## First record of Subtropical Pygmy Owl Glaucidium parkeri in the Colombian Andes

by Orlando A. Acevedo-Charry, Álvaro Cárdenas, Brayan Coral-Jaramillo, William Daza Díaz, Judit Jaramillo & Juan F. Freile

Received 1 May 2014

The enigmatic Subtropical Pygmy Owl Glaucidium parkeri, an uncommon and recently described species (Robbins & Howell 1995), is known from scattered records in the east Andean foothills and subtropics from Ecuador to Bolivia (Hennessey et al. 2003, Freile & Castro 2013). The first records in Ecuador and Peru date from the 1960s and 1970s, but confusion with Andean G. jardinii and Least Pygmy Owls G. minutissimum resulted in the species not being formally described until three decades later (Robbins & Howell 1995). However, it is unsurprising that the species' range is larger than realised, given predictions of its more continuous distribution and that many owls are so poorly known (Robbins & Howell 1995, Freile & Castro 2013).

The slopes of the Colombian Andes are still incompletely known. For example, recent work in remote parts of the central and northern Andes produced several new distributional records for Colombia (Salaman et al. 2002, Freeman et al. 2011, Olaciregui & Guzmán 2011), even species new to science (Robbins & Stiles 1999, Krabbe et al. 2005). In particular, few data exist on the avifauna of the southernmost departments of Nariño and Putumayo due in part to political instability (Calderón-Leyton et al. 2011, Sánchez-Cuervo & Aide 2013).

In 2010, the Corporación para el Desarrollo Sostenible del Sur de la Amazonía (CORPOAMAZONIA) initiated a project to search for potential Important Bird Areas (IBAs)

in dpto. Putumayo, with the Sibundoy Valley being one of the areas submitted as a new IBA (Acevedo-Charry 2014). Here, coca crop eradication programmes have resulted in some natural forest regeneration, but gold mining presents new threats to biodiversity (Sánchez & Aide 2013). A workshop aimed at building local capacity in bird observation took place in 2013 (Gutiérrez-Zamora et al. 2013, Acevedo-Charry 2014). Following this, observers from the Sibundoy Valley Birdwatching Club began sending photographs and field notes to OAA-C.

On 18 January 2014, AC, BC-J, WDD & JJ were observing birds between San Francisco and Mocoa, Putumayo (01°04'N, 76°48'W; 1,800 m), where, c.15 km east of the main road, they observed and photographed a pygmy owl (Fig. 1) that was tentatively identified as G. jardinii. It was subsequently identified as Subtropical Pygmy Owl (by JFF) due to its prominent white coronal Colombia, 18 January 2014 (Judit Jaramillo)



Figure 1. Subtropical Pygmy Owl Glaucidium parkeri, Sibundoy Valley, dpto. Putumayo, south-east

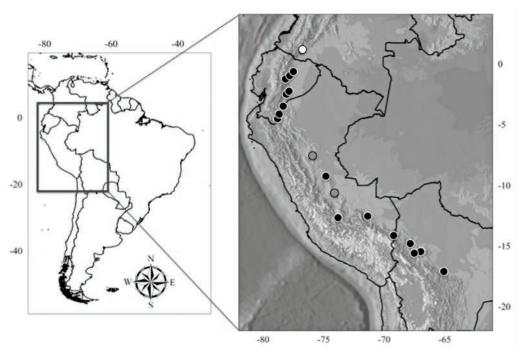


Figure 2. Distribution of Subtropical Pygmy Owl *Glaucidium parkeri* in South America: black dots indicate published localities (Robbins & Howell 1995, Hennessey *et al.* 2003, Walker *et al.* 2006, Freile & Castro 2013, Robbins *et al.* 2013), grey dots those available on xeno-canto (www.xeno-canto.org: XC152822, XC62899, XC628998) and the white dot the first record for Colombia (Sibundoy Valley, Putumayo).

spots, dark greyish-brown head, proportionately short tail and proportionately smaller head compared to *G. jardinii* (*cf.* Robbins & Howell 1995, Schulenberg *et al.* 2007). Although no sound-recordings were made, habitat and elevation also point to *G. parkeri*. The bird was perched in the subcanopy of a tree 18 m tall, for >5 minutes before it flew off. Habitat was similar to that at other known localities for *G. parkeri* (Robbins & Howell 1995, Freile & Castro 2013), with creek slopes *c.*45°. Playback of *G. jardinii* by OAA-C in the Sibundoy Valley yielded no response, but his field work did not include areas below 2,000 m elevation (Acevedo-Charry 2014), at which altitude *G. jardinii* and *G. parkeri* apparently replace one another (Robbins & Howell 1995, Freile *et al.* 2012).

G. parkeri is known from c.20 localities (Robbins & Howell 1995, Hennessey et al. 2003, Walker et al. 2006, Freile & Castro 2013, Robbins et al. 2013). Although some authors have suggested that the species might be continuously distributed over the entire Andean foothills from northern Peru to southern Colombia, there are no previous records from outlying ridges in northern Peru, or the Andes of north-east Ecuador and south-east Colombia (Fig. 2). Our record from the Colombian Andes is therefore not entirely unexpected given the species' continuous range in eastern Ecuador and the lack of evident geographic barriers between the northernmost Ecuadorian record, c.200 km to the south-west, at Cascada San Rafael, Napo (Ridgely & Greenfield 2001), and the Sibundoy Valley. This range extension is consistent with the discovery of many east slope or Napo endemics in the East Andes of southern Colombia in recent years (Salaman et al. 2002, Donegan et al. 2010, Olaciregui & Guzmán 2011).

It seems probable that *G. parkeri* ranges further north in the East Andes of Colombia, but has been overlooked due to its apparently low population density, the fact that its voice

was poorly known until recently and the species is not vocal for much of the year (Robbins & Howell 1995). The natural history, habitat, ecological interactions, population dynamics and distribution of several owl species, including *G. parkeri*, in the northern and central Andes are still very poorly known (Freile *et al.* 2012).

## Acknowledgements

To the late Sonia Charry, for her love and care, always accompanying OAA-C's explorations. The photograph was taken on J. V. Pinchado's property. We thank CORPOAMAZONIA for supporting the project I-06-086 1-02-04 10-12 'Establecimiento de Áreas de Importancia para la Conservación de las Aves (AICAS) en el Departamento del Putumayo. Fase II'. We thank M. B. Robbins, N. Krabbe, D. Brinkhuizen, J. Nilsson, R. Ahlman and F. G. Stiles for commenting on the identification, and B. Branoff and J. J. Mueses-Cisneros for their comments on an early version of the manuscript. Thomas M. Donegan and Guy Kirwan made valuable comments on the submitted version.

## References:

- Acevedo-Charry, O. A. 2014. Aves de Quindicocha valle de Sibundoy, Putumayo Colombia: potencial área de conservación. *Univ. Sci.* 19: 29–41.
- Donegan, T., Salaman, P., Caro, D. & McMullan, M. 2010. Revision of the status of bird species occurring in Colombia 2010. *Conserv. Colombiana* 18: 25–54.
- Calderón-Leyton, J. J., Flórez-Paí, C., Cabrera-Finley, A. & Rosero-Mora, A. 2011. Aves del departamento de Nariño, Colombia. *Biota Colombiana* 12: 32–116.
- Freeman, B. G., Hilty, S. L., Calderón-F., D., Ellery, T. & Urueña, L. E. 2011. New and noteworthy bird records from central and northern Colombia. *Cotinga* 34: 33–42.
- Freile, J. F. & Castro, D. F. 2013. New records of rare screech owls (*Megascops*) and pygmy owls (*Glaucidium*), with taxonomic notes and a conservation assessment of two globally imperilled species in Ecuador. *Cotinga* 35: 7–12.
- Freile, J. F., Castro, D. F. & Varela, S. 2012. Estado del conocimiento, distribución y conservación de aves rapaces nocturnas en Ecuador. *Orn. Neotrop.* 23: 235–244.
- Gutiérrez-Zamora, E. A., Mueses-Cisneros, J. J., Ramírez-Enríquez, M. C. & Perdomo-Castillo, I. V. 2013. Aves del valle de Sibundoy, alto Putumayo, Colombia guía de campo. CORPOAMAZONIA, Mocoa.
- Hennessey, A. B., Herzog, S. K., Kessler, M. & Robison, D. 2003. Avifauna of the Pilón Lajas Biosphere Reserve and communal lands, Bolivia. *Bird Conserv. Intern.* 13: 319–349.
- Krabbe, N., Salaman, P., Cortés, A., Quevedo, A., Ortega, L. A. & Cadena, C. D. 2005. A new species of *Scytalopus* tapaculo from the upper Magdalena Valley, Colombia. *Bull. Brit. Orn. Cl.* 125: 3–18.
- Olaciregui, C. & Guzmán, F. 2011. First record of Rufous-breasted Wood-Quail *Odontophorus speciosus* for Colombia. *Conserv. Colombiana* 15: 31–33.
- Ridgely, R. S. & Greenfield, P. J. 2001. The birds of Ecuador, vol. 1. Cornell Univ. Press, Ithaca, NY.
- Robbins, M. B. & Howell, S. N. G. 1995. A new species of pygmy-owl (Strigidae: *Glaucidium*) from the eastern Andes. *Wilson Bull.* 107: 1–6.
- Robbins, M. B. & Stiles, F. G. 1999. A new species of pygmy-owl (Strigidae: *Glaucidium*) from the Pacific slope of the northern Andes. *Auk* 116: 305–315.
- Robbins, M. B., Schulenberg, T. S., Lane, D. F., Cuervo, A. M., Binford, L. C., Nyári, Á. S., Combe, M., Arbeláez-Cortés E., Wehtje, W. & Lira-Noriega, A. 2013. Abra Maruncunca, dpto. Puno, Peru, revisited: vegetation cover and avifauna changes over a 30-year period. *Bull. Brit. Orn. Cl.* 113: 31–51.
- Salaman, P. G., Stiles, F. G., Bohórquez, C. I., Álvarez-R., M., Umaña, A. M., Donegan, T. M. & Cuervo, A. M. 2002. New and noteworthy bird records from the east slope of the Andes of Colombia. *Caldasia* 24: 157–189.
- Sánchez-Cuervo, A. M. & Aide, T. M. 2013. Consequences of the armed conflict, forced armed displacement, and land abandonment on forest cover change in Colombia: a multi-scaled analysis. Ecosystems 16: 1–19.
- Schulenberg, T. S., Stotz, D. F., Lane, D. F., O'Neill, J. P. & Parker, T. A. 2007. Birds of Peru. Christopher Helm, London.
- Walker, B., Stotz, D. F., Pequeño, T. & Fitzpatrick, J. W. 2006. Birds of the Manu Biosphere Reserve. Pp. 23–49 *in* Patterson, B. D., Stotz, D. F. & Solari, S. (eds.) Mammals and birds of the Manu Biosphere Reserve, Peru. *Fieldiana Zool.* 110.
- Addresses: Orlando A. Acevedo-Charry, CORPOAMAZONIA, Putumayo, Colombia; Grupo de Ornitología de la Universidad Nacional, Instituto de Ciencias Naturales, Universidad Nacional de Colombia; and Tropical Community Ecology Lab, University of Puerto Rico, Rio Piedras, San Juan, PR 00931-3360, USA, e-mail: acevedocharry@gmail.com. Álvaro Cárdenas, Brayan Coral-Jaramillo, William Daza Díaz & Judit Jaramillo, Sibundoy Valley Birdwatching Club, Sibundoy, Putumayo, Colombia. Juan F. Freile, Iniciativa Cuscungo, Pasaje El Moro E4-216 & Norberto Salazar, Tumbaco, Ecuador.