

# Upland Goose *Chloephaga picta* (Anseriformes, Anatidae): first Brazilian record

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**ABSTRACT:** From April 2012 until at least January 2013, a vagrant male Upland Goose *Chloephaga picta* was observed and photographed at Lagoa do Peixe National Park, on the coastal plain of Rio Grande do Sul, southern Brazil. This is the first record of this species for the country and also the northernmost on its wintering grounds.

**KEY-WORDS:** sheldgeese, vagrant, migration, Lagoa do Peixe, Rio Grande do Sul.

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The five species of sheldgeese of the genus *Chloephaga* are endemic to southern South America and the central Andes. Continental populations of the Upland Goose *Chloephaga picta*, Ashy-headed Goose *C. poliocephala* and Ruddy-headed Goose *C. rubidiceps* are partially or entirely migratory. They breed in southern Patagonia and Tierra del Fuego and winter in northern Patagonia and the southern Pampas of Buenos Aires province, Argentina (Blanco & de la Balze 2006).

The Upland Goose is the most numerous and widespread species of the genus. The mainland subspecies, *C. picta picta*, breeds in Tierra del Fuego and the islands of Cape Horn north through the grasslands of southern Patagonia and along the Andes to the Neuquén province in Argentina and to at least 42°S in Chile (Jaramillo 2003, Blanco *et al.* 2008). The southernmost populations are migratory (Madge & Burn 1989, Jaramillo 2003), with migrants arriving to the main wintering areas in open grasslands of central Chile and Argentina in May (Blanco *et al.* 2008). Wandering birds have rarely been recorded further north, up to near Santiago, Chile, and in the departments of Rocha and Treinta y Tres, Uruguay (Arballo & Cravino 1999, Jaramillo 2003).

Adult males of the nominate race are distinctly dimorphic (Delacour 1974). Some are completely barred black and white on the underparts, while others are predominantly white underneath, with black bars restricted to the flanks. The two color morphs may be found together in almost any locality within the species range, but barred birds predominate in the south and

white-breasted ones in the north (Delacour 1950, Madge & Burn 1989).

There are no known records of the Upland Goose for Brazil, although vagrants have been recorded very close to the Brazilian border, *e.g.*, at Laguna Guacha, dpto. Treinta y Tres, Uruguay (Arballo & Cravino 1999). Here we report the first record of this species for Brazil, and also the northernmost on its wintering grounds, based on the observation of a single immature male at Lagoa do Peixe, on the coastal plain of Rio Grande do Sul, southern Brazil.

The bird was discovered by fisherman E. B. dos Santos, who reported its presence at one site in the southern section of the Lagoa do Peixe National Park (LPNP) from April 2012 onwards. On 21 January 2013, members of the LPNP staff R. V. Martins, R. S. dos Santos, F. J. S., L. E. Burgueño and F. S. Weber visited the area and photographed the bird at approximately 31°24'26"S and 51°05'50.5"W, around a small freshwater lagoon in littoral grassy fields just inland of the coastal dunes and not far from the edge of Lagoa do Peixe. The individual was not particularly shy and allowed walking approaches to within 60 m after some habituation. On this occasion and also in previous sightings (E. B. dos Santos *pers. comm.*), the bird was frequently associated with a pair of Southern Screamers *Chauna torquata*. No vocalizations were heard.

The whitish head, the dark legs and the black-and-white barring on the underparts identify the bird as a male of the barred morph (Figure 1). The mottled dark brown instead of pure white rump, the greater wing-

coverts mostly dull brown with a very reduced amount of metallic green on the outer feathers, and the neck slightly tinged brownish grey (Figure 1), in turn, indicate it was an immature individual, perhaps in its second year (Delacour 1974, Madge & Burn 1989). In northeastern Argentina, barred-morph birds winter in coastal grasslands, while white-morph ones predominate in inland areas (Madge & Burn 1989). The observation of a bird of the barred morph on the coastal grasslands of Lagoa do Peixe agrees with this pattern.

The date when the bird was first detected at Lagoa do Peixe roughly coincides with the timing of arrival of migrating sheldgeese in their wintering grounds (early May; Lean 2012). It is somewhat strange, however, that

this individual failed to migrate and remained in the area through the following breeding season. The bird's immaturity at the time it should start migrating back to the breeding grounds may have been the reason for its failure to migrate.

In view of the lack of evidence of a regular occurrence of the Upland Goose in southern Brazil and adjacent Uruguay, and considering that the record above is supported by photographic evidence, we recommend the species be included in the primary list of Brazilian birds as a southern vagrant (*sensu* CBRO 2011). We propose the Portuguese name *ganso-de-magalhães* for the species, which means "Magellanic Goose", in reference to the main source area of its migratory population.



**FIGURE 1:** Male Upland Goose *Chloephaga picta* photographed at Lagoa do Peixe, Rio Grande do Sul, southern Brazil, on 21 January 2013 (Photo by F. J. de Souza).

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