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The nest of Serra do Mar Tyrant-Manakin *Neopelma chrysolophum* with a brief review of nest architecture in the genera *Neopelma* and *Tyranneutes*

by Guy M. Kirwan

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The genus *Neopelma*, P. L. Sclater, 1861, comprises a quintet of unprepossessing, dull-plumaged ‘manakin’ species of uncertain affinities, but whose closest relatives are generally considered to be the *Tyranneutes* ‘manakins’. Rêgo *et al.* (2007), Tello *et al.* (2009) and McKay *et al.* (2010), in their molecular analyses of the Pipridae, found evidence to suggest that *Tyranneutes* and *Neopelma* lie outwith the true manakins, but together they are sister taxa to the latter group. The same arrangement was proposed by Lanyon (1985), Prum *et al.* (2000) and Chesser (2004), but rejected by Prum & Lanyon’s (1989) study of syringeal morphology, nest architecture and plumage. To emphasise their unique position, Gill & Wright (2006) elected to use the genus’ scientific name as the English group name too, and Tello *et al.* (2009) erected a new subfamily, the Neopelminae, for these two genera, which arrangement was followed by Dickinson & Christidis (2014).

The five species with their largely allopatric ranges are: Saffron-crested Tyrant-Manakin *Neopelma chrysocephalum* (von Pelzeln, 1868) in north-east South America (south of the Orinoco River and north and east of the rio Negro), with an isolated and comparatively recently discovered population in north-east Peru; Sulphur-bellied Tyrant-Manakin *N. sulphureiventer* (Hellmayr, 1903) in south-west Amazonia; Pale-bellied Tyrant-Manakin *N. pallescens* (Lafresnaye, 1853) in eastern, central and southern Brazil, with small extensions into Bolivia, Guyana and Surinam; Wied’s Tyrant-Manakin *N. aurifrons* (zu Wied, 1831) in eastern Brazil, from southern Bahia to central Rio de Janeiro; and Serra do Mar Tyrant-Manakin *N. chrysolophum* Pinto, 1944, also in eastern Brazil, but generally at higher elevations and south of the range occupied by the previous species, from east-central Minas Gerais to southern São Paulo (Ridgely & Tudor 1994, Whitney *et al.* 1995, Robbins *et al.* 2004, Snow 2004, Kirwan & Green 2011).

Breeding data for the genus *Neopelma* are almost non-existent. Whitney *et al.* (1995) reported that Euler (1900: 44) had described the nest of what these authors assumed was probably *N. aurifrons* as being bag-shaped, like that of many tyrant flycatchers (Tyrannidae), and suspended below the overhang of a bank, from near Cantagalo, Rio de Janeiro state, south-east Brazil, in the mid 1860s. Based on the translation of Euler’s description presented by Whitney *et al.* (1995), under the system for describing the nests of Neotropical birds proposed by Simon & Pacheco (2005), the nest was of the closed / long / pensile type. However, it is unclear as to whether Euler really did collect *N. aurifrons* at this

locality, as reported by Ihering (1900) and repeated by Whitney *et al.* (1995). Certainly, no specimen that is currently identified as this species is held at the Berlin museum (Museum für Naturkunde, Zentralinstitut der Humboldt-Universität; S. Frahnert *in litt.* 2008) and none of the specimens held in that institution that was collected by Euler at Cantagalo appears likely to have been misidentified as another species. S. Frahnert (*in litt.* 2008) is unaware of any Euler specimens being sent to other museums from Berlin. Consequently, without stronger evidence, it seems best to discard this description, especially as it is quite unlike that of other nests of *Neopelma* (or *Tyrannetes*) that have been found subsequently (see below).

More recently, Lebbin *et al.* (2007) reported discovering a nest of Sulphur-bellied Tyrant-Manakin under construction, at Oceania, along the río Tahuamanu, in dpto. Madre de Dios, south-east Peru. They observed one bird (presumably a female) building a nest on 16 October within a patch of *Guadua* bamboo, but they were unable to follow it to completion. The partially completed nest was a thin, shallow cup of woven bamboo fibres, slung between two branches, 10–11 m up in the bamboo. The nests of *N. pallescens* and *N. chrysocephalum* are unknown (Kirwan & Green 2011).

I discovered a nest of Serra do Mar Tyrant-Manakin beside the Agulhas Negras road, in the upper part of Itatiaia National Park (22°37.35'S, 44°75.41'W; c.1,750 m), at the boundary between Minas Gerais and Rio de Janeiro states (with my observation made in the latter), south-east Brazil. According to the classification system proposed by Simon & Pacheco (2005), the nest described here can be categorised as low cup / fork.

The nest of *N. chrysolophum* was found on 19 September 2007, in the initial stages of construction. It was sited within 3 m of a dirt road and c.1 m above ground in an unidentified understorey shrub (c.2 m in overall height) shaded by taller trees with a canopy height of c.15 m. The nest (diameter c.5 cm) was placed c.50 cm from the main trunk of the tree, and was slung between the fork formed by two very narrow, horizontal branches, attached in two places to each branch, mainly using heavily bound spider's web, with the rest of the construction involving both live and dead black rootlets, with some moss and dead leaves for camouflage. Only one bird, presumably the female attended the nest, occasionally appearing to test it for size (by sitting on the nest and slowly moving the rear part of the body from side to side), and regularly bringing fresh material to it at intervals of 1–5 minutes over a period of c.30 minutes. The nearest singing male was at least 150 m distant. Another nest of this species was found by A. Whittaker & K. J. Zimmer (*in litt.* 2007), while leading a birdwatching group. Unfortunately, full details can no longer be located, but it was apparently similar in structure and location to this one.

The nest described here, and that of *N. sulphureiventer* described by Lebbin *et al.* (2007), recall the structure of the only nests to be reported to date for the genus *Tyrannetes*, that of a Dwarf Tyrant-Manakin *T. stolzmanni* discovered, with a single nestling, at Sacha Lodge Research Station, in eastern Ecuador, in mid-April 2001 (Greeney *et al.* 2004) and a Tiny Tyrant-Manakin *T. virescens* nest found in Guyana in late March or early April (Beebe & Beebe 1910, Kirwan & Green 2011).

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First record of Lapland Longspur *Calcarius lapponicus* in the Caribbean

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On 26 May 2016, J. Lezcano, a fishing guide from La Salina, Cuba, observed an unknown bird at Laguna de las Salinas ('Las Salinas', 22°07'42"N, 81°16'04"W; Fig. 1), c.3 km north-east of La Salina, Parque Nacional de Ciénaga de Zapata, Matanzas province, Cuba. Lezcano told F. Rodríguez about the bird, whereupon Rodríguez visited the site, and observed and photographed it for an extended period. Later the same day, Rodríguez told OM of the bird, and at 09.00 h, on 27 May 2016, OM was able to photograph and video it, an adult male Lapland Longspur *Calcarius lapponicus* in breeding plumage (Fig. 2). It was in the same area as the previous day, on the causeway dividing aquatic habitat and mangrove forest on either side. The substrate used by the longspur included sand, pebbles, rocks and grassy habitat adjacent to red *Rhizophora mangle* and black *Avicennia germinans* mangroves extending into the wetlands.