



Black-bellied Seedeater *Sporophila melanogaster* (Aves: Thraupidae): the first Paraguayan record

Corbatita vientre negro *Sporophila melanogaster* (Aves: Thraupidae): el primer registro paraguayo

Paul Smith¹

¹FAUNA Paraguay, Encarnación, Paraguay, www.fauparaguay.com; Para La Tierra, Centro IDEAL, Mariscal Estigarribia 321 c/ Tte. Capurro, Pilar, Dpto. Ñeembucú, Paraguay. www.paralatierra.org.

Abstract.- Black-bellied Seedeater, *Sporophila melanogaster* (Pelzeln), is a Near Threatened Thraupid, until recently considered endemic to southern Brazil. Here I report the first record of the species in Paraguay, an overlooked photograph of a male taken in March 2007 at Kanguery, Área para Parque Nacional de San Rafael, Itapúa department.

Keywords: Área para Parque Nacional San Rafael, Mesopotamian Grasslands, Near Threatened, vagrant.

Resumen.- La corbatita de vientre negro, *Sporophila melanogaster* (Pelzeln), es un tráupido Casi Amenazado, hasta recientemente considerado endémico al sur de Brasil. Aquí reporto el primer registro de la especie en Paraguay, una fotografía olvidada de un macho sacada en Marzo de 2007 en la Reserva Kanguery, Área para Parque Nacional San Rafael, departamento de Itapúa.

Palabras clave: Área para Parque Nacional San Rafael, Casi Amenazado, Pastizales del Sur, vagante.

Black-bellied Seedeater *Sporophila melanogaster* (Pelzeln) is a Near Threatened Thraupid (BirdLife International 2020) which breeds in the upland grasslands of Rio Grande do Sul, Santa Catarina and Paraná states in southern Brazil (Rovedder & Fontana 2012). It is a migrant species, but the wintering areas are poorly known, with records of non-breeding birds in São Paulo, Minas Gerais, Mato Grosso do Sul, Goiás and the Distrito Federal, Brazil (Rovedder 2011). There is a single record of the species from the Reserva Urutaú, Candelaria department, Misiones Province, Argentina of a pair (including a male that was photographed by Julian Baigorria) on 21 November 2017 (eBird Checklist, Torresin et al. 2019). Here I provide the first documentation of the species from Paraguay.

On 5 March 2007 an unusual male see-

deater was observed in a mixed flock of *Sporophila* at Kanguery, Itapúa department (26°30'S, 55°47'W), in Mesopotamian Grassland (Pastizales del Sur) habitat close to blocks of Atlantic Forest. The flock contained 8 male *S. pileata*, at least 2 male *S. caerulescens*, 2 male *S. palustris*, a single male *S. hypoxantha* and another distinct individual that I was unable to identify at the time. According to field notes the bird was observed from a distance of about 100 m and seen to be grey above including the head, somewhat darker on the wing and with a black throat and extensive black underparts reaching to the vent. The bird was photographed (Fig. 1) and the photograph was subsequently forgotten about until it was recently relocated.

The bird can be clearly identified as a Black-bellied Seedeater *S. melanogaster* on the basis of the greyish dorsal plumage





Figure 1. Male of Black-bellied Seedeater *Sporophila melanogaster* photographed at Reserva Kanguery, Área para Parque Nacional San Rafael, Itapúa department on 5 March 2007. Note that the orange-coloured structure in front of the bird is part of the plant upon which it is perched. (Photo: Paul Smith).

(including the ear coverts), the slightly darker wings, and significant black on the ventrum extending from the throat to the vent. No other seedeaters share this distinctive plumage pattern.

This represents the first Paraguayan record of this species, and an additional species for the Área para Parque Nacional de San Rafael, the most biodiverse reserve for birds in the country. The record is approximately 110 km north of the single reported record in Argentina. Both of these reports probably refer to vagrants, as it is well to the west of the known migration route in Brazil, and there have been no further records in either country. However, they also indicate that, at least occasionally, this interesting little seedeater can and does

occur in the countries neighbouring Brazil.

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