

Range extension for the Chotoy Spinetail *Schoeniophylax phryganophilus* (Vieillot, 1817) in northeastern Brazil

Marcos Pérsio Dantas Santos¹; Pablo Vieira Cerqueira² and Fábio de Macedo Lopes³

¹ Universidade Federal do Pará, Instituto de Ciências Biológicas, Laboratório de Ecologia e Zoologia de Vertebrados. Avenida Augusto Correia, 1, Guamá, CEP 66075-110, Belém, PA, Brasil. E-mail: persio@ufpa.br

² Universidade Federal do Piauí, Graduação em Ciências Biológicas. Rua Zuca Lopes, 1.876, Parque Alvorada, CEP 64004-430, Teresina, PI, Brasil. E-mail: pablo_bio_1@hotmail.com

³ INFRAERO, Aeroporto de Teresina Senador Petrônio Portella. Avenida Centenário, s/n, Bairro Aeroporto, CEP 64006-970, Teresina, PI, Brasil. E-mail: fabiopl77@hotmail.com

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RESUMO: Extensão de distribuição de *Schoeniophylax phryganophilus* no Nordeste do Brasil. Nós apresentamos o primeiro registro documentado de *Schoeniophylax phryganophilus* para o estado do Piauí, em áreas de pastagem e cerrado *sensu strictu*. Este registro representa um aumento de aproximadamente 800 km ao norte da distribuição conhecida da espécie.

KEY-WORDS: *Schoeniophylax phryganophilus*, Piauí, Nazareth Eco.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: *Schoeniophylax phryganophilus*, Piauí, Nazareth Eco.

The family Furnariidae is endemic to the Neotropical Region, and encompasses 236 species distributed in 56 genera (Remsen 2003). Of these, the genus *Schoeniophylax* includes two recognized subspecies – *Schoeniophylax phryganophilus phryganophilus* (Vieillot, 1817), and *Schoeniophylax phryganophilus petersi* Pinto, 1949. The nominal form ranges from northern Argentina, through Uruguay, Paraguay and southern Brazil (Mato Grosso do Sul and Rio Grande do Sul) to eastern Bolivia. The second subspecies, *S. p. petersi*, occurs in an area isolated from the first, in the Caatinga region of the Rio São Francisco, in the Brazilian states of Minas Gerais and Bahia. This taxon was described by Pinto (1948), based on specimens collected by Ernst Garbe in the region of Pirapora, Minas Gerais, in May 1912 (MZUSP 8388, 8386 11842, 11845). Additional specimens were collected in Barra, Bahia, by E. Garbe in 1913 (MZUSP 8534) and 1958 (MZUSP 40939, 40940), and in the region of Pirapora by J. Hidasi in 1972 (MPEG 30501). Barra is the northernmost collecting locality for the species, and the closest to the site recorded in the present study. There are more recent records for the São Francisco population from central Minas Gerais, in the municipalities of Jaíba (DZUFMG 2489), Francisco Sá (DZUFMG 3967, 3968, 2842, 2843, 2844), Felixlândia (DZUFMG 4202, 4203, 4204), and Arinos (MZUSP 74793).

The two taxa differ primarily in relation to body size, with *S. p. petersi* being smaller than the nominal subspecies. However, while the two taxa are recognized

by most authors, there is a need for further phylogenetic studies based on modern techniques, in order to uphold, or otherwise, the status of the Caatinga form as an evolutionary unit distinct from the nominal subspecies (Remsen 2003).

The species is normally found in open areas, ranging from pastures, open fields, and anthropogenic scrub vegetation, through cerrado *sensu strictu*, to riparian and flooded environments (Ridgely and Tudor 1989). The birds are normally found in pairs or small family groups, and tend to be relatively common throughout the species' geographical range. The species is characterized by a relatively long tail, predominantly gray plumage on the dorsum with black stripes, pileum chestnut, throat yellow with black spot, and ventrum varying from brown on the thorax to light gray on the abdomen (Ridgely and Tudor 1989, Sick 1997).

We present the first record of a population of *Schoeniophylax phryganophilus* from the state of Piauí, in northeastern Brazil. Data were collected during four excursions (May 21th, 27th, and 29th, and June 5th, 2010) to the Nazareth Eco (04°48'2.87"S, 42°36'47.18"W), which is located approximately 40 km west of the Piauí state capital, Teresina (Figure 1). The property covers 1200 hectares, and encompasses areas of pasture, cerrado *sensu strictu*, semideciduous forest, and stands of babaçu palms. The area is relatively well-preserved, and has a diverse avian fauna, with more than 230 species recorded to date.



FIGURE 1: Location of Nazareth Eco, in the municipality of José de Freitas, Piauí.

On May 21st, 2010, at approximately 16:45 h, when a playback was being used with the vocalization of *Schoeniophylax phryganophilus*, it was possible to observe a number of individuals of this species in a pasture adjacent to an area of typical cerrado vegetation. A group of at least four individuals responded incisively to the playback, and after a few minutes, these birds were joined by a number of other individuals. The group had approximately ten individuals, located in small trees and shrubs, mostly at around 2 m above the ground, and an adult female specimen (Figure 2) was collected (MPEG 70.330). On May 27th, at approximately 17:00 h, we observed two individuals in the same area as the previous encounter, foraging close to the ground together with a number of *Ammodramus humeralis*. On May 29th, we returned to the same area of pasture, and observed a similar situation, where four *S. phryganophilus* were foraging close to the ground near a number of *A. humeralis*. On this occasion, a pair of adult specimens (MPEG 70.331, 70.332) was collected. At 09:00 h on June 5th, three *S. phryganophilus* were found foraging in pasture, once again, in the company of



FIGURE 2: Specimens of *Schoeniophylax phryganophilus* collected in the Nazareth Eco and deposited in the Museu Paraense Emílio Goeldi (MPEG 70330, 70331, 70332).

A. humeralis. During this encounter, a nest was observed, located at around 2 m above the ground in a cashew tree (*Anacardium occidentale* L.). The nest was constructed of twigs, and had a lateral entrance. A pair of birds took turns bringing insects into the nest in their beaks, which suggests that it was active and contained nestlings.

The record presented here represents an extension of approximately 800 km of the northern limit of the geographic range of *S. phryganophilus*, in an area of transition between the Cerrado and the Caatinga.

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