.

aethiops, which was also registered in the same location. Individuals observed showed an insectivorous feeding behavior (Fjeldsá 2017), foraging on small bees abundant in this forest.

We detected other *Thamnophilus* Antshrikes during our biodiversity evaluation, namely *T. doliatus*, *T. murinus* and *T. schistaceus*, but all of them were in the lowlands. It is also known that, besides these species, *T. amazonicus* is present in the flooded forest nearby (Tovar *et al.* 2009). However, we did not record it during our fieldtrip. All *Thamnophilus* species we recorded during our trip are known to occur in the Brazilian side (Guilherme 2012).

This report confirms the presence of *T. divisorius* in the north part of the mountain chains of Serra do Divisor, as it was predicted by its discoverers (Whitney *et al.* 2004). The nearest record of this species is 28 km south; from a total of fourth confirmed records. Its range thus extends northward from the map presented by BirdLife International (2017) and provides a biogeographical record that will be useful for conservation planning and future research. This new location gives ornithologists an opportunity to plan research on this species, such as how competition is modeling the distribution of *Thamnophilus* antshrikes (Brunfield & Edwards 2007). Although *T. divisorius* is not considered a threatened species, we assume that any impact on the forest close to the summits would be highly detrimental. Due to its small range and specificity to the summits of the Serra do Divisor Mountains, human perturbations would cause strong negative effects in its populations.

This species, as well as other threatened and endemic species that live in the Serra do Divisor Mountains, justify the existence of National Parks in Peru and Brazil. We strongly recommend to reinforce the protection of the mountain chain of Serra do Divisor by the National Park authorities of both countries, preventing deforestation that would threaten the species.

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