



**MORE COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON PARAGUAYAN
“HYPOTHETICAL” SPECIES: *RHEA PENNATA* (RHEIDAE), *BUTEOGALLUS
AEQUINOCTIALIS* (ACCIPITRIDAE), *COLUMBINA PASSERINA*
(COLUMBIDAE), *CAPRIMULGUS HIRUNDINACEUS* (CAPRIMULGIDAE) AND
ATLAPETES CITRINELLUS (EMBERIZIDAE)**

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Abstract.- The statuses of five hypothetical bird species considered “doubtful” in Paraguay are reviewed. It is recommended that all be reclassified as “erroneously cited”.

Key words: *Bertoni, erroneously cited, Podtiaguin, status* .

Resumen.- Se analizan los estados de cinco especies de aves actualmente considerados “dudosos” en Paraguay. Se recomienda que sean reclasificados como “citados erroneamente”.

Palabras clave: *Bertoni, citado en error, Podtiaguin, estatus*.

The official list of the Paraguayan avifauna currently stands at 713 species (del Castillo, 2013, Hostettler & Smith 2014, Castillo *et al.* 2015), but an additional 101 species of “hypothetical” occurrence were listed in the last detailed review (Guyra Paraguay, 2004). These were classified into a series of hierarchical categories reflecting the likelihood of their veracity: possible occurrence (30 species), doubtful occurrence (33 species), not evaluated (38 species) and erroneous (12 species). Since this publication eleven of these species have been confirmed to occur in Paraguay (Smith *et al.*, 2006; Centrón, 2011; Álvarez *et al.*, 2012; del Castillo, 2013; Smith *et al.*, 2014b; Smith *et al.* 2015), and detailed discussions on 23 others have also resulted in re-evaluations of their respective statuses in many cases (Smith *et al.* 2014a; Smith & Rios Díaz, 2014a,b, 2015; Smith *et al.* 2015; Smith in press). In this note the statuses of an additional five hypothetical species are reviewed based on the available data, and new recommendations are made.

Lesser Rhea: *Rhea pennata* d'Orbigny, 1834

Treated as doubtful by Hayes (1995) and Guyra Paraguay (2004), Podtiaguin (1944) provides the only report from Paraguay stating dubiously

that “it seems certain” that the species occurs in western Paraguay, near the Bolivian border. Though Podtiaguin claimed to have examined skins from the Paraguayan Chaco, the rest of his text is written as a second hand account including the unreferenced statement “they say that it is found between Villazón and Estrella and also in the area of Yrendagué, generally in winter when it forms flocks separate from the Greater Rhea”. This species occurs only above 3900m in the altiplano of Bolivia in La Paz, Oruro and Potosí departments and there are no reports from lowland areas close to the Paraguayan border. It would seem clear that Podtiaguin’s trust in these secondhand reports was therefore unwarranted and that the species has never occurred in Paraguay. It should thus be considered “erroneously cited” in Paraguay.

Rufous Crab-hawk: *Buteogallus aequinoctialis* (Gmelin, 1788)

Hayes (1995) states that the species is “often cited for Paraguay at San Ignacio, MIS on the basis of Azara” providing Laubmann (1939) as an example. Laubmann (1939) however stated that the only evidence of the species in Paraguay was Nóveda’s specimen reported on, (but not seen) by Azara, and that there have been no

recent reports. Azara's (1802) no. 14 Gavilán de Estero de Roxo Obscuro is the description referred to, and it was Hartlaub (1847) who made the association with this species based on his own interpretation of Azara, listing "*Morphnus buson*, (Shaw.) – *Buteogallus cathartoides*, Less. – Sonn.". Berlepsch (1887) then updated the nomenclature by listing *Buteogallus aequinoctialis* as the identity of Azara no. 14. All subsequent citations repeated this conclusion without any additional discussion. Hellmayr & Conover (1949) however categorically stated that reports from Paraguay are "clearly erroneous".

Nóveda's description in Azara (1802) is in fact unidentifiable with certainty, but is nonetheless inconsistent with *B. aequinoctialis* in many respects. Consequently *B. aequinoctialis*, a crab specialist confined to coastal mangroves from northeast Venezuela to Paraná, Brazil (Ferguson-Lees & Christie, 2001), should be considered "erroneously cited" in Paraguay.

Common Ground-dove: *Columbina passerina* (Linnaeus, 1758)

Bertoni (1914) listed both *Columbigallina minuta* and *C. passerina griseola* for Paraguay, but in the update to this catalogue he retained only the former (Bertoni, 1939). Perhaps in response to this, Podtiagun (1944) noted that reports of *C. passerina griseola* had in the past been associated with *C. minuta* because of geographic distribution and "theoretical impossibility" of the occurrence of *C. passerina* in Paraguay. Nonetheless after examining a specimen he assigned it to *C. passerina griseola* on the basis that he "had no specimens of the typical form available to him for comparison".

Hayes (1995) later associated Podtiaguín's report with *Columbina squammata*, but he overlooked the fact that the description provides no mention of any scaling on the plumage, in fact making reference to vinous colouration and pale grey tone on the dorsum, both of which are consistent with *C. minuta* and not *C. squammata*. Furthermore the measurements provided, including a

statement that the birds dimensions are "identical to those of Brazil", conclusively rule out confusion with the much larger *C. squammata*. Given the known distribution of *C. passerina* there is little doubt that, as surmised by earlier authors, reports of that species do indeed refer to *C. minuta*, a bird well-documented in Paraguay. *C. passerina* should thus be considered "erroneously cited" in Paraguay.

Pygmy Nightjar: *Caprimulgus hirundinaceus* Spix, 1825

Pygmy Nightjar is a poorly known, non-migratory Caprimulgid confined to eastern Brazil where it occurs in three subspecies distributed from southern Piauí to Espírito Santo (Cleere & Nurney, 1998). Hayes (1995) and later Guyra Paraguay (2004) listed this species as "doubtful" in Paraguay based on Bertoni no.215 *Caprimulgus hirundinaceus* (Bertoni 1914) and no.237 *Nyctipolus hirundinaceus* (Bertoni 1939), reportedly from Puerto Bertoni (Alto Paraná department) but listed without further details.

Though its identity was correctly elucidated by Hellmayr as early as (1906), the name *Caprimulgus hirundinaceus* was often included in the synonymy of *Chordeiles acutipennis acutipennis* (Hartert, 1892; Ridgway, 1914) and confusion as to its true identity and distribution persisted for some time later, with Spix's locality of "Amazonia" being "corrected" to southern Brazil on the basis of the presumed distribution of the form (eg. Cory, 1918). In fact there are no known records outside of eastern Brazil and the inclusion of other countries in the distribution is thus an error.

Chordeiles acutipennis has been reported in Paraguay at Aguara Ñu, Mbaracayú Forest Reserve, Canindeyú department (Guyra Paraguay 2004), a locality not too far removed from that reported by Bertoni (1914, 1939). Though there is no way to confirm whether or not Bertoni's record conclusively refers to this species, its presence in Paraguay means that it is a plausible explanation stemming from the confusion that reigned in the literature at the time of Bertoni's

publications. Regardless, the distribution of *C. hirundinaceus* is geographically far removed; it occurs in a different habitat to that reported for Paraguay and a misidentification or misapplication of the nomenclature seems obvious. Consequently *Caprimulgus hirundinaceus* should be treated as “erroneously cited” in Paraguay.

Yellow-striped Brush-finch: *Atlapetes citrinellus* (Cabanis, 1883)

Though Berlepsch (1887) had earlier hypothesised that Azara’s no. 117 “Del verde obscuro y oro” might be a species of *Sicalis*, Bertoni (1914, 1939) suggested with a query but without supporting argument that the description may in fact refer to *Atlapetes citrinellus* and this was later repeated by Pereyra (1945). Azara’s description however bears no real resemblance to this species and omits what might be considered key identification features including the bold head pattern. This calls into question Bertoni’s later record of the species from the “forests of the Rio Aguarañ-guasú” (SPE) during April 1920 (Bertoni, 1924). The identity of the bird seen by Bertoni on that date, and indeed that of Azara no. 117, can only be guessed at, but it seems clear that no credible case can be made for either to refer to this species, an endemic of the undergrowth of Yungas forest between 400-3100m in the Andes of north western Argentina (Jaramillo, 2011; Capplonch *et al.*). Thus the species should be considered “erroneously cited” in Paraguay.

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