

SHORT COMMUNICATION

Occurrence of the whistling heron, *Syrigma sibilatrix* (Temminck, 1824) (Aves: Ciconiiformes), in Goiás state, central Brazil

Daniel Blamires^{1,6}, Cláudio V. Mendonça², José Hidasi³ & Carlos E. R. de Sant'Ana^{4,5}

¹ Programa de Pós-graduação em Ciências Ambientais, Universidade Federal de Goiás, Departamento de Biologia Geral, ICB I, C.P. 131, 74001-970, Goiânia, GO, Brazil. E-mail: bmeridionalis97@yahoo.com.br

² Biota- Projetos e consultoria ambiental Ltda., 11º Avenida, nº 405, Qd. 93, Lt. 9/22, Setor Leste Universitário, 74605-080, Goiânia, GO, Brasil. E-mail: claudio@biotonet.com.br

³ Fundação Museu de Ornitologia, Avenida Pará, 395, Q. 30, L. 1920, 74520-106, Goiânia, GO, Brasil.

⁴ Coordenação de Biologia, Centro Federal de Educação Tecnológica, Rua 75, 46, Centro, 74055-110, Goiânia, GO, Brasil. E-mail: kadu@cefetgo.br

⁵ Universidade Católica de Goiás. Avenida Universitária, nº 1440, Setor Universitário, 74065-010, Goiânia, GO, Brasil.

⁶ Corresponding author.

Abstract

Between 1999 and 2004 we recorded the whistling heron, *Syrigma sibilatrix*, in Goiás state, central Brazil. One specimen was collected and deposited in the Fundação Museu de Ornitologia de Goiânia (FMOG 12855). Observations were conducted in some municipalities of the Goiânia metropolitan region and in the west-central, northeastern and southern regions of Goiás. Probably, the range expansion of this species is due to the increase of pastures, artificial ponds and other anthropic areas in the region. However, it may only reflect the paucity of ornithological studies in central Brazil.

Key words: *Syrigma sibilatrix*, geographical distribution, Cerrado, Brazil, Goiás state.

The state of Goiás is located in the core area of the Cerrado region, and holds a representative fauna of this domain. However, 70% of the Cerrado region has never been satisfactorily sampled for birds, except for the area around the Goiânia micro region (Silva, 1995). It has been predicted that more studies in Goiás and in the Cerrado domain certainly would increase the species richness known for the region and the knowledge on the distribution ranges of some species (Bagno & Rodrigues, 1998; Blamires et al., 2002).

The whistling heron, *Syrigma sibilatrix* (Temminck, 1824), is distributed from Venezuela to Uruguay and northern Argentina, with the known distribution in Brazil limited, until recently, to southern Mato Grosso and São Paulo states (Pinto, 1978; Meyer de Schauensee, 1982; Sibley & Monroe, 1990; del Hoyo et al., 1992; Sick, 1997). However, recent records in Brazil were done at the Distrito Federal (Negret et al., 1984; Braz & Cavalcanti, 2001), Piauí (Olmos, 1993), southern Minas Gerais (Vasconcelos et al., 2002) and Espírito Santo (Venturini & Paz, 2003). Few specimens of the whistling heron were collected in the Cerrado, and the Fundação Museu de Ornitologia de Goiânia is the only institution to hold a specimen collected in Goiás (Tab. 1).

The whistling heron inhabits open and wet areas (Sibley & Monroe, 1990; del Hoyo et al., 1992; Sick, 1997), and its range expansion may be due to the increase of pastures, artificial ponds and other modified landscapes. Alternatively, its known range may be incomplet due to lack of studies in central Brazil. Future detailed studies on other birds in Goiás and in central Brazil will probably reach similar results (Bagno & Rodrigues, 1998).

Here, records of the whistling heron collected between 1999 and 2004 at different localities in the Brazilian state of Goiás are reported (Fig. 1):

Goiânia metropolitan region

Syrigma sibilatrix is widely distributed through the region in pairs or alone. They are often seen along roadsides, pastures, or perched on posts in marshy areas. One immature male was collected in the Zoológico Municipal de Goiânia in February 2004 (16°40'43"S, 49°15'14"W, 749 m a.s.l.), and deposited in the Fundação Museu de Ornitologia de Goiânia (FMOG 12855). Other records have been done in the municipalities of Senador Canedo (16°42'29"S, 49°05'35"W, 801 m a.s.l.) and Caldazinha (16°42'51"S, 49°00'07"W, 866 m a.s.l.). Five individuals were observed in the Serra das Areias Ecological Park, in the municipality of Aparecida de Goiânia (16°49'24"S, 49°14'38"W, 808 m a.s.l.), in September 2002.

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Table 1 - Municipalities and states where *Syrigma sibilatrix* was recorded in central Brazil, according to specimens in Brazilian ornithological collections. Abbreviations are: FMOG: Fundação Museu de Ornitologia de Goiânia; MZUSP: Museu de Zoologia da Universidade de São Paulo. Brazilian states are indicated by capital letters: MT = Mato Grosso, GO = Goiás, MS = Mato Grosso do Sul.

Municipality/state	Geographical coordinates	Specimen
Cuiabá/MT	15°35'46"S, 56°05'48"W	FMOG 918
Salobra/MT	20°11'00"S, 56°30'00"W	MZUSP 18244
Goiânia/GO	16°40'43"S, 49°15'14"W	FMOG 12855
Três Lagoas/MS	20°45'04"S, 51°40'42"W	MZUSP 70530
Sta. Rita do Pardo/MS	21°18'10"S, 52°49'50"W	MZUSP 73676

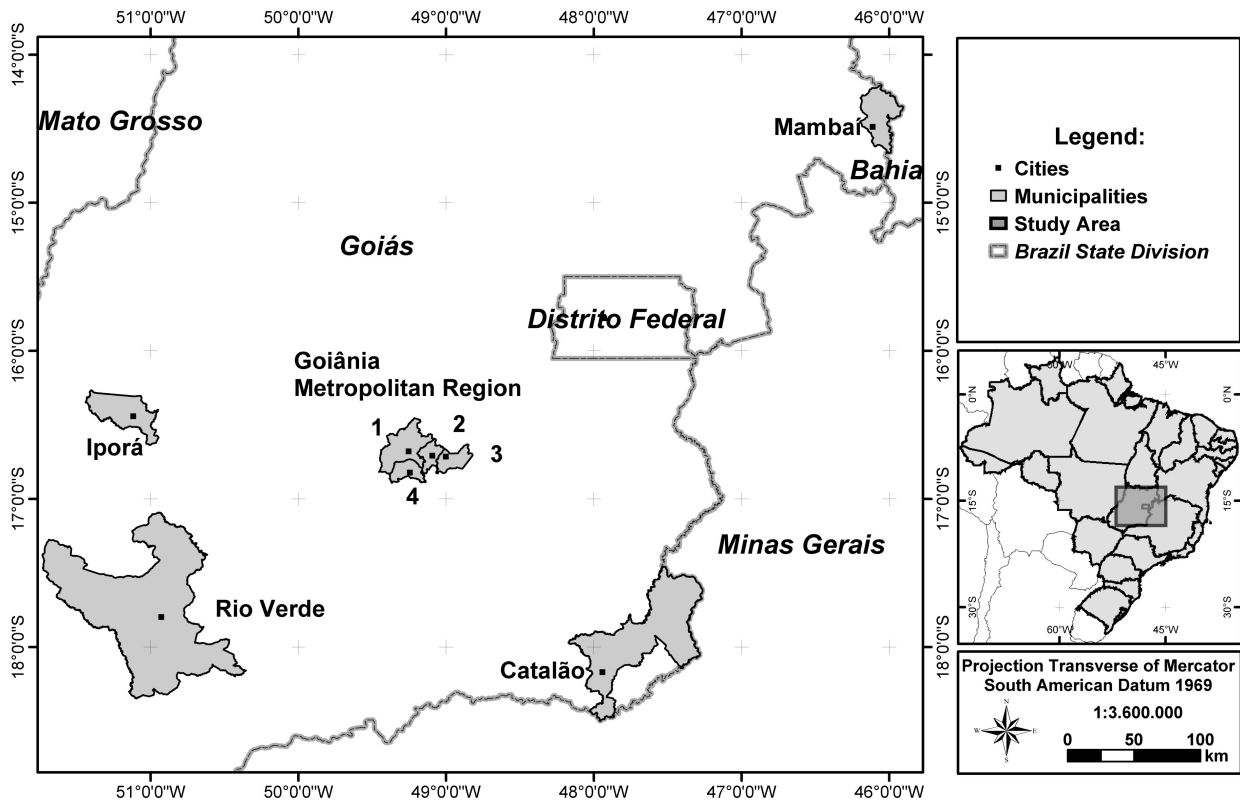


Figure 1 - Known localities for the occurrence of the whistling heron, *Syrigma sibilatrix* (Temminck, 1824), in Goiás state, Brazil. The numbers are indicating the municipalities of the Goiânia Metropolitan Region: 1= Goiânia, 2= Senador Canedo, 3= Caldasinha, 4= Aparecida de Goiânia. Following IBGE (1998) and ESRI (2001).

Municipality of Iporá

Between April and January 1999 and 2003, individuals were observed alone or in pairs. Birds were common in pastures and in nearby swamps and artificial ponds. They were also observed several times flying over the city of Iporá (16°26'31"S, 51°07'04"W, 584 m a.s.l.).

Municipality of Mambai

During a fieldwork carried out on December 16, 2001 in the environmental protection area of the "Nascentes do Rio Vermelho" (14°27'14"S, 46°11'55"W, 709 m. a.s.l.), individuals of the whistling heron were observed in pastures and in "veredas" (a riparian formation present on permanently humid

soils, and composed by a bushy stratum and a tall stripe of the palm tree, *Mauritia flexuosa* – Eiten, 1993).

Municipality of Rio Verde

Individuals, alone or in pairs, were observed in May 2004, around artificial ponds and other anthropic areas (17°47'53"S, 50°55'41"W, 715 m a.s.l.).

Municipality of Catalão

One specimen was observed in a mining area in June, 28, 2003, near an artificial pond (18°09'57"S, 47°56'47"W).

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