



Specialization on Bamboo by Neotropical Birds

Authors: Cockle, Kristina L., and Areta, Juan I.

Source: The Condor, 115(2) : 217-220

Published By: American Ornithological Society

URL: <https://doi.org/10.1525/cond.2013.120067>

BioOne Complete (complete.BioOne.org) is a full-text database of 200 subscribed and open-access titles in the biological, ecological, and environmental sciences published by nonprofit societies, associations, museums, institutions, and presses.

Your use of this PDF, the BioOne Complete website, and all posted and associated content indicates your acceptance of BioOne's Terms of Use, available at www.bioone.org/terms-of-use.

Usage of BioOne Complete content is strictly limited to personal, educational, and non - commercial use. Commercial inquiries or rights and permissions requests should be directed to the individual publisher as copyright holder.

BioOne sees sustainable scholarly publishing as an inherently collaborative enterprise connecting authors, nonprofit publishers, academic institutions, research libraries, and research funders in the common goal of maximizing access to critical research.



SPECIAL SECTION

The Condor 115(2):217–220
© The Cooper Ornithological Society 2013

SPECIALIZATION ON BAMBOO BY NEOTROPICAL BIRDS

KRISTINA L. COCKLE^{1,3,4,5}, AND JUAN I. ARETA^{2,3}

¹*Instituto de Bio y Geociencias del Noroeste Argentino, IBIGEO-CONICET, Mendoza 2, Salta (4400), Argentina*

²*Instituto de Bio y Geociencias del Noroeste Argentino, IBIGEO-CONICET, Mendoza 2, Salta (4400), Argentina*

³*Proyecto Selva de Pino Paraná, San Pedro (3352), Misiones, Argentina*

⁴*School of Renewable Natural Resources, Louisiana State University and LSU AgCenter, Baton Rouge, LA 70803*

Ornithologists have long marveled at the many species of neotropical forest birds found in close association with woody bamboos (Poaceae: Bambuseae). Over 400 species of woody bamboos occur in the neotropics, a total second only to southeast Asia, which has nearly 1000 species (Bystrakova et al. 2003, 2004). Woody bamboos may grow in the open with a compact shrubby aspect, clamber up trees into the forest canopy, stand erect and self-supported up to 30 m tall, arch over and extend outward, or form dense tangles that carpet the ground, providing a diverse array of microhabitats (McClure 1966, Judziewicz et al. 1999). Their clonal reproduction allows many of them to colonize disturbed areas quickly, forming stands large enough to hold one or more territories of specialist birds (Kratter 1997, Judziewicz et al. 1999, Gagnon and Platt 2008). The synchronous seed production of many bamboos provides abundant and nutritious food for granivores, while bamboos' fast growth, often hollow stems, and dense tangled habit support diverse arthropod communities that provide food for insectivores (Janzen 1976, Reid et al. 2004, Lebbin 2007). However, specialization by birds on woody bamboos is hindered by dramatic changes in resource availability over time and space. Most neotropical woody bamboos grow vegetatively for 30–40 years, then flower synchronously over large areas and die (Judziewicz et al. 1999). It has long been a mystery how so many species of neotropical birds specialize on such a fluctuating resource, and, more recently, concerns have been raised about how to conserve these species and their interaction relationships in the face of widespread deforestation.

Bamboo specialist birds can be grouped according to their foraging strategy and hypothesized response to bamboo flowering cycles (C. Sánchez 2005, Areta and Cackle 2012). The majority of species are insectivores that forage for insects in live or dead bamboo during the long vegetative phase. These birds may open bamboo internodes or probe in existing holes

to capture ants, larvae, or aquatic insects, glean arthropods off bamboo surfaces including culms, leaves, and trapped litter, or capture insects in flight within bamboo stands (Parker 1982, Pierpont and Fitzpatrick 1983, Fitzpatrick and Willard 1990, Rodrigues et al. 1994, Parker et al. 1997, Lane et al. 2007, Laverde and Stiles 2007). They enjoy a stable and productive bamboo habitat over many years, but as the bamboo flowers, dies, and disappears, they must switch to alternative habitat, disperse in search of new bamboo habitat, or experience population declines. Much rarer are the bamboo-seed specialists, granivores that specialize on bamboo seeds that often are produced in short, widespread pulses of masting after many years of vegetative growth (Neudorf and Blanchfield 1994, Olmos 1996, Sick 1997, Areta et al. 2009). These birds take advantage of the huge pulses of food resources offered by bamboo mast but must also experience long periods of food scarcity and travel widely in search of flowering bamboos. A third group of birds, mixed strategists, usually feed on bamboo shoots, leaves, and insects but consume bamboo seeds when available, taking advantage of bamboo resources in both the vegetative and flowering phases (Berton 1919, Hilty et al. 1979).

Parker et al. (1996) listed 102 species of neotropical birds in 54 genera as associated or probably associated with bamboo microhabitat; however, these classifications were based on limited field data, mostly anecdotal. Kratter's (1997) seminal study revealed 19 bamboo-specialist birds at just one site in western Amazonia. In the past decade, new species of bamboo-specialist birds have been described, known species have been identified as bamboo specialists, and bamboo specialists have been studied in greater detail, revealing relationships with specific species of bamboos (e.g., Lentino and Restall 2003, Bodrati and Cackle 2006, Lane et al. 2007, Lebbin 2007, Areta and Bodrati 2008, Tobias et al. 2008). However,

Manuscript received 15 April 2012; accepted 11 May 2012.

⁵E-mail: kristinacackle@gmail.com

The Condor, Vol. 115, Number 2, pages 217–220. ISSN 0010-5422, electronic ISSN 1938-5422. © 2013 by The Cooper Ornithological Society. All rights reserved. Please direct all requests for permission to photocopy or reproduce article content through the University of California Press's Rights and Permissions website, <http://www.ucpressjournals.com/reprintInfo.asp>. DOI: 10.1525/cond.2013.120067

even today many potential bamboo specialists remain unidentified as such, or their relationship with bamboo species is understood poorly (Bodrati and Areta 2006).

In this special section, a collection of four field studies from the neotropics contributes to understanding the ecology and conservation of bamboo-specialist birds in light of their fluctuating habitat: through the long vegetative phase (Leite et al. 2013, Lebbin 2013), the flowering phase (Areta et al. 2013), and after the bamboo dies (Socolar et al. 2013). In the first article in this collection, Leite et al. (2013) show that the critically endangered Kaempfer's Woodpecker (*Celeus obrieni*) specializes on the bamboo *Guadua paniculata*, where it forages by perforating the internodes to capture ants of the genera *Camponotus* and *Azteca*. They further propose that the distribution of this woodpecker in its cerrado habitat is limited by the distribution of *G. paniculata*. When this bamboo habitat is scarcest, after die-offs or wildfires, the authors suggest that survival of Kaempfer's Woodpecker depends critically on the species' ability to disperse between viable bamboo patches.

To understand occupancy of bamboo patches by specialist insectivorous birds, a critical question is how large the patches of bamboo need to be. In the second paper in this collection, Lebbin (2013) addresses this question by examining which of 38 species of bamboo-specialist insectivores occupied 13 patches of *Guadua* ranging from 0.15 to 48 ha in the Amazon of southeastern Peru. Specialist species dropped out of the community in a nested fashion as patch size declined; that is, smaller patches supported a nested subset of the species present in incrementally larger patches. Although the smallest patch supported only one (facultative) bamboo specialist, patches of just a few hectares were large enough to support many bamboo-specialist insectivores, suggesting that the availability of bamboo habitat for these species may be underestimated when only large patches of bamboo are considered.

For the highly vagile bamboo-seed specialists, which move between patches of seeding bamboo, occupancy of bamboo patches depends mostly on the timing of seed production and species-specific traits of bamboo seeds. One of the first cases to receive attention was that of the Magpie Mannikin (*Lonchura fringilloides*), which seemed to follow episodes of seeding of Bindura Bamboo (*Oxytenanthera abyssinica*) in Africa (Jackson 1972). In the neotropics, supposed bamboo-seed specialists have been reported feeding on bamboo seeds and breeding in seed-bearing stands of several bamboo genera (Davis 1945, J. E. Sánchez and Hernández 1990, J. E. Sánchez 1993, Neudorf and Blanchfield 1994, Olmos 1996, Stutchbury et al. 1996, C. Sánchez 2005, Vasconcelos et al. 2005, Greeney et al. 2007, Areta and Bodrati 2008, Areta et al. 2009, Cestari and Bernardi 2011). Areta et al. (2009) recently showed that three bamboo-seed specialists have been recorded in Argentina only at times and places when and where *Guadua* bamboos were masting; however, bamboo-seed specialists are also recorded occasionally outside of bamboos, probably

while searching for new pulses of masting (Lentino and Restall 2003, J. E. Sánchez et al. 2006, Areta et al. 2009). Until now, there has been little information about where the bamboo-seed specialists go and how they survive while specializing on such a boom-and-bust resource. The third paper in this special section (Areta et al. 2013) addresses these questions through a study of two globally threatened *Sporophila* seedeaters that are bamboo specialists across the southern and western Atlantic forest in Brazil, Paraguay, and Argentina. The authors show that bamboo-seed availability is likely to be the main factor limiting reproduction of these birds, which breed even during a cold winter if enough bamboo seeds are available. These authors suggest that the seedeaters maintain their populations at a regional scale by moving among patches of flowering of different species of bamboos, with large-seeded bamboos acting as strong population pumps and small-seeded bamboos acting as maintenance stations.

One of the biggest mysteries regarding all three groups of bamboo-specialist birds—insectivores, seed specialists, and mixed strategists—is what happens to these species when the bamboo dies (Lane et al. 2007). Anecdotal evidence suggests that some species decline regionally, while others move to alternative bamboos or alternative nonbamboo habitats (Neudorf and Blanchfield 1994, Areta and Bodrati 2008, Areta et al. 2009, 2013, Bodrati et al. 2010, 2012). The fourth paper in this special section is, to our knowledge, the first study to measure quantitatively the changes in a bird community following death of bamboo. Socolar et al. (2013) compare spot maps from two patches of *Guadua* bamboo in the Peruvian Amazon, 16 years before and 7 years after the bamboo flowered and died. By the post-die-off census, trees had grown up in the areas formerly occupied by bamboo, creating two patches of second growth in the matrix of mature forest. Although a few species of bamboo-specialist birds persisted in the die-offs, twelve specialist species disappeared from the area, and almost no species had colonized, specialist or not. The species that disappeared from the bamboo die-offs were those Lebbin (2013) found to be most restricted to large or high-quality bamboo patches; in contrast, species that remained in the die-offs without any bamboo were those Lebbin (2013) found also present in marginal bamboo patches. Although these species were present in habitat without bamboo, they continued to rely on habitat generated by bamboo (successional habitat after the die-off) and should still be considered bamboo specialists. Importantly, bamboo die-off led to a sharp decrease in avian species richness at the level of the patch but little difference at the broader scale of the stand.

The four papers in this special section show that the presence of woody bamboos adds to regional bird diversity in the neotropics by supporting a taxonomically and ecologically diverse suite of specialists. The conservation of these birds depends critically on the preservation of bamboo habitats, made difficult by the strong spatial and temporal fluctuations of bamboo resources generated by the bamboos' cycle

of flowering. We hope that this special section draws attention to the important role of bamboos in the conservation of neotropical birds. We believe that bamboo should be recognized as a critical habitat that deserves specific conservation measures through networks of reserves that provide continuous resources for all groups of bamboo specialists. We further hope this set of papers will inspire ornithologists, birders, and students to pay close attention to the natural history and ecology of the birds and bamboos they observe in the field and to study the fascinating relationships between these specialist animals and their fluctuating resources.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This special section was initiated during a symposium on bamboo-specialist birds at the XXV International Ornithological Congress (IOC), for which we received travel awards from the IOC and Biodiversity Research Integrative Training and Education (Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada [NSERC] Collaborative Research and Training Experience Program). Our ideas benefited greatly from discussions with the symposium's presenters and audience, contributors to the special section, Alejandro Bodrati, Lynn Clark, Ximena Londoño, Adrian Eisen Rupp, Don Franklin, Marcelo Vasconcelos, Walter Braun, Robin Restall, and Luis Fabio Silveira. Our work on bamboo-specialist birds has been supported by Rufford Small Grants for Nature Conservation, a Skutch Award from the Association of Field Ornithologists, doctoral and post-doctoral fellowships from the Consejo Nacional de Investigaciones Científicas y Técnicas (CONICET) of Argentina, NSERC, the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology, and the Neotropical Bird Club.

LITERATURE CITED

- ARETA, J. I., AND A. BODRATI. 2008. Comportamiento, identificación y relación con la floración de cañas del Espiguero Negro (*Tiaris fuliginosa*) en Misiones, Argentina. *Hornero* 23:77–86.
- ARETA, J. I., A. BODRATI, AND K. COCKLE. 2009. Specialization on *Guadua* bamboo seeds by three bird species in the Atlantic forest of Argentina. *Biotropica* 41:66–73.
- ARETA, J. I., A. BODRATI, G. THOM, A. E. RUPP, M. VELAZQUEZ, I. HOLZMANN, E. CARRANO, AND C. E. ZIMMERMANN. 2013. Natural history, distribution, and conservation of two nomadic *Sporophila* seedeaters of bamboo in the Atlantic forest. *Condor* 115:237–252.
- ARETA, J. I., AND K. L. COCKLE. 2012. A theoretical framework for understanding the ecology and conservation of bamboo-specialist birds. *Journal of Ornithology* 153:163–170.
- BERTONI, A. DE W. 1919. Especies de aves nuevas para el Paraguay. *Hornero* 1:255–258.
- BODRATI, A., AND J. I. ARETA. 2006. La Mosqueta Pecho Pardo (*Hemitriccus obsoletus*) en Argentina y comentarios sobre su hábitat y distribución. *Ornitología Neotropical* 17:597–600.
- BODRATI, A., J. I. ARETA, AND E. WHITE. 2012. La avifauna de la Posada y Reserva Puerto Bemberg, Misiones, Argentina. *Nuestras Aves* 57:63–79.
- BODRATI, A., AND K. COCKLE. 2006. Habitat, distribution, and conservation of Atlantic forest birds in Argentina: notes on nine rare or threatened species. *Ornitología Neotropical* 17:243–258.
- BODRATI, A., K. COCKLE, J. M. SEGOVIA, I. ROESLER, J. I. ARETA, AND E. JORDAN. 2010. La avifauna del Parque Provincial Cruce Caballero, Provincia de Misiones, Argentina. *Cotinga* 32:41–64.
- BYSTRIAKOVA, N., V. KAPO, AND I. LYSENKO. 2004. Bamboo biodiversity. Africa, Madagascar and the Americas. UNEP-WCMC/INBAR, UK.
- BYSTRIAKOVA, N., V. KAPO, C. STAPLETON, AND I. LYSENKO. 2003. Bamboo biodiversity. Information for planning conservation and management in the Asia-Pacific region UNEP-World Conservation Monitoring Centre/International Network for Bamboo and Rattan, Cambridge, England.
- CESTARI, C., AND C. J. BERNARDI. 2011. Predation of the Buffy-fronted Seedeater *Sporophila frontalis* (Aves: Emberizidae) on *Merostachys neesii* (Poaceae: Babusoideae) seeds during a masting event in the Atlantic forest. *Biota Neotropica* 11:393–397.
- DAVIS, D. E. 1945. The annual cycle of plants, mosquitoes, birds, and mammals in two Brazilian forests. *Ecological Monographs* 15:243–295.
- FITZPATRICK, J. W., AND D. E. WILLARD. 1990. A new species of antbird from southwestern Amazonia. *Auk* 107:239–245.
- GAGNON, P. R., AND W. J. PLATT. 2008. Multiple disturbances accelerate clonal growth in a potentially monodominant bamboo. *Ecology* 89:612–618.
- GREENEY, H. F., N. SHERMAN, R. LYNCH, AND I. HARMS. 2007. The nest and eggs of Maroon-chested Ground-Dove *Claravis mondetoura* in south-east Ecuador. *Cotinga* 28:71–73.
- HILTY, S., T. A. PARKER III, AND J. SILLIMAN. 1979. Observations on Plush-capped Finches in the Andes with a description of the juvenile and immature plumages. *Wilson Bulletin* 91:145–148.
- JACKSON, H. D. 1972. The status of the Pied Mannikin, *Lonchura fringilloides* (Lafresnaye) in Rhodesia and its association with the bamboo *Oxytenanthera abyssinica*. *Rhodesia Science News* 6:342–348.
- JANZEN, D. H. 1976. Why bamboos wait so long to flower. *Annual Review of Ecology and Systematics* 7:347–391.
- JUDZIEWICZ, E. J., L. G. CLARK, X. LONDOÑO, AND M. J. STERN. 1999. American bamboos. Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington, DC.
- KRATTER, A. W. 1997. Bamboo specialization by Amazonian birds. *Biotropica* 29:100–110.
- LANE, D. F., G. P. SERVAT, T. H. VALQUI, AND F. R. LAMBERT. 2007. A distinctive new species of tyrant flycatcher (Passeriformes: Tyrannidae: *Cnipodectes*) from southeastern Peru. *Auk* 124:762–772.
- LAVERDE, O., AND F. G. STILES. 2007. Apuntes sobre el Hormiguero Pico de Hacha (Thamnophilidae: *Clytoctantes alixii*) y su relación con un bambú en un bosque secundario de Colombia. *Ornitología Colombiana* 5:83–90.
- LEBBIN, D. J. 2007. Habitat specialization among Amazonian birds: why are there so many *Guadua* bamboo specialists? Ph.D. dissertation, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY.
- LEBBIN, D. J. 2013. Nestedness and patch size of bamboo-specialist bird communities in southeastern Peru. *Condor* 115:230–236.
- LEITE, G. A., R. T. PINHEIRO, D. G. MARCELINO, J. E. C. FIGUEIRA, AND J. H. C. DELABIE. 2013. Foraging behavior of Kaempfer's Woodpecker (*Celeus obrieni*), a bamboo specialist. *Condor* 115:221–229.
- LENTINO, M., AND R. RESTALL. 2003. A new species of *Amaurospiza* blue seedeater from Venezuela. *Auk* 120:600–606.
- MCCLURE, F. A. 1966. The bamboos: a fresh perspective. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA.
- NEUDORF, D. L., AND P. J. BLANCHFIELD. 1994. The Slate-colored Seedeater (*Sporophila schistacea*): a bamboo specialist? *Ornitología Neotropical* 5:129–132.
- OLMOS, F. 1996. Satiation or deception?: Mast-seeding *Chusquea* bamboos, birds and rats in the Atlantic Forest. *Revista Brasileira de Biologia* 56:391–401.

- PARKER, T. A. III. 1982. Observations of some unusual rainforest and marsh birds of southeastern Peru. *Wilson Bulletin* 94:477–493.
- PARKER, T. A. III, D. F. STOTZ, AND J. W. FITZPATRICK. 1996. Ecological and distributional databases, p. 113–436. *In* D. F. Stotz, J. W. Fitzpatrick, T. A. Parker III, and D. K. Moskovits [EDS.], *Neotropical birds: ecology and conservation*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago.
- PARKER, T. A. III, D. F. STOTZ, AND J. W. FITZPATRICK. 1997. Notes on avian bamboo specialists in southwestern Amazonian Brazil. *Ornithological Monographs* 48:543–547.
- PIERPONT, N. J., AND J. W. FITZPATRICK. 1983. Specific status and behavior of *Cymbilaimus sanctaemariae*, the Bamboo Antshrike, from southwestern Amazonia. *Auk* 100:645–652.
- REID, S., I. A. DÍAZ, J. J. ARMESTO, AND M. F. WILLSON. 2004. Importance of native bamboo for understory birds in Chilean temperate forests. *Auk* 121:515–525.
- RODRIGUES, M., S. M. R. ALVARES, AND C. G. MACHADO. 1994. Foraging behavior of the White-collared Foliage-gleaner (*Anabazenops fuscus*), a bamboo specialist. *Ornitología Neotropical* 5:65–67.
- SÁNCHEZ, C. 2005. First description of the nest and eggs of the Slaty Finch (*Haplospiza rustica*) and observations on song and breeding behavior. *Ornitología Neotropical* 16:493–501.
- SÁNCHEZ, J. E. 1993. Abundancia, estructura de población y dieta de *Acanthidops*. Congreso de Ornitología de Costa Rica. I. Resúmenes, San José, CR, 20–22 de mayo, 1993, 1993-05-20: 11. Editorial San José, CIPA–MNCR–PRMVS–UNA, San José, Costa Rica.
- SÁNCHEZ, J. E., L. CHAVES, AND D. MARTÍNEZ. 2006. Observaciones de la Tortolita Serranera (*Claravis mondetoura*) en un hábitat sin bambúes, con notas sobre su vocalización. *Brenesia* 65:79–80.
- SÁNCHEZ, J. E., AND D. A. HERNÁNDEZ. 1990. El nido y huevos de *Acanthidops bairdii* (Emberizidae). *Brenesia* 34:155–157.
- SICK, H. 1997. *Ornitología Brasileira*. Ed. Nova Fronteira, Rio de Janeiro.
- SOCOLAR, S. J., S. K. ROBINSON, AND J. TERBORGH. 2013. Bird diversity and occurrence of bamboo specialists in two bamboo die-offs in southeastern Peru. *Condor* 115:253–262.
- STUTCHBURY, B. J. M., P. M. MARTIN, AND E. S. MORTON. 1996. Nesting behavior of the Slate-colored Seedeater (*Sporophila schistacea*) in Panamá. *Ornitología Neotropical* 7:63–65.
- TOBIAS, J. A., D. J. LEBBIN, A. ALEIXO, M. J. ANDERSEN, E. GUILHERME, P. A. HOSNER, AND N. SEDDON. 2008. Distribution, behavior, and conservation status of the Rufous Twistwing (*Chnipodectes superrufus*). *Wilson Journal of Ornithology* 120:38–49.
- VASCONCELOS, M. F., A. P. VASCONCELOS, P. L. VIANA, L. PALÚ, AND J. F. SILVA. 2005. Observações sobre aves granívoras (Columbidae e Emberizidae) associadas à frutificação de taquaras (Poaceae, Bambusoideae) na porção meridional da Cadeia do Espinhaço, Minas Gerais, Brasil. *Lundiana* 6:75–77.