

Splits, lumps and shuffles

Alexander C. Lees



White-bearded Helmetcrest *Oxygoon lindenii*, Mifafí, Mérida, Venezuela, July 2007 (David Southall / www.TropicalBirdPhotos.com), a taxon restricted to the Venezuelan Andes.

This series focuses on recent taxonomic proposals—be they entirely new species, splits, lumps or reorganisations—that are likely to be of greatest interest to birders. Highlights in this edition include a new antwren and seedeater from Southern Brazil, both in need of urgent conservation action; a new tapaculo taxon from Colombia; calls for substantial splitting of nightjars, Golden-spangled Piculets and House Wrens; a reappraisal of species limits in *Sirystes*, Plovercrest and Bearded Helmetcrest; and an epic phylogeny of Tanagers with more taxonomic changes than you can shake a stick at. Get your lists out!

A vocal analysis of *Crypturellus* tinamou taxonomy suggests splits and lumps required

Species-level taxonomy in the tinamou genus *Crypturellus* is largely based on plumage characters, and species limits for some complexes are poorly defined, despite the fact that several

controversial taxa feature in global Red Lists. Laverde-R. and Cadena (2014) analysed vocal variation to assess species limits in two *Crypturellus* species—groups for which taxonomic changes have been mooted: the red-legged complex of *Crypturellus erythropus* and allied forms, and the Brown Tinamou *Crypturellus obsoletus*. There are seven subspecies described



Adult male Green-crested Plovercrest *Stephanoxis lalandi*, Campos do Jordão, São Paulo, Brazil, May 2014 (Chris Wood / Cornell Lab of Ornithology), at the southern extreme of this species' range; the English name Purple-crested Plovercrest is proposed for the southern *S. loddigesii*.

for the red-legged complex, two of which—Colombian Tinamou *C. e. columbianus* and Magdalena Tinamou *C. e. saltuarius*—have been accorded species status by some authorities and are currently considered threatened. The present study found no obvious geographic variation in vocalisations in the red-legged group, with populations mostly continuously distributed. They interpreted plumage variation as largely explicable in terms of environmental conditions and also found that vocally the Chocó Tinamou *C. kerriae* also falls into the same group. Given the more significant plumage details between that taxon and the rest of the red-legged group they stop short of proposing subspecies status for *kerriae*. The results for the brown group—where only one species is currently recognised—were rather different. The study found marked geographic variation in vocalisations, corresponding to disjunct populations and they provisionally propose species status for *C. o. castaneus* of the northern Andes, a taxon which is under-represented in the protected area network and potentially threatened.

Stephanoxis

The Plovercrest *Stephanoxis lalandi*, occurring from the Brazilian state of Espírito Santo south to

Rio Grande do Sul, eastern Paraguay and northern Argentina, was originally treated as two species, *S. lalandi* and *S. loddigesii*, until the two were unceremoniously lumped without rationale by Peters (1945). A recurring theme in 21st century taxonomy is the 'undoing' of Peters' lumps (see also the next account). Cavarzere *et al.* (2014) revisited the taxonomic status of *Stephanoxis* and examined a long series of specimens and images of the two taxa. They found the two to be readily diagnosable, with five exclusive plumage features between males of either taxon and recommend an upgrade to species status for the pair. Both taxa have distinct, allopatric distributions segregated by a 160 km gap between the Serra do Mar, to the east, and Serra de Paranapiacaba, to the west, in the state of São Paulo. This distribution is congruent with other montane species pairs such as the Buff-throated *Poospiza lateralis* and Grey-throated Warbling Finches *P. cabanisi*.

Re-validation of Helmetcrests

The Bearded Helmetcrest *Oxygogon guerinii* is a striking, polytypic hummingbird of the northern Andes. Collar & Salaman (2013) recently embarked on a reappraisal of its taxonomic status using biometric, plumage and vocal data. They concluded that the four taxa (previously lumped by Peters without justification in the 1940s) are highly distinct in multiple plumage and morphometric characters, and they recommended species status for all four using the Tobias *et al.* (2010) criteria. These four species (with the authors' proposed English names) are as follows: Blue-bearded Helmetcrest *Oxygogon cyanolaemus* in the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, Colombia, White-bearded Helmetcrest *O. lindenii* in the Venezuelan Andes, Green-bearded Helmetcrest *O. guerinii* in the East Andes of Colombia south to Cundinamarca, and Buffy Helmetcrest *O. stubelii* in the Central Andes of Colombia. The authors highlight the plight of *O. cyanolaemus* of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta. This taxon was last reported in 1946 when collected by M. A. Carriker and most of its habitat has subsequently been degraded or completely denuded. They recommended that the species be considered Critically Endangered, although they fear that this may be an optimistic position as the taxon may already have slipped to global extinction.

Nightjar phylogenetics

Famed for their plumage conservatism, nightjars are an obvious target for those hoping to uncover new taxa. With this in mind, Sigurðsson & Cracraft

(2014) produced a new molecular phylogeny of the three main radiations of New World nightjars (Caprimulgidae). Their exhaustive sampling, using mitochondrial and nuclear markers and making use of ancient DNA from museum skin specimens, let them investigate molecular diversity among the majority of recognised subspecies. Perhaps unsurprisingly they found intraspecific diversity to be high and identified several new phylogenetic species, in addition to adding molecular support for taxonomic modifications. The latter include the grouping together of *Nacunda* Nighthawk *Podager nacunda* and Least Nighthawk *Chordeiles pusillus* in the genus *Podager*, for instance. The authors endorse the division of the Whip-poor-will *Antrostomus vociferus* into two species, the Whip-poor-will *A. vociferus* and the Mexican Whip-poor-will *A. arizonae* which differ by over 5% divergence in mtDNA. They propose splitting of the large Lesser Nighthawk subspecies *Chordeiles acutipennis texensis* as a full species based on 2% mtDNA divergence, although they hold back on recommendations for *C. a. littoralis* and *C. a. micromeris* pending more work. The authors shift Bahian Nighthawk *Chordeiles vielliardi* to *Nyctiprogne* and reveal that the *latifascia* subspecies of Band-tailed Nighthawk *Nyctiprogne leucopyga* should be elevated to species status and that it is sister to a clade containing *N. leucopyga* and *N. vielliardi*. *N. latifascia* differs from *N. leucopyga* in being larger and darker, with different vocalisations and over 7% difference in mtDNA sequences. The Pauraque *Nyctidromus albicollis* is subject to considerable changes: full species status for *N. a. derbyanus* of central and southern Brazil and north-east Argentina and for *N. a. merrilli* with *insularis*, *intercedens* and *yucatanensis* as subspecies of the latter. Likewise the *heterurus* subspecies of the Little Nightjar *Caprimulgus parvulus* is recommended for species status based on a large (5%) mtDNA divergence and subtle plumage differences. They recommend splits within the polytypic Band-winged Nightjar *Caprimulgus longirostris*, shifting this species to *Hydropsalis* and recommending species status for the subspecies *roraimae* and *ruficervix* based again on significant genetic and minor plumage differences. Finally, they recommend splitting White-tailed Nightjar *Hydropsalis cayennensis* into two separate phylogenetic species with the upgrade to species status of *alibicauda* which occurs between eastern Costa Rica and north-west Colombia.

A taxonomic review of *Picumnus exilis*

The *Picumnus* piculets represent a taxonomic headache rivalling that of the nightjars, given the strong resemblance between various species, the presence of plumage polymorphisms and apparent rampant hybridism, compounded by various ambiguous descriptions from the 18th and 19th centuries. The complex of taxa in the Golden-spangled Piculet *Picumnus exilis* complex comprises 6–7 subspecies occurring from eastern Colombia, through Venezuela and the Guianas, to northern and north-eastern Brazil. This broad group includes populations with greenish upperparts (often with black or white spots), yellowish underparts with blackish bars or round spots and males with a red/orange forehead. Rêgo *et al.* (2014) have just carried out a morphometric and plumage-character review for 487 specimens of members of the *exilis* group, involving 18 plumage characters (of which 12 were found to be informative). They concluded that there are five valid taxa within the group, for which they defend species status: *Picumnus exilis* of the Atlantic Forests of Bahia and Sergipe States in Brazil; *Picumnus pernambucensis*, another Brazilian endemic occurring in the Pernambuco Area of Endemism in north-east Brazil north of the Rio São Francisco; *Picumnus buffonii* occurring north of the Amazon on the Guiana Shield (east of the Rio Branco) and also south of the Amazon east of the Rio Tocantins; *Picumnus undulatus* occurring between the rios Branco, Negro, and Orinoco; and finally *Picumnus obsoletus* which occurs from the Orinoco Delta north to north-eastern Venezuela.

Russet-mantled Foliage-gleaner is monotypic

The Russet-mantled Foliage-gleaner *Syndactyla dimidiata* is a poorly known Furnariid found in gallery forests in the Brazilian Cerrado and adjacent Paraguay. A new study by Lopes and Gonzaga (2014) questioned the validity of the two named subspecies by examining plumage colouration and morphometrics in specimens and could find no support for geographic variation with the species and thus propose synonymising the subspecies '*baeri*'. The authors also present natural history data that draws attention to the species' unfavourable conservation prospects, recommending that it be treated as globally Vulnerable.

A new genus for White-bellied Spinetail

A study of genetic relationships amongst Furnariids (Derryberry *et al.* 2011) had previously suggested an unexpected (and poorly-supported) sister relationship between the very morphologically different White-bellied *Synallaxis propinqua* and Chotoy Spinetails *Schoeniophylax phryganophilus*. Claramunt (2014) was able to confirm this unlikely result using mtDNA and nuclear DNA, a finding that uncovered a new biogeographic pattern indicating that *propinqua*—an Amazonian river island specialist—is most closely related to an endemic of the Paraná River basin in central South America. This connection is also shared by three other species groups: Brownish *Elaenia pelzelni* and Large Elaenia *E. spectabilis*; River *Serpophaga hypoleuca* and White-crested *S. subcristata* / White-bellied Tyrannulet *S. munda*; and finally Lesser *Stigmatura napensis* and Greater Wagtail-Tyrant *S. budytoides*. Given the discovery that White-bellied Spinetail is not a *Synallaxis*, Claramunt opted to erect a new genus for this species, rather than lump it with the very morphologically different *phryganophilus* and opted for the name *Mazaria*; another honour bestowed upon the late Juan Mazar Barnett.

A new genus from within *Cercomacra*

Drawing up species limits in antbirds of the genus *Cercomacra* is a taxonomic challenge, given plumage similarity among populations and species, but as currently defined the genus comprises 12 species and 20 subspecies. A molecular analysis by Tello *et al.* (2014) indicated that the genus was not monophyletic and was instead comprised of two non-sister clades. These were a) the 'tyrannina' clade formed by *nigrescens*, *laeta*, *parkeri*, *tyrannina*, and *serva* which was sister to the antbird genus *Sciaphylax* and b) the 'nigricans' clade—*Cercomacra sensu stricto*—including *manu*, *brasiliانا*, *cinerascens*, *melanaria*, *ferdinandi*, *carbonaria*, and *nigricans*. There was no name available for the 'tyrannina' clade, for which they propose the new genus name *Cercomacroides*, a name that reflects the close resemblance to *Cercomacra*.

A new *Formicivora* antwren from the Atlantic Forest

The reports of the discovery of a disjunct population of Marsh Antwrens *Stymphalornis acutirostris* near São Paulo in 2004 was big ornithological news. This species was thought to be confined to southern Brazil in the states of Paraná, Santa Catarina and Rio Grande do Sul and it was obvious that this new population was under threat from hydroelectric developments. A rescue mission was planned for one population doomed to be flooded and over 70 individuals were mist-netted and translocated. On handling the birds the differences between individuals of this disjunct population was noted and a series was collected to compare with *acutirostris*. The new population has just been formally described as a new species: São Paulo Marsh Antwren *Formicivora paludicola* (Buzzetti *et al.* 2014; the authors' support for synonymising the genus name *Stymphalornis* comes from multiple morphological and genetic sources). Males of the new taxon can be distinguished from the southern species principally by their black underparts and thighs, and very dark greyish-brown upperparts, whilst females also differ in having darker upperparts and flanks (both sexes also have shorter bills). São Paulo Marsh Antwren is restricted to tall vegetation in 14 small and isolated wetland areas at the headwaters of the rivers Tietê and Paraíba do Sul (between 600 and 760 m) where fewer than 300 individuals are thought to persist. The new species is threatened by habitat loss and degradation from drainage schemes, sand mining, housing developments, drainage for cattle raise and agricultural activities and the authors propose a series of urgent conservation measures including the establishment of protected areas.

Spotty antbird species limits

In an investigation of the impacts of historical processes in the evolution of the Spot-backed *Hylophylax naevius* and Spotted *H. naevioides* Antbird complex, Fernandes *et al.* (2014) uncovered evidence for previously unrecognised deep genetic divergences. High levels of genetic differentiation were found on opposite sides of rivers (0.6–7.1%) and across the Andes (6.9%). Of most interest to field ornithologists were the findings that neither *H. naevius theresae* nor *H. naevius consobrinus* were monophyletic, hinting at future taxonomic changes, particularly in southern Amazonia. The authors hold back on making any recommendations pending an 'integrative



Top left: White-tailed Nighthjar *Hydropsalis cayennensis*, Parque Nacional do Viruá, Roraima, Brazil, December 2013 (Andrew Whittaker / Birding Brazil Tours); an individual of the nominate race, proposed as separate from the northern *alibicauda* occurring between eastern Costa Rica and north-west Colombia.

Bottom left: Nacunda Nighthawk *Podager nacunda*, Pantanal, Mato Grosso, Brazil, July 2010 (Andrew Whittaker / Birding Brazil Tours); this species will henceforth share the genus *Podager* with the diminutive Least Nighthawk *Chordeiles pusillus*.

Top right: (Pernambuco) Golden-spangled Piculet *Picumnus exilis pernambucensis*, Saltinho Biological Reserve Pernambuco, Brazil, July 2010 (Nick Athanas / Tropical Birding); the most threatened taxon in the Golden-spangled Piculet complex, restricted to what little forest remains in the Pernambuco Centre of Endemism.

Bottom right: Russet-mantled Foliage-gleaner *Syndactyla dimidiata*, Chapada dos Veadeiros, Goiás, Brazil, January 2012 (Alexander C. Lees). This declining species is now considered monotypic, the Chapada dos Veadeiros is one of the best spots to look for this gallery forest specialist.



Top: White-bellied Spinetail *Mazaria propinqua*, mouth of the Madre de Dios river, Pando Department, Bolivia, May 2005 (Joe Tobias / Oxford University), a species that now inhabits its own genus dedicated to the late Juan Mazar Barnett.

Bottom: Adult female Blackish Antbird *Cercomacroides nigrescens*, Floresta de Maués, Amazonas, Brazil, May 2010 (Andrew Whittaker / Birding Brazil Tours), a species that has been granted a new genus along with the rest of the 'tyrannina' clade.

taxonomic approach using genetic, vocal and morphological characters; fodder for a future Splits, Lumps and Shuffles...

The notorious *Scytalopus* argument rumbles on

The biggest argument in Neotropical ornithology over the last decade has centred on the identification and provenance of a tapaculo collected in Brazil in 1824. One group of ornithologists maintains that this individual was collected at São João del Rei, in Minas Gerais; another that it was collected elsewhere, with major implications for the nomenclature of two Brazilian tapaculo species (see extensive comments here: <http://www.museum.lsu.edu/~Remsen/SACCprop559.html>). This taxonomic soap opera has been covered at regular intervals by *Splits, Lumps and Shuffles* over the years and in an attempt to bring the debate to an end, a group of independent taxonomists (entomologists and herpetologists) have reviewed the evidence. Nemésio *et al.* (2014) considered the 1824 skin to be unidentifiable (without genetic tests which seem not to be authorised) but consider the evidence that the locality from which the skin was taken to be unambiguously São João del Rei. This means that, strictly following the International Code of Zoological Nomenclature, the name applicable to the São João del Rei type specimen is *Scytalopus speluncae* (Mouse-coloured Tapaculo), making *Scytalopus petrophilus* (Rock Tapaculo) a junior synonym, the coastal taxon thus becomes *Scytalopus notorius*. It is, however, unlikely that this is the last word on the matter...

A new tapaculo taxon from the Serranía de los Yariguíes, Colombia

In 2003 Thomas Donegan found a population of *Scytalopus* tapaculos on the west slope of Serranía de los Yariguíes (a western spur of the East Andes of Colombia) which defied categorisation. Ten years on that population has been named by Donegan *et al.* (2014) as *Scytalopus rodriguezi yariguiorum*, a subspecies of the recently described Upper Magdalena Tapaculo *Scytalopus rodriguezi* (Krabbe *et al.* 2005) of which the nominate is restricted to the headwaters of the Magdalena Valley in Colombia. The new taxon is isolated by c.580 km from its inferred sister taxon and differs in its 'darker dorsal coloration, shorter tail, smaller body, lower mass and lower pitched song'. The

authors propose to rename the species Magdalena Tapaculo if both taxa are lumped together and, when split, Upper Magdalena Tapaculo for *S. [r.] rodriguezi* and Yariguíes Tapaculo for *S. [r.] yariguiorum*.

Vocal support for a four-way *Sirystes* split

The *Sirystes* *Sirystes sibilator* was recently the subject of a study of vocal variation by Donegan (2013). The study gave further weight to a split between Western *Sirystes S. albogriseus* of the Chocó (Panama, Colombia and Ecuador) and the widespread Eastern *Sirystes S. sibilator*, but also uncovered substantial vocal variation between named subspecies of Eastern *Sirystes*. Species rank is thus also proposed for White-rumped *Sirystes S. albocinereus* of western Amazonia, occurring in Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia and western Brazil; Todd's *Sirystes S. subcanescens* of northern Amazonia, north of the river Amazon in Brazil, French Guiana and Guyana; and finally Sibilant *Sirystes S. sibilator* (including the subspecies *atimastus*) of the Atlantic and Cerrado of eastern and southern Brazil to northern Argentina and eastern Paraguay. This last taxon also occurs as an austral migrant north to southern Amazonia (see e.g. Lees *et al.* 2013). In addition to the vocal variation, for which each of the four populations score over the 'magic seven' points in the Tobias *et al.* (2010) criteria, there are also considerable morphological differences that lend weight to species status. Given the apparent dependence of *Sirystes* on primary forest habitats, the various species now require independent evaluation of their conservation status.

All change in *Suiriri*

The revelation of Zimmer *et al.* (2001) that the *affinis* subspecies of the Suiriri Flycatcher *Suiriri suiriri* was in fact two biological species, which can often be found side-by-side in the same patch of *cerrado*, was a major triumph for the 'new approach' to avian taxonomy, which puts an increased emphasis on vocal studies and behavioural studies. They named the short-billed form with the white tail band and distinctive duets with raised wings *Suiriri islerorum*, the Chapada Flycatcher. However, investigations by Kirwan *et al.* (2014) of the original type specimens collected by Burmeister (and held at the Natural History Collections of the Martin-Luther-University Halle-Wittenberg, Germany) revealed that the type series of *Suiriri s. affinis* to be actually the

same taxon as *Suiriri islerorum* which is therefore a synonym. This meant that the long-billed form actually had no valid name, for which they propose *Suiriri suiriri burmeisteri*.

House Wrens

There are upwards of 30 subspecies of House Wrens *Troglodytes aedon* distributed throughout the New World and various splits have been mooted in the past, most notably based on genetic data previously reported here in *Splits, Lumps and Shuffles*. Sosa-López and Mennill (2014) recently completed a study examining vocal variation within the House Wren complex (from 609 New World locations) and assessed variation in acoustic and morphometric characters with respect to currently recognised sub-species boundaries. They found that most taxa examined diverged in song or morphology, or both, in many cases to an extent comparable to various currently recognised *Troglodytes* species. They propose immediate taxonomic upgrades to species status for Zampoaltepec Wren *T. a. nitidus*, a broadly-defined Southern House Wren *T. a. musculus* across Continental South America, Cozumel Wren *T. a. beani*, and *T. a. rufescens* of Dominica, all of which are as differentiated from other *aedon* taxa as they are from other *Troglodytes*. The authors suggest many other less conservative splits too.

A major Tanager revision

The tanagers (Thraupidae) contain about 4% of total global bird biodiversity but the lack of a complete phylogeny for tanagers has hindered the study of this evolutionary diversity. Burns *et al.* (2014) recently stepped up to this mammoth task using six molecular markers. Implications for taxonomy from their paper are enormous, with lots of changes in families and genera. At the family level, a new subfamily is erected to contain the Coal-crested Finch *Charitospiza eucosma*—the Charitospizinae—with another—the Orchesticinae—for the Yellow-shouldered Grosbeak *Parkerthraustes humeralis* and the Brown Tanager *Orchesticus abeillei*. In the Porphyrospizinae, a new subfamily for the yellow-billed tanagers (*Incaspiza*, *Phrygilus* and *Porphyrospiza*), *Phrygilus alaudinus* and *P. carbonarius* are shunted to *Corydospiza* and *Phrygilus fruticeti* becomes *Rhopospina*. The authors also erect Emberizoidinae, a new subfamily, the Grassland Tanagers, *Coryphaspiza*, *Emberizoides* and *Embernagra*. In the Saltatorinae, *Saltatricula* is subsumed with *Saltator*, whilst in the Coerebinae, *Certhidea fusca* needs a new

genus; *Loxigilla portoricensis* and *L. violacea* are moved to *Melopyrrha*; *Tiaris bicolor* to *Melanospiza*; *T. canorus* to *Phonipara*, while *T. fuliginosa* and *T. obscurus* require a new genus. Changes in the Tachyphoninae include the requirement to shift *Tachyphonus cristatus*, *T. luctuosus* and *T. rufiventer* to their own new genus, and new genera for *T. delatrii* and *T. surinamus* respectively. Within the Sporophilinae both *Dolospingus* and the *Oryzoborus* seed finches are transferred to *Sporophila*. In the Poospizinae, a new genus is required for the group comprising *Hemispingus atopileus*, *H. calophrys*, *H. parodii* and *H. reyi*; *H. frontalis* and *H. melanotis* are moved to *Sphenops*; *H. goeringi* and *H. rufosuperciliaris* are moved to *Orospingus*; *H. verticalis* and *H. xanthophthalmus* are transferred to *Pseudospingus*; *H. superciliaris* and *Pyrrhocoma* both move to join *Thlypopsis*; *Hemispingus trifasciatus*, *Poospiza alticola*, *P. cabanisi*, *P. cinerea*, *P. erythrophrys*, *P. lateralis*, *P. melanoleuca*, *P. torquata* are all merged into *Microspingus*; *Poospiza caesar* and *P. hypochondria* occupy *Poospizopsis*; whilst three species—*Poospiza hispaniolensis*, *P. rubecula* and *P. thoracica*—each need a new genus. Within the Diglossinae: *Haplospiza rustica* is transferred to *Spodiornis*; *Idiopsar*, *Phrygilus dorsalis* and *P. erythronotus* become *Diuca*; *Oreomanes* becomes subsumed in *Conirostrum*; and *Phrygilus plebejus*, *P. unicolor* are transferred to *Geospizopsis*. Within the Thraupinae, *Buthraupis wetmorei* is moved back to become the sole occupant of *Tephrophilus*; *Diuca diuca* is moved to *Hedyglossa*; *Saltator rufiventris* needs to be moved to *Dubusia* or its own new genus; *Tangara ornata* becomes *T. argentea*; *Thraupis abbas*, *T. cyanoptera*, *T. episcopus*, *T. glaucocolpa*, *T. ornata*, *T. palmarum* and *T. sayaca* are all moved to *Tangara*; and Blue-capped tanager *Thraupis cyanocephala* is moved to *Sporathraupis*.

A new *Sporophila* seedeater from the highlands of southern Brazil

The presence of a yellow-billed ‘morph’ of the Plumbeous Seedeater *Sporophila plumbea* in the highlands of southern Brazil has been noted for over 75 years. After decades of taxonomic limbo, enter Repenning and Fontana (2013) with an analysis of the form’s morphology, vocalisations, habitat preference and distribution. Taking stock, they concluded that this ‘morph’ is actually a good biological species, which they describe as Tropeiro

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Above left, top to bottom

Adult female São Paulo Marsh Antwren *Formicivora paludicola*, Salesópolis, São Paulo, Brazil, January 2011 (Bruno Rennó), the newest 'new' antbird; but certainly not the last...

Adult male São Paulo Marsh Antwren *Formicivora paludicola*, Salesópolis, São Paulo, Brazil, January 2011 (Bruno Rennó)

Dominican Wren *Troglodytes rufescens*, Dominica, June 2009 (Mikko Pyhälä), a new Caribbean endemic.

Above right, top to bottom

Western Sirystes *Sirystes albogriseus*, Ensenada de Utría National Park, Chocó, Colombia, June 2013 (Nick Athanas / Tropical Birding); the most widely-cited potential split in the Sirystes complex.

White-rumped Sirystes *Sirystes albocinereus*, Sacha Lodge, Sucumbíos province, Ecuador, June 2014 (Roger Ahlman / www.pbase.com/ahlman)

Sibilant Sirystes *Sirystes sibilator*, Itatiaia National Park, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, October 2012 (Nick Athanas / Tropical Birding); this species is apparently an austral migrant into the cerrado and southern Amazonia.



Above: Yellow-shouldered Grosbeak *Parkerthraustes humeralis*, Floresta Nacional do Tapajós, Pará, Brazil, December 2010 (Alexander C. Lees); this species now occupies a new subfamily, the Orchesticinae, with the Brown Tanager *Orchesticus abeillei*.



Left: Tropeiro Seedeater *Sporophila beltoni*, São Desidério, Bahia, Brazil, August 2012; one of two individuals, the first record for Bahia (Ciro Albano / NE Brazil Birding)

grasslands habitats, from whence they migrate north to winter in the *cerrado*; both habitats are under significant anthropogenic pressure. The authors propose that the species be classified as Endangered on the IUCN Red List, where it might take its place alongside another enigma—what of the Hooded Seedeater *Sporophila melanops*?

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Seedeater *Sporophila beltoni* in honour of Dr. William Belton, a US diplomat and ornithologist. Males of the new species differ from Plumbeous Seedeater in being larger, more bluish grey, with a robust, yellow bill with an arched culmen and a different song structure with clear whistled introductory syllables and unique call notes. Tropeiro Seedeaters do not breed sympatrically with other grey seedeaters in their upland shrub-

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