

# The type locality of Plain-breasted Piculet *Picumnus castelnau* is valid

by Thomas S. Schulenberg

Received 28 December 2012

Plain-breasted Piculet *Picumnus castelnau* was described by Malherbe in 1862, based on specimens from 'Sarayacou (Amérique méridionale)'. 'Sarayacou' or 'Sarayacu' (the commonest spelling of the site name) is a common Quechuan toponym and refers either to a site on the río Bobonaza now in eastern Ecuador (Paynter 1993) or to a locality on the río Ucayali in what now is eastern Peru (Stephens & Traylor 1983). Both localities feature prominently in collections from Ecuador and Peru in the 19th and early 20th centuries. They were visited by different collectors and, consequently, there usually is no difficulty in determining which locality is associated with a particular record. Perhaps it is inevitable, however, that two sites in the western Amazon Basin, sharing a common name, are confused occasionally (Jenkinson & Tuttle 1976).

Malherbe (1862) specified that the type of *P. castelnau* was obtained by Castelnau. Francis de LaPorte de Castelnau (c.1812–80), accompanied by Émile Deville (1824–53), traveled extensively in South America, visiting Brazil, Bolivia and Peru. The final portion of their travels in Peru was by river, descending the río Ucayali to its mouth on the Amazon, then following the latter downstream to Belém, in Brazil (Papavero 1971). At no time did Castelnau and Deville ascend the río Bobonaza, and they never entered the current boundaries of Ecuador. Clearly the type of *P. castelnau* originated from Sarayacu, Peru, formerly just a town, today one of six districts in the Ucayali Valley, Peru (Sarayacu town = 06°44'S, 75°06'W *vide* Stephens & Traylor 1983).

A few workers have correctly associated Sarayacu, Peru, with the Castelnau specimens (Taczanowski 1886, von Seilern 1936; see also Voisin & Voisin 2010, who do not identify the modern country associated with Malherbe's 'Sarayacou', but reiterate that the specimens were obtained by the Castelnau and Deville expedition). Unfortunately other authorities have reported, either implicitly (e.g. Hargitt 1890) or explicitly (Peters 1948), that the type of *castelnau* originated from Sarayacu, Ecuador. As a result, Ecuador has entered the literature as part of the range of the species in numerous secondary sources (e.g., Meyer de Schauensee 1966, Short 1982). The distribution of *P. castelnau* otherwise is centred on the río Ucayali and the western Amazon (Schulenberg & Batcheller 2012). In due time the absence of records of *P. castelnau* from Ecuador attracted notice. Several authors, while accepting Sarayacu, Ecuador, as the type locality, suggested that the types must have originated from somewhere else (e.g. Ridgely & Greenfield 2001, Winkler & Christie 2002). Despite rampant confusion in the recent literature, the type locality of *P. castelnau* is very well documented, and should not be questioned; suggestions that the type locality of *P. castelnau* is in error are unwarranted.

### Acknowledgements

Thanks to Manuel Plenge for pointing me towards two important references, and for encouraging me to prepare this note. Frank Steinheimer made a number of useful suggestions that improved the final version.

### References:

- Hargitt, E. 1890. *Catalogue of the birds in the British Museum*, vol. 18. Trustees of the Brit. Mus., London.  
Jenkinson, M. A. & Tuttle, M. D. 1976. *Accipiter poliogaster* from Peru, and remarks on two collecting localities named "Sarayacu". *Auk* 93: 187–189.

- Malherbe, A. 1862. *Monographie des picidées, ou histoire naturelle des picidés, picumminés, yuncinés ou torcols*, vol. 2. Société d'Histoire Naturelle de la Moselle, Metz.
- Meyer de Schauensee, R. 1966. *The species of birds of South America and their distribution*. Livingston Publishing Co., Narberth, PA.
- Papavero, N. 1971. *Essays on the history of Neotropical dipterology*, vol. 1. Mus. Zool., Univ. São Paulo.
- Paynter, R. A. 1993. *Ornithological gazetteer of Ecuador*. Second edn. Mus. Comp. Zool., Harvard Univ., Cambridge, MA.
- Ridgely, R. S. & Greenfield, P. J. 2001. *The birds of Ecuador*, vol. 1. Cornell Univ. Press, Ithaca, NY.
- Schulenberg, T. S. & Batcheller, H. 2012. Plain-breasted Piculet (*Picumnus castelnaui*). In Schulenberg, T. S. (ed.) Neotropical Birds Online. [http://neotropical.birds.cornell.edu/portal/species/overview?p\\_p\\_spp=307256](http://neotropical.birds.cornell.edu/portal/species/overview?p_p_spp=307256) (accessed 27 December 2012).
- von Seilern, J. 1936. Ornithologische Miscellen. I. Bemerkungen über Vögel aus Südostperu. *Ann. Naturhist. Mus. Wien* 47: 33–40.
- Short, L. L. 1982. *Woodpeckers of the world*. Delaware Mus. Nat. Hist. Monogr. No. 4, Greenville.
- Stephens, L. & Traylor, M. A. 1983. *Ornithological gazetteer of Peru*. Mus. Comp. Zool., Harvard Univ., Cambridge, MA.
- Voisin, C. & Voisin, J.-F. 2010. List of type specimens of birds in the collections of the Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle (Paris, France). 20. Piciformes (Part 2: Picidae). *J. Natl. Mus. (Prague), Nat. Hist. Ser.* 179: 7–26.
- Winkler, H. & Christie, D. A. 2002. Family Picidae (woodpeckers). Pp. 296–555 in del Hoyo, J., Elliott, A. & Sargatal, J. (eds.) *Handbook of the birds of the world*, vol. 7. Lynx Edicions, Barcelona.
- Address:* Cornell Lab of Ornithology, 159 Sapsucker Woods Road, Ithaca, NY, USA, email [tss62@cornell.edu](mailto:tss62@cornell.edu)

## On a possible type specimen of *Tropidorhynchus fuscicapillus* Wallace, 1862, in New York

by Mary LeCroy

Received 11 January 2013

A recent paper on specimens of Dusky Friarbird *Philemon fuscicapillus* from Morotai Island, Indonesia, listed AMNH 697224 as a possible syntype of *Tropidorhynchus fuscicapillus* Wallace, 1862 (Besson 2012: 239). After correspondence with Besson, I did not accept this specimen as a possible syntype of Wallace's name and did not include it in my list of AMNH types (LeCroy 2011). The following are my reasons.

AMNH 697224 came to the American Museum of Natural History (New York) via the Rothschild Collection in 1932. Rothschild was cognisant of the value of prior labels and if this specimen had possessed an original label it would have remained and an additional Rothschild label would have been attached; often the history of his specimens can be unraveled based on their labels. AMNH 697224, in fact, does not even possess a Rothschild label; the single label it does bear is stamped 'Rothschild Collection' with a rubber stamp, which was done either before the specimen was shipped or after it arrived in New York, in order for its provenance to be traceable. It was one of five specimens of the species that came to AMNH with the Rothschild Collection, the other four having been collected by J. M. Dumas on Morotai (LeCroy & Jansen 2011) and were noted on the Rothschild label as having been collected by the former.

There is nothing to connect AMNH 697224 to Allen or to Wallace. There is, in fact, nothing on the label (Fig. 1) that provides a clue as to the collector. The old name '*Tropidorhynchus*' has been substituted with '*Philemon*'. Subsequently, apparently after it had been given its AMNH number, '*fuscicapillus*!' was added in a different hand. There is no locality or date of collection on the label and the reverse is blank.