

# *Response to Ornitología Colombiana editorial by Cadena and Stiles concerning Grallaria fenwickorum*

## **Background**

Two scientific papers were published in 2010 describing the same new species of *Grallaria antpitta* found at ProAves' "Colibrí del Sol" Bird Reserve in Urrao, Antioquia, Colombia. The first was published on 18 May 2010 in this journal (Barrera et al. 2010) and a second description was published on 24 June 2010 in the online edition of *Ornitología Colombiana* (Carantón & Certuche 2010), a publication of Asociación Colombiana de Ornitología (ACO). Both articles were accompanied by an editorial that explained why the article in question was published and which made differing claims concerning the background to this discovery.

The ProAves editorial set out various elements of the background to the publication of the paper describing the new species. In summary, it, explained that the new species had been discovered by Diego Carantón, then carrying out his duties as reserve manager due to his employment relationship with our foundation. According to his employment contract, he was obliged to conduct ornithological research, including the capture of birds using mist-nets. These activities took place at the Reserva Natural de Aves (Bird Nature Reserve – RNA) Colibrí del Sol in the municipality of Urrao, Antioquia, a new protected area established by ProAves as a result of the findings of other researchers. Carantón's research was required to observe protocols designed by ProAves for monitoring its reserves. He was selected to do this research but did not conceive it. He was contracted to conduct the research, but did not follow the protocols of ProAves or the terms and conditions of his employment contract. The research was funded by American Bird Conservancy (ABC), which has a long history of support of the growth and development of ProAves and its projects. This funding was provided several years before the discovery of the new species and no conditions as regards the naming of species were attached to the funding. Carantón collected two specimens of the new *Grallaria* but failed to report this either to CorpoUrabá (Corporación para el Desarrollo Sostenible del Urabá – who had granted a research permit to ProAves as the regional environmental

authority with jurisdiction for the region and consequently the reserve) or to ProAves, in breach of the research permission issued by CorpoUrabá to ProAves, Carantón's contract with ProAves and ProAves' internal regulations. The ProAves editorial also set out reasons as to why ProAves had the necessary intellectual property rights to proceed with publication of the paper, based on legal advice it had received.

Despite what had happened, the foundation endeavored to resolve the situation through various meetings, phone calls and emails with Carantón and others who claimed an involvement concerning the description (including Daniel Cadena, co-editor of *Ornitología Colombiana*) over a period of twenty (20) months. These communications were led by Alonso Quevedo, President of Executive Board of ProAves, Lina Daza, Legal Director, and Andrés Paez, then Director of Research. During the course of these discussions, at least three (3) letters were sent to Carantón from ProAves reminding him that any publication of the description of the new species required ProAves' approval and that without such approval, publishing would be in breach of ProAves' intellectual property rights. Despite this, Carantón submitted a description of the new species to the editors of the North American journal *The Condor* around October 2009, without notifying ProAves or obtaining its prior approval. On learning of the dispute with ProAves, and in particular the alleged breach of the terms of the research permit, *The Condor* rejected the paper and recommended that Carantón not publish it anywhere until such issues were resolved. Carantón then submitted an amended manuscript to *Ornitología Colombiana* for publication, again without notifying ProAves.

The ACO editorial, authored by Dr Daniel Cadena of Universidad de los Andes and Dr F. Gary Stiles of Instituto de Ciencias Naturales, Universidad Nacional, argued that the ProAves editorial was incorrect in various aspects, that Carantón may have acted lawfully, called in question the legal rights that ProAves had asserted, making known subjective opinions of the authors about scientific ethics. ACO published the other description, involving a different scientific name to that published in *Conservación*

*Colombiana*, in full knowledge that the new species had already been described elsewhere. As a consequence, that other name represents a junior synonym and therefore has no taxonomic validity.

Furthermore, CorpoUrabá found Carantón to have breached the terms of the research permit and Colombian law and imposed a substantial fine on ProAves and Carantón as a result. This finding supports ProAves' editorial in this respect and draws attention to the inconsistencies of the assertions in ACO's editorial. Below, we discuss ACO's approach of publishing a description of a "new species" which already has a name, based on illegal collecting activities, infringing intellectual property rights and prepared in breach of contract. We also respond to some of the allegations made in the ACO editorial.

## The research permits and CorpoUrabá resolution

It is now some eight months since the publication of the ACO editorial, a lapse of time which Cadena (2010) has drawn attention to and criticized. However, this delay was simply because CorpoUrabá, being the competent government environmental entity for the region, was conducting an administrative action concerning Carantón's irregular specimen collecting activities in the reserve. As a result, the matter was *sub judice*. CorpoUrabá were notified of ProAves' fieldwork and steps to describe *Grallaria fenwickorum* but ProAves did not wish to take further steps or make any further comment until this investigation had been closed.

The two editorials diverge in their interpretation of the situation concerning the research permits. The ProAves editorial asserted that both the collecting and the failure to report the specimens were in breach of the terms of the permit granted by CorpoUrabá. The ACO editorial suggested that the permit may have allowed collecting but concluded that "*Not knowing the full extent of the permits awarded by the Corporation nor being experts in this matter, we cannot emit a definite concept regarding the legality of Carantón's actions.*" In summary, the ACO editorial sought to cast aspersions on ProAves' assertion that Carantón had acted illegally, and then developed various ethical points of view.

On 6 December 2010, CorpoUrabá published its finding in resolution N° 200-03-20-04-1722-2010

with a technical report (1213 of 2 December 2010) based on an analysis of evidence provided by both ProAves and Diego Carantón. Diego Carantón filled an appeal against the decision so CorpoUrabá undertook a second evaluation of all the evidence. The second and final resolution N° 200-03-20-07-0157-2011 of 4 March 2011 confirmed the first resolution, with the government authority making the following findings, among others:

- Diego Carantón, as a ProAves researcher, collected two specimens of the new species without consulting ProAves.
- Diego Carantón did not notify ProAves or CorpoUrabá of the collection of these specimens. This was in breach of the terms of the research permit granted to ProAves.
- Diego Carantón breached ProAves' internal regulations for research in the reserve.
- Any natural or legal person seeking to carry out biological scientific research involving the capture, collection, fishing, hunting, manipulation or mobilization of biological resources requires a research permit according to Decree 309 of 2000. Moreover, article 8 of this decree obliges researchers to submit progress reports and list specimens or samples collected during that period to the regional corporation, in this case CorpoUrabá.
- Environmental regulations, particularly Article 8 of Decree 309 of 2000, were breached, as CorpoUrabá was not informed about the collection of two specimens of the new *Grallaria*.
- CorpoUrabá held Diego Carantón and ProAves (as his employer) jointly responsible for this infraction.
- CorpoUrabá imposed a monetary fine of \$20,600,000 pesos (approx. US\$10,800) jointly on Diego Carantón and ProAves.
- The Instituto de Ciencias Naturales, Universidad Nacional, was ordered to transfer the two *Grallaria* specimens that were collected by Diego Carantón to the collection of Instituto Alexander von Humboldt (a governmental specimen collection).

ProAves has pledged payment of the full amount of the fine imposed by CorpoUrabá and is considering its rights to recover this amount from third parties.

CorpoUrabá did not make a finding either way on whether the actual collection of specimens was

lawful, as opposed to the related actions that followed such collection, merely noting that there was a research permit in place at the time of the collection of the specimens. ProAves has previously taken the view, based on legal advice it had received, that the collection was not lawful. This conclusion was based on the text of its original application to CorpoUrabá, which stated that “*The [research] program does not contemplate the collection of individuals, however, if collection becomes necessary due to accidents resulting from the manipulation of birds with mist nets, individuals collected will be preserved adequately and deposited in the ornithological collection of Instituto de Ciencias Naturales, Universidad Nacional de Colombia*”. In the case under review here, at least one of the specimens collected was evidently not the result of accidents. Nevertheless, given the obvious breach of reporting requirements, CorpoUrabá appears to have focused on this easier-to-prove offence in its assessment of the legality of Carantón’s actions. Meanwhile, ProAves continues to maintain its position that Carantón’s action in deliberately collecting a *Grallaria* specimen and withholding data of the second specimen, a supposed mist-net mortality, was in breach of the Foundation’s regulations and his employment contract. The late reporting of data to regional corporations by researchers in Colombia is not an uncommon occurrence and more usually results in no action being taken. The large fine imposed in this instance is indicative of the dim view that CorpoUrabá has taken of Carantón’s behavior more generally in this matter.

ProAves has previously allowed scientific collecting in its reserves when proposed by external researchers or employees. Such activities must be approved by ProAves in advance in accordance with its internal procedures and policies, then receive permission from, or be notified to, the relevant regional environmental authority. The editors of *Ornitología Colombiana* know this, because in November 2007 Dr Cadena and his students undertook research in one of ProAves’ reserves, RNA El Dorado (Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, Magdalena dept.), and collected specimens with prior permission sought, valid permits in place from CORPAMAG (Corporación Autónoma Regional del Magdalena) and reports duly submitted thereafter. In instances where specific collecting activities are not covered by a permission from the regional corporation, ProAves would take a cautious view of the scope of its

permission and either seek a specific permit or at least notify the regional corporation prior to commencing such activities. Carantón justified his failure to report specimens based his supposed ignorance of permit requirements, with which he sought to exonerate responsibility. This argument is inadmissible: on the one hand, as a professional biologist, he knows about the requirement to obtain a permit and comply with its terms. Furthermore, by then he had been working as a contracted ornithologist for ProAves for several years. ProAves also supported his undergraduate thesis fieldwork and attendance at various training courses. He knew the protocols of working for ProAves very well, including the requirement to provide reports to the relevant regional environmental corporation. Ignorance cannot be an excuse for his behavior. This was not only in breach of contract: in failing to report his collecting he has been found by the relevant environmental authorities to be culpable and to have acted illegally. This has resulted in ProAves being fined a large amount of money that could have been spent directly on conservation actions.

## **Commentary on remarks in the ACO editorial**

The ACO editorial makes various remarks critical of ProAves along with various assertions and implications (quoted in bold italics below). We contest various of these here.

***Both in the article and in the editorial, ProAves completely omitted mentioning the biologist Katherine Certuche, who was involved in this discovery from March 2008 onwards.***

Although Certuche was involved and mentioned in discussions between Carantón, Cadena and ProAves concerning this new species, ProAves had no reliable records about her involvement and her participation in the research was not approved by ProAves. However, according to Carantón & Certuche (2010), the type specimen used in that description was “*prepared by KCC at the Reserva Natural Colibrí del Sol*”. It is clear that her visit should have been properly reported by Carantón, as reserve coordinator, in accordance with ProAves’ internal procedures. Fees for accommodation would have been payable and accounted for. Any involvement that Certuche had in working in the reserve or as an assistant to Carantón was never reported to or approved by ProAves. If she conducted any field

research, it is not clear whether she would have been covered by ProAves' research permits, but as far as we know Certuche did not have any research permission of her own.

***In addition to a call for honesty and professionalism and to clarify a most unfortunate situation, we wish to bring to the attention of the ornithological and conservation community certain fundamental aspects related to the ethics of research and scientific publication.***

This remark, and others, paint the ACO paper's authors as being honest and ethical, in contrast to the ProAves paper's authors, but there is no factual substance to this claim. What one should really question is why a professional biologist would enter into a contract with clear, specific obligations accepted by him as an employee, requiring loyalty with respect to information obtained relating to his scientific findings, but rather than respecting this, in breach of what had been agreed, he would engage in clandestine behaviour which lacks honesty and professionalism, without regard to his obligations.

In conclusion, we would suggest that it is unethical (a) to promise to do something for remuneration and then not do it (i.e. to receive a salary, pension contributions, health insurance and other benefits, but breach the terms of one's employment contract) and (b) to act with disregard for the reasonable requests of one's employers, to the point of clandestinely working with third parties on a publication and seeking to publish it, based on data collected in the course of employment, against the specific, written requests of one's former employer. This is exactly what Diego Carantón did. These are also actions that the editors of ACO appear to condone.

***However, it is important to emphasize that while Carantón might legally assign patrimonial rights of his discovery to ProAves in a clause of his contract, according to Colombian law he conserves the moral rights to it because such rights, as stated in the Law 23 of 1982, are inalienable, unrenouncable and cannot be prescribed or seized. ... Even had Carantón effectively violated his contract and collected specimens without proper permission, one may ask whether it is ethically justifiable to publish the description of the new *Grallaria* while ignoring his moral rights as the person who made the***

***discovery, denying him the right to authorship of his find. We submit that the answer is no.***

Carantón assigned all intellectual property rights in his work to ProAves, his employer. This is a standard term of employment contracts in Colombia. As in many other countries, the employer's rights to an employee's intellectual property is automatic, and there is often no need even to state this in the contract. For example, an employee researcher of a pharmaceutical company cannot publish results of research independently or sell products developed in the course of employment on a personal basis. Furthermore, most employers and many universities and research institutions, like ProAves, have approval processes for published work of their employees. All intellectual property developed by Carantón in the course of his employment belongs to his employer, ProAves and he could only publish information resulting from his employment with the consent of his employers.

In contrast, a "moral right" is merely the right of someone (usually an individual) who has produced a work, to be associated with that work and to be appropriately named as such. Moral rights do not automatically entitle persons to be authors or publishers of scientific papers in relation to something they have found. This is because "moral rights" do not attach to findings or discoveries, but rather to copyright and other works of an author. Neither Carantón nor Certuche wrote any of the text in Barrera et al.'s description of *Grallaria fenwickorum*, so they have no moral rights in respect of that paper. In any event, Carantón's role in discovering this new species was duly acknowledged and cited in both the description and the *Conservación Colombiana* editorial. As a result, there was no breach of Carantón's moral rights: those rights were fully respected and due credit was given. Conversely, Carantón and ACO's publication of the second description and data resulting from Carantón's work as an employee of ProAves was made without ProAves' consent, and therefore constituted an infringement of ProAves' intellectual property rights, given that ProAves did not grant ACO or either of the authors a licence to use its intellectual property rights.

Moreover, ProAves did not deny Carantón the "right to authorship of his find"; he did this himself. Over twenty months of intermittent discussions, ProAves made considerable efforts – in a spirit of conciliation

well beyond what was necessary or might be expected, given that the breaches of contract were not on the part of ProAves and Carantón's illegal actions – to negotiate the basis for a paper in which Carantón would have been the first author, as detailed in the earlier *Conservación Colombiana* editorial. However, no agreement had been reached by the time that Carantón clandestinely sought to publish the paper separately. Should a ProAves researcher find a suspected new species in one of its reserves, ProAves would always be willing to collaborate with that person and in principle allow them to be first (and possibly sole) author of the description, assuming their involvement in the research and writing warranted it. Relevant external experts that might add value to a paper should also be authors where this is appropriate. If Carantón had approached ProAves with his finding promptly, as required by his contract, and accepted his employer's reasonable requirements, he would have received such treatment. There are several examples of descriptions of new bird species and subspecies based on the work of ProAves researchers, sometimes in collaboration with external researchers, that have not involved disputes of this nature.

As to ACO's assertions about scientific ethics, there is no written or unwritten code of which we are aware that requires those who pay a collector or researcher to allow him or her to unconditionally name any or every new species he or she collects. At the age of discovery during the early part of the last century, the big international museums used to send people all over the world to collect specimens for them, but it was typically their curators, like Sharpe, Rothschild, Stresemann and Blasius in Europe and Todd, Riley, Allen and Ripley in the US, who did the describing. More recently, new species descriptions have been less frequent. Whilst the historical treatment of employee-collectors is indicative of the considerations applicable in instances such as this, we should state that ProAves does not consider itself to run a research program at all similar to that of western museums in a different age. First, it is a national organisation and secondly, administrative staff and researchers within the foundation seek to achieve a high level of collaboration.

Turning to more recent descriptions, there are various cases of junior expedition team members not being included as authors on new species descriptions, including in some descriptions by the editors of

ACO. It should be borne in mind that the *Grallaria* was not discovered by Carantón in his capacity as an independent researcher mounting his own project, but rather as a paid researcher undertaking a project financed and conceived by other people. The new antpitta is not uncommon around the lodge in the reserve, and any person appointed to carry out mist-netting or other research work there would have been likely to find it. Carantón happened to be that person and should be rightly acknowledged for concluding that this was an undescribed species. We regret that Carantón was unable to come to an arrangement with ProAves on the publication of this description. However, he should not be treated as if he had found this new species on a project that he either obtained funding for or conceived.

***For this reason, the actions of Luis Felipe Barrera, Avery Bartels and the ProAves Foundation, as authors of the paper in Conservación Colombiana, are highly questionable. It is worth adding that Carantón was given no opportunity to answer the accusations against him for not complying with his contract before the accusations were made public, in detriment to his name and reputation.***

It is difficult to see how the editors of *Ornitología Colombia* could presume to know whether Carantón had been given an “opportunity to answer the accusations against him” except on the authority of Carantón himself, whose status as a reliable witness is one his record with ProAves would render, in his editors' own words, “highly questionable”. In fact there was considerable and documented communication with Carantón in the twenty months between October 2008, when ProAves learned of the discovery, and May 2010, when it was published. On 24 February 2009, ProAves held a meeting with him and a considerable numbers of letters, emails and phone conversations followed that. Evidence was presented to CorpoUrabá about the facts prior to the *Conservación Colombiana* editorial, which was subject to a legal review before being published. CorpoUrabá, an independent governmental third party, has also now endorsed ProAves' position in relation to Carantón's breaches of ProAves' regulations, and has determined that illegal behavior, attributable to Carantón, occurred. There is nothing that does or should restrict ProAves from making accusations which are both factual and true.

***At this point, as editors of Ornitología Colombiana, we consider that we should explain how we came to be involved in this matter, and what has been our part in it. In October 2008, Carantón communicated to one of us (CDC [Cadena]) his discovery of the new species on 27 September 2007 (confirmed by captures of birds in early 2008) and mentioned Certuche's involvement. He also indicated that he had communicated with ProAves personnel regarding publication and that the Foundation had agreed that he should lead the process of description, with the sole condition that they would decide the name of the new species in order to honor one of their donors.***

This statement carries the unequivocal implication that Carantón told Cadena of his “communication” with ProAves at the same time that he disclosed his discovery to him. Whether this is the construction of Carantón or of the editors of *Ornitología Colombiana*, it is false: ProAves only learnt of Carantón’s discovery (albeit in the same month as Cadena) as a consequence of third party information. In other words, Carantón told Cadena, who has no links with ProAves, of his discovery but informed neither ProAves, his employers, nor CorpoUrabá, the permit-granting authority. Once ProAves had found out about the proposal to describe the new species, Cadena himself was at the forefront of “negotiations” on how the publication of the new species should proceed. At one point Carantón agreed to the new species being named after the Fenwick family, whose generosity resulted in the establishment of the Colibrí del Sol Reserve, but it was principally Cadena who objected strongly to this name, as can be seen from the ACO editorial. Whilst issues concerning the name clearly led Cadena to cease participating in the paper, he continued at the forefront of discussions with ProAves. We have no information about why Carantón was not able to reach an agreement on this matter or to accept ProAves’ other requests.

After publishing the ACO article, Cadena wrote to over 40 persons including various members of the ABC board, the Smithsonian Institution, the Colombian Embassy in Washington, ProAves donors and others, circulating the *Ornitología Colombiana* editorial. He has also published a critical letter in *Birding* magazine (Cadena 2010). It is appropriate to ask why someone with no direct interest in this issue should see fit to interfere in it then or now, and – given the content of his statements against ProAves

both in the editorial and in other public communications discussed below – whether the questions he raises relating to “professionalism” should not now be asked of his own conduct in this affair. ProAves denounces these actions, which are clearly intended to have the effect of reducing the funding for its conservation work in Colombia. However, ProAves is encouraged that it has received only messages of support, both for its work generally and its approach to this new species description, from the persons to whom Cadena has written.

Cadena’s editorial and communications should be read in the context of a broader, unwarranted campaign against ProAves, often based on libelous statements. In a separate email to the Colombian national bird observers’ network (RNOACOL) on 24 July 2010, Cadena complained about the publication of the *Field Guide to the Birds of Colombia* (McMullan et al. 2010), an unrelated work whose proceeds will support ProAves, stating publicly that he would not buy it and suggesting that Colombia should only have one field guide, being one which ACO is supposedly working on. The communication sarcastically queries whether this was a plagiarized work, which it is not. It can be read, together with other public emails of his various of his associates, as inciting a boycott. On a separate e-mail to RNOACOL on 9 July 2010, Cadena made serious and entirely false accusations suggesting that ProAves had no collecting permit for other activities, namely the collection of the holotype of an (as yet undescribed) species of owl from Santa Marta (which was covered by a permit from CORPAMAG and duly reported) and that of the feathers of the *Grallaria fenwickorum* holotype (covered by a permit from CorpoUrabá and also duly reported). All these actions contrast starkly with the collaborative and reconciliatory message towards the end of his editorial.

Despite all that is set out here and in the other editorial, ProAves still regrets that it was not possible for Carantón to be an author of the *Grallaria fenwickorum* paper, and in a spirit of reconciliation has offered to rectify this through a corrigendum to the authorship of the name *fenwickorum* for nomenclatural purposes. This is possible, given that Carantón was a ProAves employee, ProAves is an author of the paper, and the ICZN code envisages authorship by institutions being attributed to their employees (ICZN Code, Glossary, definition of

“author”). Certuche, as his assistant, was also subject to this offer. ProAves also regrets that ACO merely characterizes this offer - which was considered in detail by ProAves up to Consejo level and which remains open until 30 April 2011 - as “rash” and made “inexplicably” rather than conciliatory, appropriate and generous in the circumstances.

***After receiving the unanimous approval of the Board of Directors of the Asociación Colombiana de Ornitología, and in spite of the existence of an already published description in the journal of ProAves, we have decided to publish the article by Carantón and Certuche in this number of Ornitología Colombiana, without modifying in any way the content approved over a month ago, both for its academic and scientific value and because we believe it important to clear up the doubts left by the article and editorial published by ProAves regarding the discovery of the new species of Grallaria.***

ProAves understands the position of ACO in publishing important information about the new species in a scientific paper and appreciates that additional data on the new species have been made available. However, as indicated above, this was in breach of ProAves’ intellectual property rights, and sets a poor precedent for the acceptability of published research based on illegal collecting activities and breach of contract. Most respectable journals reject manuscripts based on illegal collecting activities or which infringe the intellectual property rights of third parties, as shown by the approach of *The Condor*.

The purported re-description of this species with a new name, junior to *fenwickorum* by Carantón and Certuche, needlessly has created a certain level of nomenclatural instability. Although the ACO editorial rightly noted that *fenwickorum* has priority, certain people have deliberately avoided using the correct name *Grallaria fenwickorum* and have instead sought to use the junior synonym in conferences, papers and on-line resources in an apparent attempt to get this other name “established” in preference to *fenwickorum*. An example is the symposium presentation co-authored by Carantón, Certuche, Cadena and M. J. Gómez-Martínez at the International Ornithological Conference in Brazil (Certuche-Cubillos et al. 2010) and a separate presentation in the third Colombian Zoological Congress by Carantón & Certuche (2010b). In both

presentations, the junior synonym was used in full disregard of the provisions of the International Code of Zoological Nomenclature concerning the priority of species names. In the latter presentation, the junior synonym was published by ACO in the abstracts; and in at least the former presentation, scant or no acknowledgment was given to ProAves for supporting the research. These attempts appear unlikely to succeed. The “Principle of Priority” cannot be reversed for names used after 1899 (International Code for Zoological Nomenclature, article 23.9.1) without a decision of the International Commission for Zoological Nomenclature (Code, article 23.1). No such decision exists and it is not clear why the Commission should intervene in Carantón & Certuche’s favour here.

Despite this questionable campaign, the name *Grallaria fenwickorum* has priority and is the correct name for this new species. This name has now been formally accepted by BirdLife International and is used on influential independent websites such as Wikipedia and Aves–A taxonomy in Flux. *Grallaria fenwickorum* is also used in the recent *Field Guide to the Birds of Colombia* (McMullan et al. 2010), which went to press on 21 June 2010, a few days before the second description was published and an example of why the ICZN Principle of Priority is relevant and important even in relation to works published close in time to one another. We have further consulted a number of world experts on zoological nomenclature, who have been unanimously of the view that the *fenwickorum* description is valid and has priority. It is senseless and destabilising for ACO to have published a new alternative name for this *Grallaria* and of Carantón, Certuche, Cadena and others to seek to “establish” it in breach of the Code. Such actions cannot be justified in terms of scientific value or “clarification” relating to the discovery. The correct approach would have been for ACO to publish the data (with appropriate permissions and ProAves’ consent) or even the whole description, but without seeking to establish a new name.

***Readers interested in the scientific rigor of the work rather than the other issues related to this situation can form their own conclusions by comparing the article by Carantón and Certuche with that of ProAves.***

This statement implies that the ACO paper is somehow superior to the ProAves paper. In reality,

the two papers are different – apparently without a common origination – and each is stronger in different areas. One difference is that the ACO description uses a full specimen as a holotype while the ProAves description mentions and depicts these specimens but uses samples of a live, photographed individual as a holotype. Full specimens clearly allow a more comprehensive morphological description of the holotype than feather samples, but this does not affect the validity of a description. On the other hand, the ProAves description includes considerable information on the conservation of the new species and its population in the nature reserve that protects it. Moreover, the ProAves description considers in detail the rank of the new taxon as a species or a subspecies of allopatric *Grallaria milleri*, comparing the diagnostic vocal and plumage differences observed with those between sympatric antpitta species. That issue is not addressed in detail in the ACO description. Researchers we have consulted have concluded that both papers are strong, each providing valuable information about the new species.

## The future

The story of this new *Grallaria*, which should be a celebration for research and conservation in Colombia, has sadly been mired by the petty disputes discussed again in this paper.

Nonetheless, ProAves wishes and continually seeks collaborative relations with the ornithological research community of Colombia. Having established a sizeable and effective bird reserve network for many threatened species and their habitats, as well as major programs of environmental education, community outreach and other conservation activities, ProAves has focused its resources on land purchase and conservation management, resulting in significant benefits for the conservation of birds and biodiversity in Colombia. Nevertheless it has always fully acknowledged that conservation also needs good research to support it. ProAves has taken various steps to support researchers working at its reserves and often applies for funding for research projects, such as Carantón's work at Colibrí del Sol and its national banding program. ProAves welcomes

external researchers to use its reserve network, recognizing that conservationists, ornithologists and birders are all stronger if they work together. However, such collaboration imposes responsibilities on both sides, and the necessary permits must always be obtained and complied with.

## Fundación ProAves

*This editorial was circulated to and approved by both the Advisory Council and Executive Board of Fundación ProAves, prior to its publication.*

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