

# Revision of the status of bird species occurring or reported in Colombia 2013

## *Revisión del estatus de las especies de aves que han sido reportadas en Colombia 2013*

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### Abstract

The following species are added to Colombia's bird checklist: Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator* (photograph, San Andrés & Providencia), Black Scoter *Melanitta americana* (sight record) and Kelp Gull *Larus dominicanus* (photographic record). A new subspecies of Common Bush-Tanager *Chlorospingus flavopectus olsoni* is recognized. Proposed splits are accepted of *Oxygogon* Helmetcrests into four species (three in Colombia), Lineated Woodcreeper *Lepidocolaptes albolineatus* into five species (one in Colombia), Curve-billed Scythebill *Campylorhamphus procurvoides* into three species (one in Colombia), Stipple-throated Antwren *Epinecrophylla haematonota* into at least three species (one in Colombia) and *Sirystes* into four species (two in Colombia). The Green-crowned Woodnymph *T. fannyi* is lumped back into Purple-crowned Woodnymph *T. colombica*. Dunlin *Calidris alpina* becomes a confirmed species (photograph) and Caribbean Coot *Fulica caribaea* is confirmed from mainland records (photograph). A possible vagrant record of Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos* is presented. Zebra Finch *Taeniopygia guttata* and Fischer's Lovebird *Agapornis fischeri* are new escaped species known only from sight records and Java Sparrow *Lonchura oryzivora* becomes confirmed as an escapee. Several amendments to genus and species names, English names and linear order are made, following recent publications. As a result of these changes, the Colombian checklist again increases in size, for the first time for any country, passing the landmark of 1900 species to 1903 (excluding escapes), of which 1831 are documented by 'confirmed' records on the mainland. The Kelp Gull is Colombia's 1900<sup>th</sup> bird.

**Key words** Red-breasted Merganser, Black Scoter, Kelp Gull, Bush-Tanager, Helmetcrests, Lineated Woodcreeper, Curve-billed Scythebill, Stipple-throated Antwren, Mallard, *Sirystes*, Woodnymph, Dunlin, Caribbean Coot, Colombia, bird, checklist.

### Resumen

Las siguientes especies se agregan al listado de aves de Colombia: *Mergus serrator* (basado en fotografía), *Melanitta americana* (observaciones) y *Larus dominicanus* (fotografía). Se reconocen las separaciones propuestas de *Oxygogon* en cuatro especies (tres en Colombia), *Lepidocolaptes albolineatus* en cinco especies (una en Colombia), *Campylorhamphus procurvoides* en tres

especies (una en Colombia), *Epinecrophylla haematonota* en por lo menos tres especies (una en Colombia) y *Sirystes* en cuatro especies (dos en Colombia). Se reconoce la nueva subespecie *Chlorospingus flavopectus olsoni*. *Thalaurania fannyi* se vuelve otra vez una subespecie de *T. colombica*. *Calidris alpina* se vuelve una especie confirmada (fotografía) y *Fulica caribaea* se confirma en el territorio continental (fotografía). Se presenta un registro de un individuo posiblemente accidental de *Anas platyrhynchos*. *Taeniopygia guttata* y *Agapornis fischeri* son especies exóticas registradas por observaciones y *Lonchura oryzivora* se vuelve especie confirmada como especie escapada. Se realizan varias modificaciones a los nombres de géneros y especies, nombres en inglés y el orden del listado. A raíz de estos cambios, el listado Colombiano aumentó nuevamente, superando 1900 especies por primera vez para cualquier país del mundo, a 1903 especies (excluyendo especies exóticas), de las cuales 1831 han sido confirmadas con registros en el continente. La gaviota *Larus dominicanus* se categoriza como la especie número 1900 para Colombia.

**Palabras clave** *Mergus serrator*, *Melanitta americana*, *Larus dominicanus*, *Chlorospingus flavopectus olsoni*, *Lepidocolaptes albolineatus*, *Oxygogon*, *Campylorhamphus procurvoides*, *Epinecrophylla haematonota*, *Sirystes*, *Larus dominicanus*, listado, aves, Colombia.

### Introduction

This is the 13<sup>th</sup> year of the National checklist to the Birds of Colombia, a list which has grown steadily, as set out in three checklist books (Salaman *et al.* 2001, 2008b, 2010), two field guide editions (McMullan *et al.* 2010, 2011) and recent annual updates (Salaman *et al.* 2008a, Donegan *et al.* 2009, 2010a, 2011, 2012). The checklist will be available online in the near future. This paper sets out details of further changes to the Colombian list since our last update was published in October 2012.

### New for Science

**Common Bush-Tanager** *Chlorospingus flavopectus olsoni*

We recognize this new subspecies for science, described from the east slope of the East Andes (Avendaño *et al.* 2013). It is illustrated in Fig. 1.



**Figure 1.** *C. f. olsoni*. Photograph by Alonso Quevedo, East slope of the Andes in Meta, 14 February 2010.

### Species added

#### **Black Scoter *Melanitta americana***

Sight record of seven individuals at sea between Utría and El Valle reported by Barnes (2013) during February 2013. An escaped origin is not a plausible explanation for so many sea-ducks, compared to vagrancy. The locality of the observation is more consistent with vagrancy. Although the report lacks detail, this species would be familiar to the observers. The species is added as known only from sight records (Obs) for Colombia. It is hoped that further information relating to these records will be published in due course.

#### **Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator***

Photographic records off San Andrés and Providencia (Ward-Bolívar & Lasso-Zapata 2012) leave no doubt that this migratory duck species can now be added to Colombia's checklist. It is included as confirmed for the San Andrés region (SA) but not on the mainland. Various other records of this species in Mexico, Belize and elsewhere were overlooked in the summary of Caribbean records accompanying publication of this record (e.g. Howell & Webb 1995, Jones *et al.* 2002). As for Black Scoter, an escaped origin does not seem a plausible explanation compared to vagrancy.

#### **Kelp Gull *Larus dominicanus***

A photographic record by Fagan & McMullan (2013) allows the species to be considered confirmed for Colombia's mainland.

### Splits and lumps considered

#### **Crowned Woodnymphs *Thalurania colombica/fannyi***

Green- and Purple-crowned Woodnymphs are lumped following publication of details of intermediate populations in Serranía de San Lucas and the northern Central Cordillera (Donegan 2012a), consistent with Remsen *et al.* (2013a) and Chesser *et al.* (2013)'s approach. Escalante-Pliego & Peterson (1992) had previously split the two species. The new treatment is a reversion to Hilty & Brown (1986)'s taxonomy. This results in a change in English name for *T. colombica* back to Crowned Woodnymph and deletion of Green-crowned Woodnymph *T. fannyi* from the checklist as a species, *fannyi* becoming a subspecies of *colombica*.

#### **Green-bearded Helmetcrest *Oxygogon guerinii***

#### **Blue-bearded Helmetcrest *O. cyanolaemus***

#### **Buffy Helmetcrest *O. stubelii***

We accept the splits set out in Collar & Salaman (2013), resulting in recognition of three species occurring in Colombia, *guerinii* in the Central Andes, *cyanolaemus* in Santa Marta and *stubelii* in the East Andes. All are known from specimen records in Colombia so can be considered confirmed for the country.

#### **Lineated Woodcreeper *Lepidocolaptes albolineatus***

#### **Duida Woodcreeper *L. duidae***

Batista Rodrigues *et al.* (2013) published data on the striking vocal differences and relatively deep (>3.4% mtDNA) molecular structure between five proposed species in this group. Populations in Eastern Colombia, which remain known only from sight records (Willis 1998, Donegan *et al.* 2010) should now be considered part of Duida Woodcreeper *L. duidae*. We accept this split, resulting in a change in name for Colombian populations from *albolineata* to *duidae*.

#### **Curve-billed Scythebill *Campylorhamphus procurvoides***

Populations of this species in Colombia (subspecies *sanus*) are closely related to *C. (p.) gyldenstolpei*, which was described by Aleixo *et al.* (2013). Vocal differences between these two taxa and nominate *procurvoides* are only in the note shape of part of the song; and in note shape of a call comprising a single note similar to the variable note of the song. Typically for antbirds, multiple (>3) diagnostic vocal differences are recommended to treat populations as separate species (Isler *et al.* 1998). In the absence of studies into the extent of vocal variation between sympatric scythebills (e.g. Brown-billed and Red-billed Scythebills in Colombia), we treat *sanus*, *procurvoides* and *gyldenstolpei* as allopatrically distributed subspecies of the same species. Molecular (<1.2% mtDNA), biometric and plumage differences between the three taxa initially appear relatively minor. We instead adopt Aleixo *et al.* (2013)'s alternative three-way split of *procurvoides* (including *sanus* and *gyldenstolpei*) from extralimital species *probatas* (including recently-described *cardosoi* of Portes *et al.* 2013) and *multostriatus*. Such a

treatment separates out vocally highly divergent populations with deep (4.3%-6.7%) molecular differentiation and avoids paraphyly with eastern populations of Red-billed Scythebill *C. trochilirostris*. However, further splitting of *procurvoides* (or other taxa in this complex) lack support of a detailed vocal study. Further consideration needs to be given to vernacular names for this group and to the inclusion of vocally distinctive Colombian populations of *C. trochilirostris* (cf. Donegan 2012a) in molecular studies. No change of names of Colombian populations results from accepting Aleixo *et al.* (2013)'s three-way split.

#### **Amazonian Barred Woodcreeper *Dendrocolaptes certhia***

Batista *et al.* (2013) proposed a multi-pronged split of this species based on molecular and morphological differentiation. However, they also found the loudsong of newly described *D. retentus* not to "differ constantly from those of other taxa in the *D. certhia* complex". Moreover, all proposed split taxa demonstrate less than 2% mtDNA differences. We do not recognize proposed splits in this species in the absence of a detailed vocal study.

#### **Stipple-throated Antwren *Epinecrophylla haematonta* "Negro Stipple-throated Antwren" *Epinecrophylla pyrrhonota***

Whitney *et al.* (2013) have proposed treating *E. pyrrhonota*, and others as species separate from *E. haematonta* based on impressive molecular differentiation and some vocal and plumage differences. Differences in loudsongs appear to fall a little below those generally regarded as necessary for recognition of species in antbirds (Isler *et al.* 1998, Remsen *et al.* 2013). Molecular results included impressive (>5%) differentiation between various groups in a polytomy comprising: *spodionota*, *dentei+amazonica*, *haematonta+fjeldsaai* and *pyrrhonota*. Because *spodionota* and *pyrrhonota* are fully sympatric in the East Andes of Colombia (Salaman *et al.* 2002) and specimens from the zone of sympatry were sampled in the molecular study, lumping the polytomy is not a viable proposition. Proposed new species *E. (amazonica) dentei* is a weaker candidate for species rank but extralimital for Colombia so its status does not require consideration here. Recognition of this split results in a change of the name for populations occurring in Colombia from *haematonta* to *pyrrhonota*.

#### **Choco Sirystes *S. albogriseus***

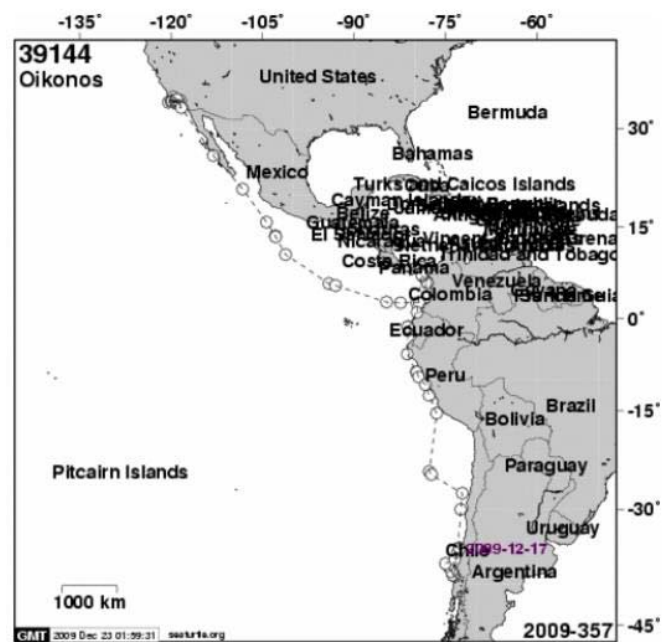
#### **White-rumped Sirystes *S. albocinereus***

The split of Western from Eastern Sirystes (Ridgely & Greenfield 2001) and of Eastern Sirystes into three species (Donegan 2013b) are adopted here, resulting in recognition of two species occurring in Colombia. Both are known from specimen records in Colombia, so they can both be considered confirmed.

## **Changes of Category**

### **Pink-footed Shearwater *Puffinus creatopus***

Previously known in Colombia only from sight records in the late 1970s (Hilty & Brown 1986). Mangel *et al.* (2013) placed satellite trackers on a number of individuals, revealing 2% of subsequent transmissions of this Vulnerable species from Colombian waters. A number of records come from maritime regions of the south-west Pacific region of Colombia in particular. Figure 2 shows movements of one individual, which reached the Colombia/Ecuador marine border on or around 7 October 2009, moved northwards up the Pacific coast of Colombia, presumably through seas bordering dptos. Narino, Cauca and Valle to Chocó almost up to the Panamanian border on 20 October 2009 and then returned back into Ecuadorian waters by 27 October 2009.



**Figure 2** Map showing movements of an individual of *Puffinus creatopus* taken from [www.seaturtle.org](http://www.seaturtle.org). Circles show transmissions. Circles show records and dotted line its apparent movements.

The individual in question was registered with satellite no. 39144 and its movements can be viewed online: [http://www.seaturtle.org/tracking/index.shtml?tag\\_id=39144&anime=1&lang\\_](http://www.seaturtle.org/tracking/index.shtml?tag_id=39144&anime=1&lang_) reproduced in Fig. 2. Other individuals appear to have been registered in Colombia by Mangel *et al.* (2013: Fig. 6) using similar methods. Consistent with recent acceptance of other satellite transmitter records (e.g. Fea's Petrel for South America: Ramírez *et al.* 2013, Remsen *et al.* 2013), this species is now considered confirmed for Colombia.

### **Mallard *Anas platyrhynchos***

Discussed in several previous checklist updates (Salaman *et al.* 2008a, Donegan *et al.* 2010). Another record is of a male showing typical wild plumage and morphology

observed at Laguna Santoya, mun. Cabuyaro, dpto. Meta (04°13'57.7"N, 72°49'14.7"W) on 8 January 2011 by A. Quevedo. This is a remote location in the Colombian llanos, far from any major human settlement. The individual was free flying, associating with an Orinoco Goose *Neothen jubata*. This record is considered more likely than not to pertain to a vagrant from northern populations, given its state of plumage and distance from major human habitations. Mallard is also reported as a vagrant or migrant in the Orinoco region of Venezuela by Restall *et al.* (2006).

Mallard is introduced in Bogotá (Salaman *et al.* 2008a, Donegan *et al.* 2010). There are populations of c. 30-40 individuals at Simón Bolívar, c. 20-25 at Parque Timiza, and records of smaller numbers of birds at other localities such as Parque de los Novios, Salitre, Humedal Santa María del Lago and Humedal Jaboque, but many of these individuals are leucistic, melanistic and/or of inelegant morphology, descended from domesticated birds. This possible vagrant record may cast light on the status of the elevated numbers of individuals, including several "wild-type" birds at Parque Timiza in December 2007-January 2008 (Salaman *et al.* 2008a) which were not seen in subsequent visits (Donegan *et al.* 2010).

Mallard changes in status to being *both* an established introduced species (Int) (based on the long-established Bogotá park populations) and a vagrant based only on sight records (Obs), a unique category on the Colombian checklist.

#### **Caribbean Coot *Fulica caribaea***

Previously regarded as known only from sight records on San Andrés island (Donegan *et al.* 2010). The species is here upgraded from "SA Obs" to confirmed on the mainland, on account of Ellery (2013)'s photographic record of an individual which in all likelihood appears to be of this species.

#### **Dunlin *Calidris alpina***

Upgraded from "Obs" to confirmed, on account of Fagan & McMullan (2013)'s impressive and unmistakable photographic records of this species. The species was known in Colombia previously only from sight records (Salaman 1995, Donegan *et al.* 2010).

#### **Java Sparrow *Lonchura oryzivora***

Changed from "escaped" and known only from sight records (Esc and Obs) to being confirmed as an escaped species (Esc only), based on the photographs and sound recordings in Donegan (2013a).

### **Colombia's 1900<sup>th</sup> bird**

Following the records discussed here, Colombia, the world's most diverse country for birds, becomes the first country in which 1900 bird species have been recorded (Table 1, Fig. 3). This landmark is a testament to the

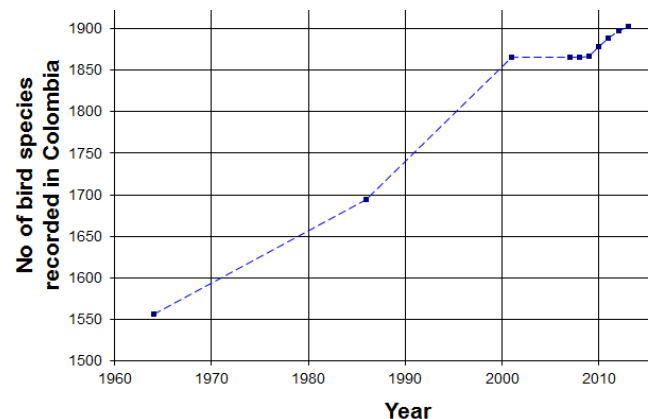
outstanding work of the Colombian ornithological community as well as the collaboration of a growing contingent of birders visiting Colombia.

In date order, Colombia's list can be considered to have changed as follows (in chronological order):

- 1898** (2012 checklist total) (Donegan *et al.* 2012)
- 1899 (Earlier, but nominally for present purposes) Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator*, 4 January 2008
- 1898 Data concerning lump of *Thalurania* published, *T. fannyi* removed: September 2012.
- 1899 Black Scoter record – February 2013
- 1900 Kelp Gull record – 25 March 2013**
- 1901-3 novel splits recognized in this edition.

The honor of reaching this milestone therefore falls to Jesse Fagan, Miles McMullan and colleagues for their Kelp Gull record. This is one of a string of new records of vagrants uncovered by the increasing number of birding tours taking place in Colombia.

Figure 3 shows how Colombia's bird checklist has increased over time, with large numbers of new records and taxonomic treatments between publication of Meyer de Schauensee (1964) and Hilty & Brown (1986)'s first field guides and Salaman *et al.* (2001)'s first checklist. From 2001 to 2009 the Colombian list remained fairly static, despite many new records being published (e.g. Salaman *et al.* 2008a), as these were offset as a result of species split by Salaman *et al.* (2001) being lumped to follow earlier editions of Remsen *et al.* (2013) (in Salaman *et al.* 2007). Moreover, several species known only from dubious records were removed from the checklist (in Salaman *et al.* 2007, 2008b, Donegan *et al.* 2009, 2010). In the last few years, the Colombian list has grown steadily with new records and in light of the findings of taxonomic research (summarised in Donegan *et al.* 2010, 2011, 2012 and herein), both which have been facilitated by the improving security situation in Colombia.



**Figure 3** Number of bird species recorded in Colombia over time.

**Table 1:** Summary of changes resulting in changes of numbers of species in particular categories and new species total.

Change	Species	Conf.	Bog.	Int & Obs	Obs.	Obs.*	SA	SA(Obs)	Int	Int? /Esc	Total
<b>2012 Check-list totals</b>		1,825	4	0	45	4	11	5	4	[14]	1,898 [1,912]
<b>Species added</b>	Red-breasted Merganser <i>Mergus serrator</i>						+1				
	Black Scoter <i>Melanitta americana</i>				+1						
	Kelp Gull <i>Larus dominicanus</i>	+1									
<b>Splits</b>	Blue-bearded Helmetcrest <i>Oxygogon cyanolaemus</i>	+1									
	Buffy Helmetcrest <i>O. stubelii</i>	+1									
	White-rumped Sirystes <i>Sirystes albocinereus</i>	+1									
<b>Lumps</b>	Green-crowned Woodnymph <i>Thalurania fannyi</i>	-1									
<b>Changes of category</b>	Pink-footed Shearwater <i>Puffinus creatopus</i>	+1			-1						
	Dunlin <i>Calidris alpina</i>	+1			-1						
	Caribbean Coot <i>Fulica caribaea</i>	+1						-1			
	Mallard <i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>			+1					-1		
<b>Escaped species</b>	Zebra Finch <i>Taeniopygia guttata</i>									[+1]	
	Fischer's Lovebird <i>Agapornis fischeri</i>									[+1]	
<b>Totals per category 2012</b>		<b>1,831</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>[16]</b>	<b>[1,919]</b>
<b>Change since 2011 Checklist</b>		+6	-	+1	-1	-	+1	-1	-1	[+2]	
<b>Less escaped species</b>											<b>-16</b>
<b>TOTAL BIRD SPECIES FOR COLOMBIA</b>											<b>1,903</b>

**Genus names, linear order, spellings, English names and pended proposals**

The following additional changes to names and orders, which are either under consideration or have been accepted by Remsen *et al.* (2013a), are relevant to Colombia and adopted here. Proposal numbers and, where appropriate, key references supporting these changes are cited below:

- 522. An alternative classification of nighthawk species in the New World (Han *et al.* 2010) (M. Nores & F.G. Stiles).
- 543. English names for *Schiffornis* (genus and species) (F.G. Stiles) (except usage of "Western Schiffornis" instead of "Northern Schiffornis" for western *S. veraepacis*).
- 558. Treat *Thalurania fannyi* and *Thalurania colombica* as conspecific (Donegan 2012a) (see above).
- 570. Adopt a new English name for *Thamnophilus atrinucha* (2) (M. Isler).
- 557. Recognize the genus *Euchrepomis* for four "Terenura" (Bravo *et al.* 2012) (G. Bravo & J.V. Remsen).
- 567. Change English name of *Drymophila caudata* (T. Donegan).
- 568. Change English names of Immaculate Antbirds (T. Donegan).

- 571. Adopt a new generic classification for the Parulidae (Klein *et al.* 2004, Escalante-Pliego *et al.* 2009, Lovette *et al.* 2010, Gutiérrez-Pinto *et al.* 2012) (R. C. Banks).
- 578. Divide *Aratinga* into four genera (Remsen *et al.* 2013b) (J.V. Remsen & A. Urantówka).
- 583. Change English name for *Myrmeciza immaculata* (II) to "Blue-lored Antbird" (T. Donegan).
- 589A. Split *Epinecrophylla haematonota* (M. Isler) (see above).
- 591. Revise the classification of the Pipridae (Ohlson *et al.* 2013) (J.V. Remsen).
- 593. Revise classification of the genus *Saltator* (Chaves *et al.* 2013) (J.V. Remsen).
- 594B. Revise linear sequences of species in *Cinclodes* (Derryberry *et al.* 2011) (J.V. Remsen).
- 595. Revise sequence of genera in the New World parrots (Schirtzinger *et al.* 2012) (J.V. Remsen).
- 597. Modify linear sequence of species in *Dendrocincla* (Derryberry *et al.* 2011, Weir & Price 2011) (J.V. Remsen).
- 599. Revise classification of the Psittaciformes (Joseph *et al.* 2012) (J.V. Remsen) (noting in addition that escaped species *Melopsittacus undulatus*, *Nymphicus hollandicus* and *Agapornis fischeri* are Psittaculidae and *Cacatua galerita* is a Cacatuidae).

The following AOU-SACC proposal was already dealt with prior to this publication for the Colombian list:

566. Treat *Geotrygon purpurata* as a separate species from *G. saphirina* (Donegan & Salaman 2012).

We pend a decision on the following matters that are subject to ongoing AOU-SACC discussions, until next year:

569. Revise the generic classification of the Mountain-Tanagers (Sedano & Burns 2010) (T. Donegan).

579. Change the English names of *Chlorospingus* species from “Bush-Tanager” to “Chlorospingus” (J.V. Remsen).

584. Recognize Cracidae subfamilies (II) (Donegan 2012b)

587. Split *Gymnophrys leucaspis* into two species (Brumfield *et al.* 2007) (B. Freeman)

We also pend decisions on species limits in Three-striped Warbler *Basileuterus tristriatus* (Gutiérrez-Pinto *et al.* 2012), *Sclerurus* (d’Horta *et al.* 2013) and *Henicorhina leucophrys* (Caro *et al.* 2013) to give time for other apparently forthcoming publications on these groups.

### Newly Recorded Escaped species

#### Fischer's Lovebird *Agapornis fischeri*

Three individuals were observed in the field at vereda el Totumo, mun. Ibagué, dpto. Tolima (00°23’N, 75°11’N, 1,100 m), associating with a flock of Orange-chinned Parakeet *Brotogeris jugularis* by William Figueroa (pers. comm. to A. Quevedo) in June 2010. The species is known to be held in captivity in Colombia (Baptiste *et al.* 2010, Donegan 2013a) but has not previously been recorded free flying. It is added as an escaped species (Esc) owing to lack of evidence of any established or breeding population.

#### Zebra Finch *Taeniopygia guttata*

Donegan *et al.* (2012) concluded that despite the existence of two Colombian museum specimens, there are no acceptable records of this species in Colombia, even as escapes. Just weeks after this publication, T. Ellery (in litt. 2012) reported an escaped bird in west Bogotá at Barrio Villa Gladys, calle 64c, carrera 112, near Humedal Jaboque in October 2012. The bird was captured and brought to Ellery in an office in central Bogotá. However, no photographic record was made. The individual was kept in captivity by its finder but died some weeks later. Notably, several other escaped bird species have been recorded recently in the Humedal Jaboque area (e.g. Cortés & Donegan 2012). The individual recorded here is clearly an isolated escapee. Zebra Finch can now (finally) be added as an escaped, non-established species but without a confirmed record (Esc and Obs).

### Threat Categories

Updates to the threat status of a single species occurring in Colombia follows a further review process by BirdLife International that concluded in September 2013: Black-

browed Albatross *Thalassarche melanophrys* changes from EN to NT.

### Acknowledgments

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