First breeding data for Cherry-throated Tanager *Nemosia rourei*

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São relatadas as primeiras observações sobre atividades de nidificação de Saíra-apunhalada *Nemosia rourei* em novembro de 1998 na Fazenda Pindobas IV, Conceição do Castelo, sul do Espírito Santo, Brasil. Três indivíduos foram observados, sendo que dois pareciam mais ativos. O ninho estava sendo construído em depressão natural de um tronco de árvore, a meia altura do solo. É descrito o comportamento dos indivíduos, a forma do ninho e material utilizado. Uma breve comparação com o comportamento reprodutivo de sua congênere Saíra-de-chapéu-preto *Nemosia pileata* foi feito.

Introduction

Virtually our entire knowledge of Cherry-throated Tanager *Nemosia rourei*, which until recently was considered one of the 'lost' species of the Atlantic Forest, is presented by Bauer *et al.*[2]. Described, in 1870, from a specimen taken in Muriaé, Minas Gerais, there are only two subsequent confirmed records, both in the 20th century and in Espírito Santo, between 900 and 1,100 m, in 1940, at Itarana[7] and in February 1998, in Conceição do Castelo[1,5]. A possible sight record is from the comparatively well-watched Augusto Ruschi (Nova Lombardia) Federal Biological Reserve, above Santa Teresa (700 m), in the same state, in 1994[6].

Following the record at Fazenda Pindobas IV, a privately owned ranch situated at 1,100 m in the municipality of Conceição do Castelo, a project was initiated to study the species. This is scheduled to finish in December 2002 and is being undertaken by Originalis Natura. In addition to studying the species' ecology at the rediscovery site, the project is searching for *Nemosia rourei* elsewhere in Espírito Santo, as well as in neighbouring areas of Minas Gerais and Rio de Janeiro. Currently the work is supported by the Itapemirim Corporation and NBC/Field Guides, through an NBC Conservation Award.

Observations of nesting behaviour

In November 1998, at Fazenda Pindobas IV, ACV and PRP, together with GMK and a group of birdwatchers, observed the first nesting behaviour recorded for the species. In the morning of 25 November, PRP briefly observed three lone individuals (not within a mixed-species flock as is usual in our experience of *Nemosia rourei*), in an area of the property where the species is often observed, known as the Pingadeira complex. In an attempt to relocate them, he briefly played a recording of the species' vocalisation. Surprisingly, unlike on previous occasions, one responded immediately to playback and flew very low and close to its source. Several factors were unusual in this observation: it was the first time we had observed the species outside of a canopy mixed-species flock led by Sirystes *Sirystes sibilator*; and the immediate response to playback, with one individual flying directly towards the source of the vocalisation, was also noteworthy.

All three *Nemosia rourei* were then observed vocalising constantly for several minutes, during which time a member of our group (Joel Abramson) drew our attention to what he thought was a nest. Using both binoculars and telescope, we observed the behaviour of the three birds for the rest of the morning. For approximately the first hour, two individuals (the third appeared less active and more observant; perhaps acting as a 'lookout') regularly brought nesting material ('hairy' moss) in their bills, placing it in a natural shallow depression within a branch forming a right angle to the trunk (Fig. 2). After depositing the material, they 'sat' on it (Fig. 3), arranging it with lateral movements of their bodies. Sometimes the bill was also used for this purpose. All individuals were very vocal and the two bringing nest materials would leave and return rapidly. The other perched very close by, though it was not seen to collect any nesting material.

During this period, we also observed nearby (c.50 m away) at least one other *Nemosia rourei* carrying a thin twig, c.10 cm long, in its bill. (This individual was more retiring than the three at the nest and we therefore continued to observe the activity of the original group. We were unable to observe where it deposited the twig and therefore do not know if it was used in the construction of another nest unseen by us.) At the end of the first hour, the birds left the nest site for c.40 minutes. They returned to the nest-building work at 10h00 for a few minutes and departed again.

A group of four *Nemosia rourei* was observed at 12h00, c.100 m from the nest site, within a mixed-species flock containing Sirystes, Black-tailed Tityra

Tityra cayana and Azure-shouldered *Thraupis cyanoptera*, Golden-chevroned *T. ornata*, Rufous-headed *Hemithraupis ruficapilla*, Red-necked *Tangara cyanocephala*, Gilt-edged *T. cyanoventris* and Brassy-breasted Tanagers *T. desmaresti*. We concluded observations at c.12h30, after a period of more than two hours without further activity at the nest site, but returned to the site in the afternoon. No activity was observed between 16h30 and 17h45. Following this we played the species' vocalisation and observed two individuals approach alone, from a different direction (i.e. not from the location of the nest, although nearby). We did not persist with the playback and the individuals swiftly departed.

Breeding behaviour of *Nemosia pileata*

Few data exist on the nesting ecology of Hooded Tanager *Nemosia pileata*[4]: the most detailed are those presented by Haverschmidt & Mees[3] from Surinam. The nest, constructed by both sexes, consists of an open cup of small dead leaves and grasses, which is usually placed high, and typically bound with spider webs, on a tree branch. Nest building has been observed in July and August, an occupied nest noted in late December and a recently fledged juvenile in early February[3,4]. These data contrast slightly with those now available for *N. rourei*. Firstly, the nest we observed was situated at mid-height within the tree, and we were unable to observe any spider webs attaching the nest structure to the tree, which was in contrast placed within a shallow, natural cavity of a branch. Most of the constituents of the nest appeared to be 'hairy' moss, described above. Clearly, more data on the breeding ecology of both species would be welcome.

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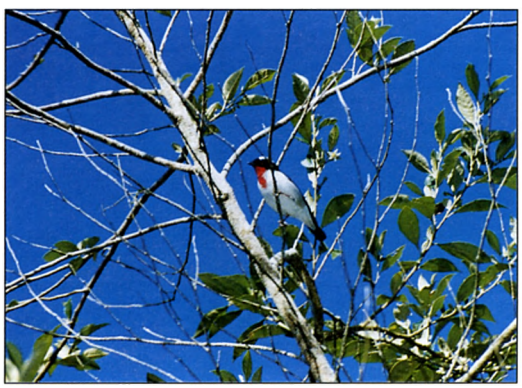

Figure 1. Cherry-throated Tanager *Nemosia rourei*, Pingadeira complex, Fazenda Pindobas IV, Espírito Santo, Brazil (Pedro Rogerio de Paz)

Figure 2. Nest tree of Cherry-throated Tanager *Nemosia rourei*. The individual is depositing nesting material in a natural depression on the tree branch (Pedro Rogerio de Paz)

Figure 3. Cherry-throated Tanager *Nemosia rourei* on the nest, arranging nesting material (Pedro Rogerio de Paz)

many special times. Finally, we thank all of those birdwatchers that have shared our observations and sense of excitement that *Nemosia rourei* still exists!

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