

Grey Hawk *Buteo nitidus* and Ornate Hawk-Eagle *Spizaetus ornatus* in north-west Peru

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La Reserva de Biosfera del Noroeste es un complejo de tres áreas naturales protegidas que abarca una superficie de 230.000 ha localizadas en el corazón de la Zona Endémica Tumbesina, en los departamentos de Tumbes y Piura, noroeste de Perú. La reserva protege la mayor porción de bosques deciduos y semideciduos en toda la región y las tres áreas protegidas que la conforman son áreas importantes para la conservación de las aves. Al menos 260 especies de aves se han reportado para la reserva de biosfera, de las cuales 34 corresponden a rapaces diurnas. A pesar de que varias expediciones ornitológicas han sido conducidas en estas áreas dentro de ellas continuamente se reportan nuevas especies de aves para el noroeste de Perú y para todo el país. En este artículo reportamos la ocurrencia de una nueva especie de rapaz para el oeste de Perú (el Gavilán Gris *Buteo nitidus*) y confirmamos la presencia del Águila Penachuda *Spizaetus ornatus*, una rapaz conocida previamente para el noroeste de Perú pero de la que no habían registros recientes, siendo el último de finales del siglo XIX.

Between August 2004 and May 2009, we made several visits to the North Western Biosphere Reserve (NWBR) and its environs as part of detailed research into the structure and ecology of the diurnal raptor community in north-west Peru. During this work, one diurnal raptor species new to north-west Peru (Grey Hawk *Buteo nitidus*) and another, Ornate Hawk-Eagle *Spizaetus ornatus*, with no modern records were documented.

Study area

Our observations were made along the road from Cruce Quebrada Seca north-west to the town of El Tutumo, in the north of Cerros de Amotape National Park (CANP) buffer zone, now proposed as the Tutumo-Matapalo Regional Conservation Area, and near El Caucho Research Station. These areas are located at altitudes of 350–500 m and <1

km from Faical creek and 8 km from the Ecuador border; ecologically they are classified as dense evergreen forest¹.

Records

Grey Hawk *Buteo nitidus*.—On 27 December 2007 FA and RP observed a juvenile perched in a *Cecropia* tree within a cleared area along a trail from El Caucho Research Station to Cotrina, at c.500 m, in the north of the CANP. In the morning of 18 May 2009, RP photographed a juvenile Grey Hawk (Fig. 1) perched at c.7 m on a tree beside a trail parallel to a small tributary that joins Faical creek. The bird was vocalising and was identified by the yellowish head with a prominent dark brown post-ocular stripe. Next day, at 08h00, both FA and RP recorded a vocalisation that they suspected belonged to a Grey Hawk (see www.xeno-canto).



Figure 1. Juvenile Grey Hawk *Buteo nitidus* (left) and adult Grey Hawk (right), Cerros de Amotape National Park, Tumbes, Peru, May 2009 (Renzo P. Piana, left photograph, and Fernando Angulo)

org/recording.php?XC=35185). The recording was compared to a published vocalisation of this species², which proved to be very similar. Some minutes later, they observed an adult Grey Hawk flying over the forest canopy very close to the creek. It perched on an exposed branch c.100 m away and was photographed (Fig. 1).

Ornate Hawk-Eagle *Spizaetus ornatus*.—On 18 July 2005, MA photographed an adult at Unión creek (c.450 m), very close to El Caicho Research Station. It was perched c.16 m above ground and 30 m from the observer, and was identified by the rufous pattern on the head with an erect crest. On 18 December 2008, at 11h00, EO observed a *S. ornatus* along the trail from Cotrina to Pozo del Pato at c.500 m, in the north-east CANP. The bird was seen perched under the canopy of a tree, 12 m above ground and 16 m from the observer, for four minutes and was identified as an adult Ornate Hawk-Eagle due to its size, feathered tarsi, rufous head-sides, black-barred breast and belly, black crest and yellow to orangey irides. On 19 May 2009 at 11h00, a juvenile Ornate Hawk-Eagle was observed by SC beside the road from Cruce Quebrada Seca to El Tutumo, north of the CANP at 370 m. The bird flew low and then perched for at least three minutes on the branch of a *Cavanillesia platanifolia* tree, at c.7 m above ground and 8 m from the observer, and was photographed (Fig. 2). It was identified as a juvenile *S. ornatus* based on the pale rufous neck-sides, brown back and belly, and black-barred thighs.

Discussion

Despite the relative accessibility of the NWBR, and particularly of the CANP and its buffer zone (50 km south-east of Tumbes city) new bird species are continuously reported there. Four new species for Peru and two new species for western Peru have been reported in the last two years^{3,4,5} (this work). Probably still more bird species that typically occur west of the Andes in Ecuador await discovery in western Peru. Further surveys of the North Western Biosphere Reserve are needed to thoroughly document the region's avian diversity and to better understand the distribution of bird species that although present in western Ecuador, have not been recorded west of the Peruvian Andes.

Grey Hawk, which is rare in eastern Peru⁷, has been detected three times (involving at least four individuals) in north-west Peru since 2007 (W. ten Have pers. comm. and this report). In Ecuador this species favours deciduous woodland, borders and clearings in the western lowlands⁶, similar to the habitat in which it has been found in north-west Peru. The presence of two immatures and two adults in the NWBR suggests a resident population. However, it is possible that birds from



Figure 2. Juvenile Ornate Hawk-Eagle *Spizaetus ornatus*, Cerros de Amotape National Park buffer zone, Tumbes, Peru, May 2009 (Segundo Crespo)

Ecuador are being forced to move south due to the destruction and fragmentation of deciduous forest, or that they are occupying a vacant niche in Peru.

The sightings described here confirm the occurrence of Ornate Hawk-Eagle in Tumbes. Taczanowski⁹ reported collecting one at Lechugal (30 km east of Tumbes city) although this specimen cannot now be located (T. S. Schulenberg pers. comm.). The species is rare in western Ecuador⁶ and uncommon in eastern Peru⁷. The presence of Ornate Hawk-Eagle along with the similar Black Hawk-Eagle *Spizaetus tyrannus* poses new challenges to better understand the ecology and interactions between these two raptors in north-west Peru.

It would be relevant to know if these two raptors had been merely overlooked by previous workers or are newly colonising. Detailed studies of raptor habitat requirements, species' response to deforestation and habitat conversion rates on both sides of the border will be needed to better understand their population dynamics, and will help promote conservation of the forest remnants either side of the border.

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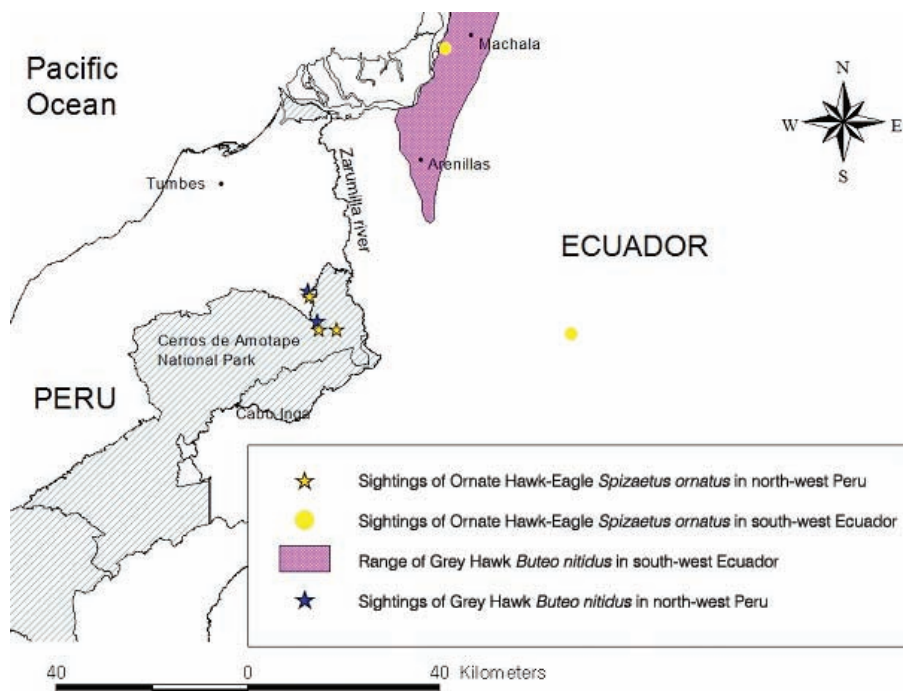


Figure 3. Distribution of Grey Hawk *Buteo nitidus* and Ornate Hawk-Eagle *Spizaetus ornatus* in south-west Ecuador and the new sightings in north-west Peru. Distribution in Ecuador is based on the maps in Ridgely & Greenfield⁸.

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