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NATURAL HISTORY SURVEY
Variation in *Myiozetetes luteiventris*

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A small collection of birds recently received from central-southern Surinam contains several additions to the fauna of the Guianas and one specimen of a distinct new race of *Myiozetetes luteiventris*. As this species is apparently quite rare, although occupying much of Amazonia westward to extreme eastern Colombia, eastern Ecuador, and northern Peru, it has seemed desirable to investigate both its affinities and its variability. The study is based on specimens available in American museums. The results are presented below.

For the loan of comparative material I am indebted to authorities of the following institutions: American Museum of Natural History; Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia; United States National Museum; Carnegie Museum.

All measurements are in millimeters and the wings are measured flat. Names of colors when capitalized are from Ridgway's *Color Standards and Color Nomenclature* (1912 ed.).

*Myiozetetes luteiventris septentrionalis*, new subspecies

*Type.*—Chicago Natural History Museum no. 262347, from Palomeu Airstrip, Tapanahoni River, Marowijne District, Surinam. Adult female in breeding plumage, collected April 27, 1961, by Harry A. Beatty. Original number 683.

*Diagnosis.*—Similar to the nominate race of Amazonia but decidedly darker (nearest Blackish Brown-3) and more uniformly colored above, the dorsal feathers lacking any trace of olivaceous wash or edgings; yellow of under parts faintly tinged with greenish and much more extensively streaked with olive; ventral streaks vaguely defined as in typical *luteiventris* but undiminished on the sides, flanks, and under tail coverts.

*Measurements.*—Wing, 71; tail, 60; exposed culmen, 11; culmen to base, 13.5.

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Range.—Known only from the unique type. Probably present in lowland forests of interior Surinam and interior French Guiana generally, and (?) southward to the north bank of the lower Amazon River.

Remarks.—The name Myiozetetes was first used in 1859 by P. L. Sclater as an emendation of "Myiozeta Bonaparte" (nomen nudum; type, Muscicapa cayanensis Linnaeus). The generic characters as described in detail by Ridgway (1907, pp. 442-443) are either trivial or non-exclusive, being shared to a greater or lesser extent with various species that traditionally have been placed in Elaenia or related groups. Sclater's (1888, p. 159) characterization of Myiozetetes as "a robust version of Elaenia, with a stronger beak and feet, and slightly bristled rictus" is decidedly apt, if perhaps oversimplified, and suggests how vague are the limits of the genus as now constituted and formally characterized.

The species luteiventris was transferred from Elaenia to Myiozetetes by Sclater (1871, p. 751) without comment. This arrangement has been followed by subsequent writers but the affinities of luteiventris have been questioned by Cory and Hellmayr (1927, p. 146, footnote) and others. In plumage luteiventris bears only superficial resemblance to other species of the genus but it is in most respects nearest granadensis in appearance. Both lack the conspicuous superciliaries of cayanensis and similis and, unlike those forms, only males have a concealed coronal patch. As granadensis (but not luteiventris) has pale frontal feathers and usually a trace of superciliary streaks it appears to occupy an intermediate position between birds of the cayanensis-similis complex and luteiventris.

The concept of granadensis as a natural link between species having notably different plumage patterns is further strengthened by the presence of fairly distinct olive pectoral streaks in some examples of granadensis. Although luteiventris differs from the latter quite as much as granadensis differs from cayanensis and similis, the four appear to comprise a natural group of related species that are quite similar morphologically although differing superficially in appearance. In my opinion it would be unrealistic to exclude luteiventris from Myiozetetes unless the genus be restricted to cayanensis and similis.

The relative scarcity of luteiventris in museum collections has discouraged comment on its variability. For the present study I have assembled an unprecedented series of thirty-two adult specimens of

1 A specimen listed by Sclater (1871, p. 755) from "Oyapock, Cayenne" has hitherto been discounted.
the nominate race representing all parts of its extensive range and, presumably, all variations in the adult plumage. The sexes are indistinguishable in appearance except for a concealed red-and-orange coronal patch in males. Plumage variation is not pronounced but may involve brightness of the yellow under parts, prominence and extent of the olive ventral stripes, prominence of the olivaceous tinge on the back, and presence or absence of narrow edgings on the remiges and feathers of the lower rump. All plumage variation in these birds apparently is either fortuitous or (?) related to age, molt, or wear. There is no evidence of geographic variation.

Males of luteiventris average larger than females but individuals may be of similar size as shown by the following measurements:

Males (17): wing, 73–81 (77.7); tail, 58–67 (63.5). Females (15): wing, 65–74 (71.7); tail, 52–62 (59.2). Sex for sex, birds from north of the Amazon River tend to be somewhat smaller than those from more southern localities but the apparent difference is too slight for formal recognition. North of Amazon: Males (8): wing, 75–79 (75.5); tail, 59–64 (63.5). Females (11): wing, 65–74 (70.4); tail, 52–62 (58).

South of Amazon: Males (9): wing, 73–81 (78); tail, 58–67 (63.5). Females (4): wing, 72–74 (73); tail, 59–62 (60.5).

SPECIMENS EXAMINED

M. l. luteiventris.—Colombia: opposite Tauaponto, Río Uaupés, 1 male. Ecuador: Río Sinu, 1 male; Río Napo, 1 male, 1 female. Brazil: Tauaponto, Río Uaupés, 1 male, 3 females; Río Negro (Cu-cuhy, São Gabriel, Yucali, Curucuryari), 5 males, 5 females; Tonantins, Río Solimoes, 1 female; São Paulo do Alavença, Río Solimoes, 1 male, 1 female; Hyutanahan, Río Purus, 2 males, 1 female; Borba, Río Madeira, 1 male; Villa Braga, Río Tapajos, 1 male, 2 females; Santarém, Pará, 1 male. Peru: Apayacu, Río Amazonas, 2 males; Lagarto, Alto Río Ucayali, 1 male.

M. l. septentrionalis.—Paloemeu Airstrip, southern Surinam, 1 female (type).

REFERENCES

CORY, CHARLES B., and HELLMAYR, CHARLES E.

RIDGEWAY, ROBERT
SCLATER, PHILIP LUTLEY