

# Recent records of the Bearded Tachuri *Polystictus pectoralis* (Tyrannidae) (Vieillot 1817) in the state of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil

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**RESUMO:** Registros recentes do papa-moscas-canela, *Polystictus pectoralis* (Tyrannidae) (Vieillot, 1817) no estado do Rio Grande do Sul, Brasil. *Polystictus pectoralis* é um passeriforme de pequeno porte que habita capinzais e áreas de campo sujo. Possui status “Vulnerável” no Brasil e “Quase Ameaçado” na América do Sul. Pouco conhecimento existe acerca de sua biologia reprodutiva e seu padrão de migração é incerto. Seu status de conservação no Rio Grande do Sul é indefinido em função da pouca disponibilidade de registros. Diante disto, são descritas novas localidades de ocorrência da espécie no estado. Os registros foram realizados durante pesquisas de campo em áreas de capinzal entre setembro de 2005 e março de 2008 nos municípios de Cacequi, Manoel Viana e São Francisco de Assis (região da Campanha do Rio Grande do Sul). Em Cacequi *P. pectoralis* foi registrado em fevereiro de 2007, em Manoel Viana nos meses de fevereiro e março de 2006 e março de 2008, em São Francisco de Assis a visualização ocorreu em março de 2008. Em todos os encontros houve o registro de apenas um indivíduo ou de prováveis casais.

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** Bioma Pampa, campos, distribuição geográfica, novos registros, *Polystictus pectoralis*.

**KEY-WORDS:** geographic distribution, grasslands, Pampa Biome, new records, *Polystictus pectoralis*.

The Bearded Tachuri *Polystictus pectoralis* is a tiny insectivorous flycatcher that inhabits open grasslands (Stotz *et al.* 1996, Sick 1997, Bencke *et al.* 2003). Individuals can be found alone or living in pairs (Parker and Willis 1997, Di Giacomo 2005). It has a disjunct distribution in South America, ranging from Colombia, Venezuela, and Guyana to northern Brazil (*Polystictus bogotensis* and *Polystictus polystictus brevipennis*) and from Bolivia to Uruguay (*P. p. pectoralis*; Collar and Wege 1995). The subspecies *P. p. pectoralis* is found in Brazil in the states of Mato Grosso, Mato Grosso do Sul, Goiás, Minas Gerais, São Paulo, Paraná and Rio Grande do Sul (Ridgely and Tudor 1994, Collar and Wege 1995). Migration pattern of the species remains uncertain (see revision in Collar and Wege 1995). According to Stotz *et al.* (1996) the species shows high conservation and research priorities.

*Polystictus pectoralis pectoralis* is considered “Vulnerable” in Brazil (Urban-Filho and Straube 2008) and “Near Threatened” in South America (IUCN 2008, Birdlife International 2008). The species is considered Data Deficient in Rio Grande do Sul due to the lack of information

that hinder the determination of its correct conservation status (Bencke *et al.* 2003). Records of the species in Rio Grande do Sul are rare. Previous records were from Porto Alegre (unknown date; Gliesh 1930), Itaqui (December 1914; Pinto 1944) and recently in Quaraí (April and July 2006; Reppenning and Fontana 2008). Here we report new sites of occurrence of the species in central-west Rio Grande do Sul, Pampa biome, as new records are needed to locate remaining populations of the species (Bencke *et al.* 2003).

We recorded the species in three municipalities during field studies of different research projects on grassland bird species in central-west Rio Grande do Sul. Surveys were conducted from September 2005 to March 2008, with search efforts concentrated in the Spring and Summer of each year. Vegetation in the grassland areas surveyed is composed of *Paspalum*, *Andropogon*, *Setaria*, *Saccharum*, *Agrostis*, *Leptochloa*, *Eriochrysis* (Poaceae), *Eryngium* (Apiaceae), *Rhynchospora*, *Eleocharis* and *Cyperus* (Cyperaceae), among others. New and previous records of the species are illustrated in Figure 1. New records descriptions are given below:

**São Francisco de Assis:** A single individual recorded on 6 March 2008, likely a female, was observed foraging close to *Sporophila* spp. and *Sicalis luteola* flocks. The bird was recorded in a ca. 20 ha tall grassland patch surrounded by soybean fields in a private farmland (Fazenda Santo Antônio do Buricaci; 29°36'S, 54°54'W).

**Manoel Viana:** Six records were accounted in two different areas. One farmland, Assentamento Santa Maria do Ibicuí, destined to landless workers (Area 1; 29°29'S, 55°39'W) and a grassland patch in a private farmland (Area 2; Fazenda Cina Cina; 29°29'S, 55°26'W) about 20 km apart. Area 1 is located in the floodplain of the Ibicuí River and encompasses 6000 ha. The grassland patch of 300 ha, approximately, is part of the Legal Reserve of the farmland. A Legal Reserve refers to the 20% of vegetation that must be protected in a farmland area according to Brazilian Environmental Legislation. Area 2 has a grassland patch of 400 ha. In both areas an irrigation canal of 3-4 m wide separates the grasslands patches from rice plantations. Area 1 is also surrounded by frequently burned grazing fields.

The first records at Area 1 occurred on 10 and 11 February 2006. A probable female was observed perching and foraging in the grassland edge. On 16 February 2006

two individuals (a male and one probable female) were attracted with play-back in the same edge of the grassland. In response to play-back they flew over the irrigation canal several times, getting close to the observers as they were video-taped. Records at Area 2 were made during the morning of 13 March 2006 and the afternoon of 14 March 2006. In such cases a single bird was video-taped while foraging. Another encounter of a single bird in the Area 2 occurred on 5 March 2008.

**Cacequi:** One female was observed in a private farmland (Fazenda São José; 30°03'S, 54°47'W) on the morning of 25 February 2007. The bird was observed moving through tall lowland grassland. The same area was surveyed on 4 May 2007 but no records of the species were made.

Our records from February and March unclear any migration pattern of *P. p. pectoralis* in Rio Grande do Sul. Such records together with records from April and July (Repenning and Fontana 2008) suggest year-round residence in the state. Migration patterns of the nominal subspecies, if any, are still controversial (see revision in Collar and Wege 1995). The species breeds from October to March in Buenos Aires Province (Argentina) and emigrates during the winter (Narosky and Di Giacomo 1993). On the other hand, records in April and July in Misiones Province and from February to September in Formosa Province (Di Giacomo 2005) suggest possible year-round residence at least in some regions of Argentina (Collar and Wege 1995). The species is considered resident in Paraguay (Hayes 1995).

Field surveys aiming to identify new sites of occurrence of the species, as well as gathering details on its breeding behavior are needed to ascertain its status in Rio Grande do Sul. Despite being considered a "Data Deficient" species in Rio Grande do Sul, it is probably being affected by habitat loss and degradation (Bencke *et al.* 2003). The main causes of grassland birds' habitat loss in the Pampa region are the conversion of grasslands into agricultural field and unsuitable cattle raising (Stotz *et al.* 1996, Bencke *et al.* 2003). Thus, appropriated management of private lowland grasslands in agreement with Brazilian Environmental Legislation and the implementation of reserves comprising tall and dense grassland areas seem to be crucial to insure the persistence of the species in Rio Grande do Sul.

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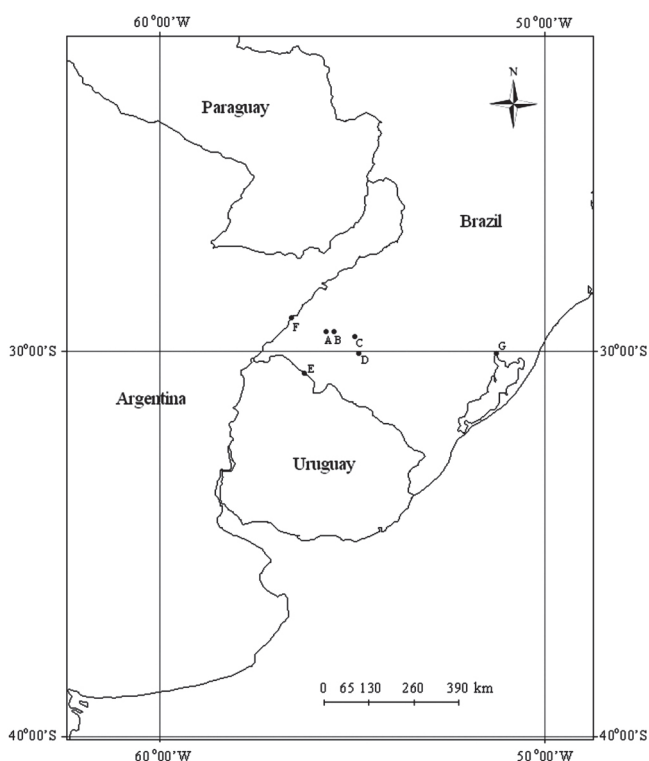


FIGURE 1: Records of Bearded Tachuri *Polystictus pectoralis* in the state of Rio Grande do Sul. New recent sites of occurrence (Manoel Viana – A, B; São Francisco de Assis – C and Cacequi – D). Also are illustrated records from Quarai – E (Repenning and Fontana 2008); Itaquí – F (Pinto 1944) and Porto Alegre – G (Gliesh 1930).

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