

endemic to South America². Previously included in the genus *Podager*, it was recently subsumed in *Chordeiles* following a molecular study^{6,13}. Two subspecies are currently recognised, *C. n. nacunda* and *C. n. coryi*¹, the former in eastern Colombia, Ecuador and Peru through Brazil (south of the Amazon) to central Argentina and Uruguay, and *coryi* in northern and central Colombia, including north and west of the Andes, east through Venezuela, Trinidad, the Guianas and northernmost Brazil^{3,9}.

Austral migrants to northern South America probably involve the nominate race, while birds in the Amazon Basin are rather intermediate in size, but are currently also assigned to the same race.

C. nacunda inhabits savanna, grasslands and marshes, as well as forest edges, xerophytic country, shores, pastures and other anthropogenic areas⁴. It is typically a lowland species, occurring from sea level to 500 m^{7,8}, 600 m¹⁰ or 1,000 m^{3,4,9}. Here we report new altitudinal data, based on previously overlooked museum specimens, revealing that it may occur to at least 2,500 m. In 2012–13, we collected data on the taxonomy and distribution of *C. nacunda* and, among many specimens examined, six of *C. n. coryi* from Venezuela and Colombia were collected above 1,000 m (see Table 1). One at the American Museum of Natural History, New York (AMNH 477001) was collected at El Valle, Mérida, Venezuela, at 2,165 m. From the same region, a specimen in the Museum of Comparative Zoology, Cambridge, MA (MCZ

120012), from the vicinity of ‘La Culata’ in easternmost Mérida, is from c.2,500 m. Two others are from the same region: one labelled only ‘Culata’, at the University of Michigan Museum of Zoology, Ann Arbor (UMMZ 89254), and one from ‘Mérida, Venezuela’ at the Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto (ROM 33.9.1.339). Based on the label data of UMMZ 89254, the bird was collected at c.2,000 m. These records imply an increase of at least 1,000 m in the known elevational range of *C. nacunda* in Venezuela and Colombia.

Two additional specimens at the National Museum of Natural History, Washington DC (USNM A16578, A16579) are labelled ‘Bogotá, Colombia’, a city lying mainly at 2,500–2,600 m elevation. Although no precise locality is mentioned, the label of USNM A16579 mentions coordinates of a locality in the extreme east of Bogotá. Many authors have discussed the reliability and real origin of ‘Bogotá specimens’^{2,12}. Many refer to lowland species of the *llanos*, Magdalena Valley and Amazonian localities⁵, meaning the specimens of *C. nacunda* could have been collected elsewhere. Furthermore, no recent records from Bogotá are known. In Colombia, the species is common in the *llanos* when austral migrants arrive, with rare resident populations in the Magdalena Valley and northern Colombia (T. M. Donegan *in litt.* 2014).

Few data exist concerning local altitudinal movements or migrations of *C. nacunda*. Hilty⁷ mentioned that the species shows marked seasonal variation in abundance in the *llanos* of Venezuela, being scarce and local

Altitudinal range of Nacunda Nighthawk *Chordeiles nacunda* in northern South America

Nacunda Nighthawk *Chordeiles nacunda* is a widespread species

Table 1. Museum specimens of Nacunda Nighthawk *Chordeiles nacunda* collected in Venezuela and Colombia above 2,000 m. AMNH: American Museum of Natural History, New York; MCZ: Museum of Comparative Zoology, Cambridge, MA; USNM: National Museum of Natural History, Washington DC; ROM: Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto; UMMZ: University of Michigan Museum of Zoology, Ann Arbor. - = data unknown.

Museum	Reg. no.	Country	State	Locality	Altitude	Date
AMNH	477001	Venezuela	Mérida	El Valle	2,165 m	18 May 1903
MCZ	120012	Venezuela	Mérida	La Culata	c.2,500 m	-
UMMZ	89254	Venezuela	Mérida	Culata	c.2,000 m	-
ROM	33.9.1.339	Venezuela	Mérida	-	2,500 m	21 April 1908
USNM	A16578	Colombia	-	‘Bogotá’	unknown	-
USNM	A16579	Colombia	-	‘Bogotá’	unknown	-

in the dry season (January–April) but common to abundant in May–October, with many presumably being austral migrants. McMullan *et al.*¹⁰ considered the species to be resident in small numbers in Colombia, supplemented by larger numbers of austral migrants. *C. n. coryi* is also considered to be possibly a partial migrant in Colombia, as large flocks have been observed in the Santa Marta region, in Meta and near Leticia⁴. No previous information exists regarding the occurrence of *C. nacunda* at higher altitudes, beyond a record in the central Mérida Andes, although the text in the same work stated that the species occurs at 0–900 m⁷. Meyer de Schauensee¹¹ reported the species as occurring in the tropical zone, namely at 0–1,500 m. Stotz *et al.*¹⁴ stated that 1,400 m is the maximum known altitude for the species, and Hilty & Brown⁸ and Hilty⁷ reported that it occurs at 0–500 m in Colombia and Venezuela, respectively. In the latter case, given that Hilty also mapped records in the Mérida Andes, this presumably refers to the species' usual range. Based on this and our evidence, we can infer that the species occurs at higher altitudes, albeit rarely and possibly as a migrant. The species' altitudinal range should be considered to be from sea level to at least 2,500 m.

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