

# Records of three new antbirds for Colombia

## *Registros de tres nuevos hormigueros para Colombia*

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**Abstract.** Details are presented of photographic records of Black-headed Antbird *Percnostola rufifrons jensoni*, Band-tailed Antbird *Hypocnemoides maculicauda* and Black-tailed Antbird *Myrmoborus melanurus*, a subspecies and two species of antbird not previously reported to occur in Colombia.

**Keywords:** new record, antbird, distribution.

**Resumen.** Se presentan detalles sobre registros fotográficos de *Percnostola rufifrons jensoni*, *Hypocnemoides maculicauda* y *Myrmoborus melanurus*, una subespecie y dos especies de aves hormigueros no reportados anteriormente en Colombia.

**Palabras clave:** nuevo registro, hormiguero, distribución.

In February of 2019, I visited Leticia in the Colombian Amazon for a third time. Although Mitú and Irírida are very popular destinations for birders, I have always felt that Leticia, with the large number of Amazon river and várzea specialists, was just as interesting.

In 2017, we encountered an ant swarm around kilometer 14 in Leticia, and I was able to obtain photos of both a male and female Black-headed Antbird *Percnostola rufifrons*. Most maps do not show this species in Leticia. The '*jensoni*' subspecies is in northeast Peru and the '*minor*' subspecies is in east Colombia. The female I saw resembles the female '*jensoni*' (from HBW information) because it has a lot of grey, but it seemed odd to see the subspecies on the other side of the Amazon river. There are now a few other records on eBird of the Black-headed Antbird in the 'tierra firma' forests in Leticia, but I have not seen another photo of the female.

In February 2019 we visited a new várzea site near Lago Tarapoto, because most of the usual sites were flooded. On the way we passed through a section of forest on a boat, and recorded a pair (male and female) of Band-tailed Antbirds *Hypocnemoides maculicauda*. They did not respond to the recording I had for a Black-chinned Antbird *Hypocnemoides melanopogon*, and I didn't have a recording for the Band-tailed Antbird. Both sexes clearly show a band on end of the tail. I had seen a pair of similar antbirds in 2017 in almost the same place, except during low water, but was not able to photograph the tail or hear the song. They somehow seemed

different than the Black-chinned Antbirds I had seen in Irírida because they were out of the forest at the water edge, and moving as a pair, so in 2019 I was on the look out for Band-tailed Antbirds.

In the same várzea forest, we found a male Black-tailed Antbird *Myrmoborus melanurus* on the first visit, a female on the second visit a few hundred meters further along, and both sexes together on the third visit. I didn't know what species it was until the third visit, and the female at least responded to playback and then disappeared, almost as if it had encountered playback before (which seems unlikely). This patch of várzea was especially dark and wet and full of mosquitos.

All three birds illustrated were photographed and are shown in Figure 1. Given that these three pairs of birds that had previously thought to be species or subspecies only found on the south side of the very wide Amazon river, I am wondering how much of a barrier the Amazon river really is. How often does an antbird cross the Amazon river? Perhaps they cross some of the Amazon tributaries further west, or places where islands shorten the crossing? Could they cross on floating vegetation?

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**Figure 1.** Three new antbirds for Colombia. Males are on left and females are on right and middle centre. Top: Black-headed Antbird *Percnostola rufifrons jensoni*, km 14, Leticia, Amazonas, Colombia, 16 September 2017. Middle: Black-tailed Antbird *Myrmoborus melanurus*, Puerto Nariño, Amazonas, Colombia, 21 February 2019. Lower: Band-tailed Antbird *Hypocnemoides maculicauda*, Puerto Nariño, Amazonas, Colombia, 25 February 2019. All photographs by Tom Friedel, © <http://www.BirdPhotos.com>.