

Broad-winged Hawk *Buteo platypterus* (Aves: Accipitridae): An addition to the Paraguayan Avifauna

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ABSTRACT

The first Paraguayan records of the Broad-winged Hawk *Buteo platypterus* are reported from Itapúa and Central departments.

Key words: distribution, Asunción, Artigas, Reserva Chopi Say'ju

RESUMEN

Se reportan los primeros registros Paraguayos del Aguilucho alas anchas *Buteo platypterus* de los departamentos Itapúa y Central.

Palabras claves: distribución, Asunción, Artigas, Reserva Chopi Say'ju

The Broad-winged Hawk *Buteo platypterus* (Accipitridae) is a small buteonine hawk consisting of six subspecies, five endemic to the Caribbean, and the nominate which breeds throughout the eastern half of North America and migrates south through Central America to spend the non-breeding season in South America (Capitolo *et al.* 2020, Haines *et al.* 2003, Bildstein and Saborio 2000). Though long thought to winter mainly in the northern half of South America, recent publications have documented the occurrence of individuals much further south, and the species is now known to occur regularly in northwestern Argentina and southern Brazil during the Nearctic winter months (austral summer months) (Willrich and Joenck 2019, Kilpp *et al.* 2018, Meller and Bencke 2012, Klavins *et al.* 2012, Roesler and Mazar Barnett 2004,) and at least sporadically as far south as Buenos Aires Province (Monllor and Chiurla 2020).

Though stated to be of likely occurrence in Paraguay by Contreras *et al.* (1990) and Kilpp *et al.* (2018), no records have been for-

thcoming and the species was “not evaluated” by Guyra Paraguay (2004) because of a lack of concrete reports. The first report of this species in Paraguay is thus a juvenile light phase bird photographed by Jose Paredes on the Sendero Kambay at Reserva Chopi Say'ju, Artigas, Itapúa department on 16/11/2020 at 15.30 h (Figures 1 and 2). The species was identified as a Broad-winged Hawk on the basis of the bold malar streak contrasting with pale ear coverts, the blotched pattern of the underparts, the white shaft streaks in the primaries and the tail pattern. No other Paraguayan species shares these characteristics.

On 02/01/2021, Rob and Matthew Clay observed a juvenile light phase Broad-winged Hawk in the Jardín Botánico, Asunción, Central department. The bird was observed circling low over the forest for two minutes, gliding away after a brief interaction with an



Figure 1. Broad-winged Hawk *Buteo platypterus* ventral view. Reserva Chopi Say'ju, Artigas, Itapúa department on 16/11/2020 (Photo: José Paredes)

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adult Roadside Hawk *Rupornis magnirostris*. The wing shape (“candle flame” with quite pointed wing tip) was immediately obvious, as was the relatively unmarked pale underwing, with dark tip and a narrow diffuse trailing edge. The tail was pale brown with fine bars and one broader subterminal bar. The tail appeared quite long as the bird glided away. The underparts were pale with streaking concentrated on the sides of the neck and upper breast (none in the centre). The upperparts (including the upper wing and tail) were uniform brown. The bird appeared about the same size as the Roadside Hawk, though with longer and more pointed wings (lacking Roadside Hawk’s “paddle-winged” appearance).

Records in Argentina correspond to the period November to early February (Kilpp *et al.* 2018), and there is a photograph online of an individual very close to the Paraguayan border at Parque Nacional do Iguaçu, Paraná state, Brazil (30/12/2013) (Pegoraro 2013). The two Paraguayan reports are consistent with these dates. Kilpp *et al.* (2018) noted a dramatic increase in the species South American range (24.2%) and an increase in the number of reports of the species in southern South America post-1999, but they were unable to discern whether this was a real range increase, or an artefact of an increased number of observers and the availability of online citizen science platforms providing greater data availability. However, it has been suggested that the species is undergoing a global increase in population (Hoffman and Smith 2003) and that this may translate into an increase in the wintering range where a larger number of individuals leads to an increase in the number of migration strategies, and perhaps drives competition for resources resulting in range expansion (Kilpp *et al.* 2018). Nonetheless Kilpp *et al.* (2018) also note that other studies provide some evidence of declines in the eastern population, or that the population is stable. If the species non-breeding range is expanding, it may be in response to changes within the core area (e.g. increased deforestation and fires within the Amazon basin).

Though it is difficult to make any affirmations about the status of the species in Paraguay on the basis of two reports, it seems likely based on the known range of the species that more records will be forthcoming. We hypothesise that Broad-winged Hawk may prove to be a rare passage migrant or Nearctic winter visitor to Paraguay.



Figure 2. Same individual dorsal view. (Photo: José Paredes)

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