

OBSERVATIONS ON THE NEST AND EGG OF THE SWALLOW-TAILED NIGHTJAR (*UROPSALIS SEGMENTATA SEGMENTATA*) IN SOUTHEASTERN ECUADOR

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Observaciones sobre el nido y huevo del Chotacabras Tijereta (*Uropsalis segmentata segmentata*) en el sureste del Ecuador.

Key words: Nest and egg description, incubation behavior, Ecuador, Tapichalaca, Swallow-tailed Nightjar, *Uropsalis segmentata*.

The Swallow-tailed Nightjar (*Uropsalis segmentata*) is one of only two species in the genus (del Hoyo *et al.* 1999). It ranges from Colombia to Bolivia, inhabiting temperate forest edges, clearings, and paramo on both slopes of the Andes (Holyoak 2001), and is typically encountered at elevations between 2200 and 3600 m (Holyoak 2001, Ridgely & Greenfield 2001).

Little is known about the breeding biology of the Swallow-tailed Nightjar (but see Carriker 1955, Schönwetter 1964, Hilty & Brown 1986) or its congener, the Lyre-tailed Nightjar (*U. lyra*) (but see Greeney & Wetherwax 2005). Schönwetter (1964) describes the eggs of Swallow-tailed Nightjar from Bolivia but, to use his own words he “has reservations about” (translation from original German text by IH) the correct species identification. Here we provide the first con-

firmed description of an egg for this species from Ecuador.

On 28 September 2005, we encountered the nest of a Swallow-tailed Nightjar at c. 2650 m a.s.l. in the Tapichalaca Biological Reserve (04°30'S, 79°10'W), Zamora Chinchipe province, southeastern Ecuador. At 10:45 h (EST), we found a warm egg resting on the ground and, upon checking the site 45 min later, we found an incubating female Swallow-tailed Nightjar. The bird flushed rather reluctantly after being photographed from a distance of c. 1.3 m (Fig. 1). After flushing, she flew to perch on a branch of *Chusquea* bamboo, 4–5 m from the nest. The nest (Fig. 2) appeared similar to other nightjar nests, with little or no material added, and consisted of dried leaves and a few dead twigs lining a small depression on the ground. The nest was on a steep northeastern-facing slope roughly 3.5 m above a small cattle trail. The slope was sun-exposed for most of the morn-

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FIG. 1. Incubating female Swallow-tailed Nightjar (*Uropsalis s. segmentata*), Tapichalaca Biological Reserve, 2650 m a.s.l, Zamora Chinchipe province, Ecuador, 28 September 2005. Photo by Inka Harms.

ing, and surrounding vegetation consisted of small shrubs, ferns and *Chusquea* bamboo in regrowing pasture. The nest itself was situated on a small, level, cleared area (roughly 2.5 by 1 m) with very little green vegetation within 1 m of the egg. The single egg (Fig. 2) was pure white and measured roughly 3 by 2 cm (using a photograph next to a known length). The egg disappeared after 4 days, and the female was not observed again.

We filmed the nest on 28 September, from 13:00 to 16:30 h, and again on 29 September from 08:00 to 11:45 h. During this time, only the female incubated, and left the nest only at our approach, returning to the nest 11 and 19 min after our departure ($n = 2$ observations). While incubating, she spent 6.6 and 5.0% of her time shuffling, preening, and changing positions (28 and 29 September, respectively). Egg-rolling and wing-stretching

both occurred only once during the entire observation period. These bouts of activity lasted from 3 to 334 s (mean \pm SD = 29 ± 64 s). We also observed the female panting with open bill and rapidly fluttering her throat (Fig. 1). This behavior occurred during midday when the bird was most exposed to the sun, and we presume it to be a form of thermoregulation.

While we did not observe a male near the nest, our limited observations do not preclude his involvement in incubation. Greeney & Wetherwax (2005) observed no male involvement in brooding or feeding of the nestling for Lyre-tailed Nightjar, and it is likely that neither species has biparental care.

The Swallow-tailed Nightjar is currently thought to include two distinct subspecies *U. s. segmentata* and *U. s. kalinowskii* (del Hoyo *et al.* 1999, Holyoak 2001). Subspecies *segmentata*



FIG. 2. Complete clutch of Swallow-tailed Nightjar (*Uropsalis s. segmentata*) in shallow depression nest on the ground, Tapichalaca Biological Reserve, 2650 m, Zamora Chinchipe province, Ecuador, 29 September 2005. Photo by Ryan Lynch.

ranges from Colombia to Ecuador, whereas *kalinowskii* ranges from Peru to Bolivia (del Hoyo *et al.* 1999, Holyoak 2001, Ridgely & Greenfield 2001). The all white egg observed here was quite different from those described by Schönwetter (1964). Translated from German, he describes them as having “dense clay-brown scribbles on a pale-brown background with very fine light-grey spots.” Even should his identification prove correct, this suggests large differences in egg coloration between the two subspecies.

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