

NOTAS DE CAMPO/FIELD NOTES

Rusty-belted Tapaculo *Liosceles thoracicus*, nest and eggs

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Recibido/Received: 30 Marzo 2020. Aceptado/Accepted: 28 Septiembre 2020
Publicado en línea/Published online: 18 Diciembre 2020

To date, only a single nest of Rusty-belted Tapaculo *Liosceles thoracicus* has been described in the literature (Rosenberg, 1986). This nest was found in northeastern Peru (subspecies *L. t. erithacus*) containing two nearly fledged young, and the eggs remain undescribed. Here I describe a nest and the clutch of two eggs, found near Gareno Lodge, Province of Napo, eastern Ecuador (-1.0175, -77.3922; 430 m a.s.l.).

On 12 February 2013, at 13h00, I flushed an adult *L. thoracicus erithacus* from a nest containing a single egg. The adult flushed only after I paused for about 2 min while standing 1 m in front of nest. The adult shot out of the nest, remaining at ground level, and silently disappeared into nearby undergrowth. The single egg was immaculate white, showed no signs of embryonic development when held up a light, and weighed 6.15 g. It was cool to the touch, suggesting that the adult had only recently entered the nest. At 16h15, the nest still contained a single cold egg. The following day, at 08h45, the adult was again on the nest (Fig. 1a), flushing as described previously, but only after I remained standing for over a minute, 1.5 m from the nest. It likely would not have flushed had I passed close to the nest without pausing. The nest contained two eggs, both warm and dry (Fig.1b). The second egg was also immaculate white and weighed 6.02 g at this time. Linear measurements of the first and second eggs were 27.1 × 20.2 mm and 26.8 × 20.2 mm, respectively.

Overall, the nest I found was similar to Rosenberg's (1986) nest. It was extremely cryptic, built on the ground, nestled into a shallow cavity that was likely naturally formed amongst the earth, roots, and leaf litter, the rear portion of the nest backed up against a partially exposed buttress root. Small roots from surrounding soil were grown into the thick nest walls, suggesting it had been there for at least several months and was perhaps used for previous breeding attempts. It was situated on a gentle slope at the top of a narrow ridge, c. 30 m high, surrounded by low, swampy patches of *terra firme* forest in most directions. The ball-shaped nest was almost perfectly spherical, with a c. 14 cm external diameter. It was entered through a lateral opening, situated just above the midline (in the upper half). Based on my examination of Rosenberg's nest (currently at the Western Foundation of Vertebrate Zoology; EN-168902), I suggest that the entrance "located at the top" of the nest described by Rosenberg (1986) was similarly located. The round entrance was 4 cm in diameter and oriented 270°. Externally, the nest was tightly woven of dark (old) moss and very fine, dark rootlets, with a few thicker rootlets and fern leaves intermixed. There was a well-established colony of minute ants (Formicidae) living in the lower portion of the nest and the ground below. Though small, the ants had a powerful sting, but it appeared that they were not entering the nest chamber. The internal nest chamber was slightly taller than wide, measuring 10 cm tall and 8–9 cm wide. The egg cup (lower half) of the inner chamber was covered with a 1–1.5 cm thick layer of pale, thin, flexible fibers, and was 4 cm deep from the lip of the entrance. The aged appearance of the external nest material, presence of an ant colony in/below the nest, growth of rootlets into the nest, and general condition of the nest suggest to me that the nests of *L. thoracicus erithacus* may be used for multiple breeding attempts, during which only the nest lining is replaced, much like the thick-walled, well-hidden nests of Spotted Barbtail *Premnoplex brunnescens* (Greeney, 2008a,b).

I thank John V. Moore, Matt Kaplan, Field Guides Inc., and the Population Biology Foundation for supporting my fieldwork. The writing of this manuscript was supported by a John Simon Guggenheim Foundation Fellowship.

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Figure 1: Rusty-belted Tapaculo *Liosceles thoracicus erithacus*, adult peering from the nest entrance while incubating, 13 February 2013, Gareno Lodge, Napo, Ecuador (Harold F. Greeney).



Figura 2: Rusty-belted Tapaculo *Liosceles thoracicus erithacus*, nest containing two eggs that are partially visible through the well-hidden lateral nest entrance, 13 February 2013, Gareno Lodge, Napo, Ecuador (Harold F. Greeney).