

similar dimensions and structure to that found in April 2006. This nest was c.6 m above ground and placed atop a mass of intertwined branches that supported the structure. Rather remarkably, its location was just a few hundred metres from that in 2006.

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#### The nest and eggs of Masked Crimson Tanager *Ramphocelus nigrogularis*

The genus *Ramphocelus* comprises several medium-sized tanagers notable for the short, dense, plush-like head-feathers and mostly glistening red and black plumage. Depending upon taxonomy, it numbers 8–9 species<sup>1</sup>. Nests of all but two have been described<sup>1</sup>. Robinson<sup>3</sup> mentioned two nests of Masked Crimson Tanager *R. nigrogularis* in Peru, giving little information except nest height (1 and 2 m). Here we present the first detailed description of a nest of this species, which ranges mostly below 600 m (one record at 1,100 m, in Peru), east of the Andes from southern Colombia, through Ecuador to Peru, and east to Brazil, mostly south of the Amazon<sup>1</sup>.

On 2 July 2005 we found a nest of Masked Crimson Tanager at Shiripuno Research Center (01°06'S 76°43'W), which is south of Coca at the border between Pastaza and Napo provinces, Ecuador, at 220 m. As we canoed across a small oxbow lake, an adult tanager flushed from the nest when we were c.15 m away. It 'chipped' sharply once, then left the area.

The nest was 20 cm above ground and 30 cm from the lake's edge. It was completely suspended between 10–15 stiff vertical stems of various grasses and sedges. The nest was a bulky cup, mostly of dead dicot leaves and bound by long stems of a vine-like fern (*Microgramma* sp., Polypodiaceae). The fern stems wrapped around the outside of the nest, sometimes passing around it twice, and were woven in and around the supporting stems, firmly attaching the nest to the substrate. Inside the outer layer of leaves and ferns, the nest was sparsely lined with brown, thin, flexible fibres. Outside, the nest measured 9 cm wide by 8 cm tall. Two eggs rested within an inner cup 6.5 cm wide by 5.0 cm deep. They were blue with sparse, heavy, black splotches overlaying denser, much paler, lavender flecking, and measured 22.0 × 17.9 and 22.2 × 17.6 mm.



Figure 1. Nest and eggs of Masked Crimson Tanager *Ramphocelus nigrogularis*, Shiripuno Research Station, Amazonian Ecuador, 2 July 2005 (Harold F. Greeney)

In addition, a nest under construction in mid-August 2006, near Atalaya (500 m), dpto. Madre de Dios, Peru, was in a large, relatively open garden and c.6 m from the main lodge at Hacienda Amazonia (S. L. Hilty *in litt.* 2007). It was suspended amidst several vertical, regrowing, sapling-like branches of an isolated, broken tree stump, densely covered in bromeliads and other epiphytes. The nest was c.90 cm above ground in a low-lying area adjacent to the upper río Madre de Dios subject to seasonal flooding. This nest, however, was >100 m from a small permanent stream, and >150 m from a lagoon with permanent water. At least three birds brought dead leaf fragments to the partially constructed cup nest, confirming Robinson's<sup>3</sup> observations that Masked Crimson Tanager is a cooperative breeder.

Whilst the nests of a few other *Ramphocelus* have been fairly well studied<sup>4,5</sup>, the nesting habits of most are poorly known. The nest described here appears largely similar to those described for other congeners<sup>1</sup>. Similarly, the eggs are as described for this species from the Natural History Museum, Tring, collection<sup>2</sup>, and by Robinson<sup>3</sup> from Peru. As the species frequently inhabits the edges of oxbow lakes<sup>1</sup>, the location of the Ecuador nest is no surprise. The Peruvian nest, however, was situated well away from the lake margin, but near other waterbodies.

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Figure 1. Nest and eggs of Blue-headed Quail-Dove *Starmoenas cyanocephala*, Ciénaga de Zapata, Cuba, June 2006 (Arturo Kirkconnell)



Figure 3. Hatchling of Blue-headed Quail-Dove *Starmoenas cyanocephala*, Ciénaga de Zapata, Cuba, 23 June 2006 (Arturo Kirkconnell)



Figure 2. Incubating adult Blue-headed Quail-Dove *Starmoenas cyanocephala*, Ciénaga de Zapata, Cuba, June 2006 (Arturo Kirkconnell)

**First record of Willet *Catoptrophorus semipalmatus* in the Ecuadorian highlands**

On 20 October 2007 a Willet *Catoptrophorus semipalmatus* was photographed at Lago San Pablo (00°12'N 78°12'W), prov. Imbabura, in the northern highlands of Ecuador, at 2,680 m. It was on a narrow strip of mud on the west side of the lake, near a group of roosting Yellow-billed Pintails *Anas georgica*. The bird was observed well and we took digital photographs at a distance of c.10 m. It gave a loud call when it flew off with the pintails. Unlike the pintails, it returned to the shore a few hundred metres away.

Identification was straightforward. A large, drab wader with a long, relatively heavy bill, bluish grey at the base, with pale legs and a conspicuous black-and-white wing pattern in flight. We identified the bird as an adult in non-breeding plumage, as it lacked the buff plumage of a juvenile, which has dark subterminal markings on the scapulars, coverts and tertails<sup>1</sup>. The subspecies involved was probably *C. s. inornatus*, which is common in saltwater habitats of the Ecuadorian coast in November–February<sup>6</sup>. Structural characters such as the long bill, neck and legs