

First record of White-crowned Manakin *Dixiphia pipra* in western Ecuador

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White-crowned Manakin *Dixiphia pipra* occurs from montane Costa Rica south to Amazonian Bolivia and the Atlantic Forest of eastern Brazil (Snow 2004, Kirwan & Green 2011). Thirteen subspecies are currently recognised but plumage variation is complex and not yet fully understood (Kirwan & Green 2011). Most authors have suggested that several species might be involved given morphological, vocal and behavioural differences across subspecies (Ridgely & Greenfield 2001, Snow 2004, Ridgely & Tudor 2009, Kirwan & Green 2011).

Subspecies distribution over the species' wide range is unresolved. Most subspecies have small ranges, with some occupying narrow altitudinal distributions in the east Andean foothills (Kirwan & Green 2011). Until recently, a single subspecies was believed to occur in Ecuador, namely *D. p. coracina* (Ridgely & Greenfield 2001). However, Freile *et al.* (2014) reported the first records of *D. p. occulta*, from extreme south-east prov. Zamora Chinchipe, in the río Nangaritza valley. They also discussed subspecific affinities of populations in the eastern lowlands and Andean foothills, suggesting that *D. p. discolor* occurs in the former, with *D. p. coracina* and *D. p. occulta* in the foothills.

While examining specimens at the Museo Ecuatoriano de Ciencias Naturales (MECN), Quito, I located a *D. pipra* in female plumage misidentified as Green Manakin *Xenopipo holochlora litae*. The specimen (MECN 2734) was collected by M. Olalla at San Javier, prov. Esmeraldas (01°03'N, 78°46'W; 100 m; *cf.* Paynter 1993) on 5 November 1966. This is the first record of *D. pipra* from the western lowlands of Ecuador (Fig. 1), although Chapman (1926) apparently envisaged its occurrence there.

San Javier is c.250 km south-west of the type locality of *D. p. minima* (Chapman 1914) but just c.90 km south-west of Río Ñambí reserve, the species' nearest-known locality in the lowlands and foothills of western dpto. Nariño, Colombia (Hilty & Brown 1986, Calderón-Leytón *et al.* 2011). I was unable to compare MECN 2734 with other specimens, but photographs of birds in south-west Colombia indicate that it resembles those from the Pacific slope of the West Andes of Colombia. Therefore, I tentatively identified the specimen as *D. p. minima*.

The description of *D. p. minima* is based on size and minor plumage differences in males, but no comparative description of female-plumaged birds was provided (Chapman 1914, 1917). The single Ecuadorian specimen resembles some female-plumaged *D. p. coracina* at MECN (Fig. 2). Although no detailed description of female *D. p. minima* exists, Snow (2004) and Kirwan & Green (2011) suggested that western subspecies resemble each other in the amount of grey on the head and yellow in the underparts.

The MECN specimen differs from *D. p. coracina* in the amount of bluish grey in the crown, which is more uniform olivaceous grey, especially on the forecrown (Fig. 1). Two specimens of *D. p. coracina* at MECN also lack bluish grey in the crown, which has a more olive tone with a few scattered bluish-grey feathers. Likewise, one collected in the Nangaritza Valley, prov. Zamora Chinchipe, deposited at the Museo de Zoología, Universidad Católica del Ecuador (QCAZ 3342), also has little grey in crown. Remaining upperparts of the San Javier specimen resemble *D. p. coracina* in being bright yellowish olive, brighter than the



Figure 1 (left). Female-plumaged specimen of White-crowned Manakin *Dixiphia pipra* collected by M. Olalla at San Javier, prov. Esmeraldas, Ecuador, deposited at Museo Ecuatoriano de Ciencias Naturales (MECN) (MECN 2734), Quito (J. F. Freile)

Figure 2 (below). Female-plumaged specimens of White-crowned Manakin *Dixiphia pipra* from Ecuador deposited at Museo Ecuatoriano de Ciencias Naturales, Quito; MECN 2734, collected at San Javier, prov. Esmeraldas, is on the extreme right (J. F. Freile)



upperparts of the eastern lowlands specimens examined (Fig. 2). Most underparts are yellowish but the throat is whiter and duller, approaching the underparts of *D. p. coracina*.

Specimens from the eastern Ecuadorian lowlands are more reminiscent of eastern subspecies *sensu* Snow (2004) and Kirwan & Green (2011) in being duller olive-green above, lacking bluish grey in the crown, and having duller and greyer underparts. A consistent size difference is also apparent between western subspecies—including the San Javier specimen—and those from the eastern lowlands, all of which look smaller. A more thorough revision of racial variation in *D. pipra* is required, especially in female plumage, as most subspecies are delineated solely on the basis of male characters.

I cannot eliminate the possibility that the San Javier specimen represents an undescribed taxon, but additional specimens are needed, and further field work is required to elucidate the taxonomy and distribution of *D. pipra* in north-west Ecuador.

Few previous records of *D. p. minima* exist from south-west Colombia (Calderón-Leytón *et al.* 2011), but none from north-west Ecuador, even in areas subject to fairly intensive surveys (Jahn 2011). Nevertheless, other recent discoveries in this region, such as Slaty-backed Forest Falcon *Micrastur mirandollei* (Brinkhuizen & de Bruin 2013) and Thicket Antpitta *Hyllopezus dives* (Moore *et al.* 2013) suggest that ornithological knowledge of the Ecuadorian Chocó is still far from complete. That the specimen of *D. pipra* had been overlooked for >40 years also suggests that museum material might still provide insights, and that further collecting work is needed.

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