

First record of White-bellied Dacnis *Dacnis albiventris* for Acre, Brazil, with notes on its foraging behaviour

White-bellied Dacnis *Dacnis albiventris* is considered rare and restricted to Amazonia⁸, locally in central and southern Colombia, southern Venezuela, southern and eastern Ecuador, north-east Peru and Brazil³. It occurs in the canopy of *terra firme* forest, gallery forest, and around lakes and clearings, to 400 m, and its distribution may be associated with nutrient-poor soils³.

The first record in Brazil involved an adult and juvenile male collected in August 1957 at the upper rio Cururú, an eastern tributary of the rio Tapajós, by Sick⁷. The species' range in Brazil is very poorly known with few documented records. In Mato Grosso, at the Xingu Refugio Amazonico and Fazenda Uirapuru, on the Rio Von Den Steinen, on 12–17 May 2004, in tall sandy belt and clay-based *terra firme* forest with low tree species diversity, A. Whittaker tape-recorded four males singing along a 5-km transect⁴. In southern Pará, the species was recorded in July 2009 at the Pousada Rio Azul on the rio São Benedito II; a photograph is archived on www.wikiaves.com.br (WA572773). Ridgely & Tudor⁵ mentioned a record near Manaus, but without confirmation it must

be considered doubtful. Despite almost 35 years of observations, there are no records from this well-studied region (A. Whittaker pers. obs.). However, to the west, A. Whittaker collected a female (Museu Paraense Emilio Goeldi 50188) at Caitau Uara, rio Solimões, Amazonas, on 15 September 1992 in *terra firme* forest edge. He has also observed males at Palmari Lodge, on the rio Javari, Amazonas, in *terra firme*.

We photographed a female-plumaged bird at the border of the Parque Zoobotânico (09°57'S 67°52'W), on the Universidade Federal do Acre campus, in the municipality of Rio Branco, Acre. The campus protects c.100 ha of forest. Vegetation comprises a mosaic of secondary vegetation at different stages of regeneration, with a mean tree height of 20 m¹, and a significant number of bamboos, palms and *cipós*.

On 23 July 2013, while observing birds at a fruiting *Ficus pertusa* (Moraceae) tree c.6 m tall, we observed an unidentified bird that was photographed (Fig. 1). Observations at the tree were made twice daily, morning and evening, with each session lasting c.2 hours. The bird was alone and remained for c.10 minutes before flying off, but was seen daily feeding in the same tree until 28 July, always alone. After comparing the bird with field guide

illustrations^{4,8,9} and photographs of female *Dacnis* species, it was identified as an adult female *D. albiventris*. The short bill, dark primaries and tail, greener upperparts, yellow abdomen and orange iris distinguished it from other *Dacnis* possible at the site. Female Yellow-bellied Dacnis *D. flaviventer* has a well-marked red iris, longer beak and more brownish-green upperparts, and female Black-faced Dacnis *D. lineata* has grey upperparts, bluish-grey belly, dark grey primaries and uppertail, and pale throat.

The bird was seen returning to the same *Ficus*, as described by Hilty³ at a *Miconia* (Melastomataceae) on a forest border in Venezuela. However, there observations involved groups of 3–10 birds, comprising males, females and juveniles, following rapid-moving mixed-species flocks. During our observations, a small flock of Turquoise Tanagers *Tangara mexicana*, singles or pairs of Blue Dacnis *Dacnis cayana*, Short-billed Honeycreeper *Cyanerpes nitidus*, Purple-throated Euphonia *Euphonia chlorotica* and White-lored Euphonia *E. chrysopasta* fed in the same tree, but apparently not in association with *D. albiventris*.

During our observations, the bird moved rapidly, hopping between branches searching for ripe fruit in a manner distinct from larger birds that consumed the same fruits. Larger birds tear off entire fruits, whereas *D. albiventris* extracted small pieces (Fig. 2) that were quickly swallowed, changing perches when a larger bird arrived. It occasionally extracted a larger piece, which was manipulated in the bill for a few minutes, before part of the fruit fell to the ground. Foraging height varied at 3–5 m. We noted the following behaviours used to feed on fruit: gleaning without extending the legs or neck; reaching, whereby the bird extended its legs and neck to reach food; and hanging downwards from a horizontal perch. In December 2013, the same *Ficus* was fruiting, but no



Figure 1. Female White-bellied Dacnis *Dacnis albiventris*, Universidade Federal do Acre campus, Rio Branco, Acre, Brazil, 27 July 2013 (Tomaz Nascimento de Melo)



Figure 2. Female White-bellied Dacnis *Dacnis albiventris*, feeding in *Ficus pertusa*, Universidade Federal do Acre campus, Rio Branco, Acre, Brazil, 27 July 2013 (Tomaz Nascimento de Melo)

D. albiventris was observed. A. Whittaker (pers. obs.) has observed White-bellied Dacnis feeding on *Miconia* (Melastomataceae) in the understorey of *terra firme* at Palmari Lodge at 6–12 m.

Our record is the first for Acre, although the species' occurrence was expected². Photographs are also archived on wikiaves (WA1031825, WA1031827). Our record extends the species' range in Brazil 700 km south of Palmari Lodge, its nearest known locality in Brazilian Amazonia. Although the species, given its rarity, could be missing from large areas^{3,5,6}, the difficulty of detecting canopy birds in many areas and because this species' vocalisations could be confused with those of Masked Tanager *Tangara nigrocincta*, and are easily overlooked, hinder its detection.

Acknowledgements

We are grateful to Mario Cohn-Haft, Thomas S. Schulenberg, Alexander Lees and Thiago Laranjeiras for help with the identification, and Andrew Whittaker and Bradley Davis for important contributions during the refereeing process.

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Tomaz Nascimento de Melo

Programa de Pós-graduação em Ecologia e Manejo de Recursos Naturais, Universidade Federal do Acre, BR 364, Km 04, Rio Branco, Acre, Brazil. E-mail: tomaznascimento@hotmail.com.

Rafael Ruan Araújo Pinto, Mirna Amoêdo Lima and Edson Guilherme

Laboratório de Ornitologia, Universidade Federal do Acre, BR 364, Km 04, Rio Branco, Acre, Brazil.

Renata da Silva Xavier

Programa de Pós-graduação em Ecologia, Instituto Nacional de Pesquisas da Amazônia, Av. André Araújo, 2.936, Petrópolis, Manaus, Amazonas, Brazil. E-mail: renatadasilvaxavier@yahoo.com.br.

Received 19 December 2013; final revision accepted 6 March 2014; published online 10 March 2015