

A new species to Ecuador: White-bellied Pygmy-Tyrant

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On 14 December 2010 we birded the new road to Shaime, Zamora-Chincipe, remote Southeast-Ecuador. We were staying at the Yankuam Lodge and had two full days of birding in this superb area (04°15'S 78°39'W). The road starting on the other side of the river Nangaritza (opposite of Yankuam) can be crossed by ferry. The road provides excellent birding through good habitat and is probably the easiest way to get the much sought-after Orange-throated Tanager *Wetmorethraupis sterrhopteron*. We got the tanager daily at many sites (15+) and they seemed most abundant at the fork 11km past the ferry. A pair of Blackish Pewees *Contopus nigrescens* was also stationary here. Taking the fork to the right will bring you close to Shaime on a “freshly cut” road going through stunning primary forest. About 2km from the fork (just above Shaime at 980m asl.) we watched a small party of birds with species like Rufous-winged Antwren *Herpsilochmus rufimarginatus* and Greyish Mourner *Rhytipterna simplex*.



Suddenly, Dušan's attention was drawn by some insect-like calls coming from 50m further down the road. His words were: "I'm sorry but I think I'm hearing a new species for Ecuador, we have to go there now!". We watched the canopy carefully and within a few minutes we could confirm that the calls were indeed made by a tiny *Tyrannidae*. Dušan was familiar with the call of White-bellied Pygmy-tyrant *Myiornis albiventris* from Peru and it all seemed to fit. It turned out to be a family group of three pygmy-tyrants and the first glimpses we got of them looked promising. After making some recordings of the uttering calls we played back full song of the species. We got positive response and one bird (presumably the male) sang back. The tiny tyrants slowly came in towards us and we watched them for about 15min within 10m distance. They were still moving around but at this point we were able to observe plumage details well and record photos were taken. The grey streaking on flanks, breast and throat, dark auricular patch and pinkish color around the eyes fully supported the identification as White-bellied Pygmy-tyrant, excluding the Short-tailed Pygmy-tyrant *Myiornis ecaudatus*.

The species is uncommon in Peru and Bolivia where found locally along the east base of the Andes and outlying ridges. The northernmost distribution previously known for the species are the foothills of the department of San Martin, Peru. Our observation of the White-bellied Pygmy-tyrant at Shaima is a significant northward range extension of the species (>300km) and a new species to Ecuador.