



Expansion of the known range of Tawny Piculet *Picumnus fulvescens* including the south bank of the São Francisco River in north-east Brazil

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Tawny Piculet *Picumnus fulvescens* is a small-bodied Picidae, with predominantly tawny-coloured plumage and ferruginous, white-speckled underparts. Males are distinguished from females by the red forehead (Sick 1997). The species is currently listed as Near Threatened, due primarily to extensive and ongoing habitat loss within its range (BirdLife International 2008). The species occurs predominantly in Caatinga scrub, but also in drier forests of the Atlantic Forest domain. Like other piculets, *P. fulvescens* appears relatively tolerant of habitat disturbance, and is often found in second growth, where it feeds on insects, particularly the larvae and pupae of ants (Sick 1997).

P. fulvescens is endemic to north-east Brazil, in the northern Caatinga east to the coastal Atlantic Forest. Prior to the present study, the species' known range (*cf.* Ridgely *et al.* 2007) encompassed a relatively limited area parallel to the left (north) bank of the São Francisco River in the states of Alagoas, Ceará, Pernambuco and south-east Piauí (Fig. 1).



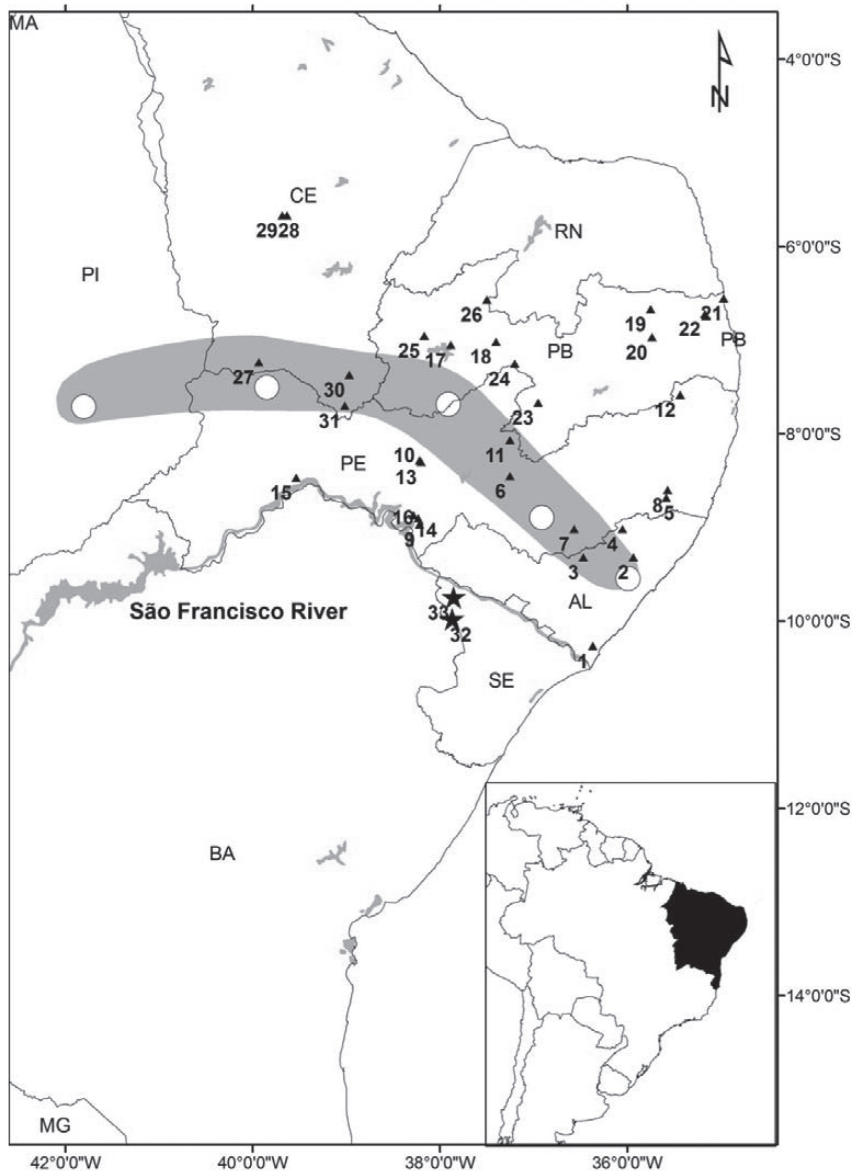


Figure 1. Distribution of Tawny Piculet *Picumnus fulvescens* in north-east Brazil. The grey shaded area is the range defined by Ridgely *et al.* (2007), with localities marked by white circles. Stars represent new localities recorded by the present study and triangles sites mentioned in the literature or based on the Federal University of Pernambuco (UFPE), Recife, ornithology collection. Sites numbered as in Table 1. Brazilian states: AL = Alagoas; BA = Bahia; CE = Ceará; MG = Minas Gerais; PB = Paraíba; PE = Pernambuco; PI = Piauí; RN = Rio Grande do Norte; SE = Sergipe.

During field work at the Serra da Guia in western Sergipe, an adult male *P. fulvescens* (Fig. 2) was captured in a mist-net at 17.00 h on 19 December 2008. The trapping site (09°58'55"S, 37°52'06"W) is located within an enclave of cloud forest in an area of arboreal caatinga, 750 m above sea level. In October 2010, the species was observed during field work at a neighbouring site in western Sergipe (09°45'22"S, 37°51'12"W), 430 m above sea level.

TABLE 1

Geographic localities identified for Tawny Piculet *Picumnus flavescens* during the present study. Brazilian states listed by locality: AL = Alagoas; CE = Ceará; PB = Paraíba; PE = Pernambuco; RN = Rio Grande do Norte; SE = Sergipe. Habitats: CA = Caatinga; AF = Atlantic Forest.

Site	Locality	Coordinates	Habitat	Source
1	Piaçabuçu (AL)	10°16'S, 36°22'W	AF	Cabral <i>et al.</i> (2006)
2	Murici (AL)	09°19'S, 35°56'W	AF	Roda (2003)
3	Quebrangulo (AL)	09°19'S, 36°28'W	AF	Roda (2003)
4	São José da Laje (AL)	09°01'S, 36°03'W	AF	Roda (2003)
5	Palmares (PE)	08°41'S, 35°35'W	AF	Roda (2003)
6	Buíque (PE)	08°27'S, 37°15'W	CA	Farias (2009)
7	Brejão (PE)	09°01'S, 36°34'W	CA	Roda & Carlos (2004)
8	Floresta (PE)	08°36'S, 35°34'W	AF	UFPE specimen
9	Sertânia (PE)	08°58'S, 38°13'W	CA	UFPE specimen
10	Caruaru (PB)	08°17'S, 38°13'W	CA	UFPE specimen
11	Sertânia (PE)	08°04'S, 37°15'W	CA	UFPE specimen
12	São Vicente Ferrer (PE)	07°35'S, 35°26'W	AF	Roda & Carlos (2004)
13	Betânia (PE)	08°18'S, 38°12'W	CA	Farias <i>et al.</i> (2006)
14	Icó Mandante (PE)	08°52'S, 38°17'W	CA	Farias (2007)
15	Brígida (PE)	08°28'S, 39°32'W	CA	Farias (2007)
16	Apolônio Sales (PE)	08°54'S, 38°14'W	CA	Farias (2007)
17	Coremas (PB)	07°03'S, 37°53'W	CA	Pinto & Camargo (1961)
18	Santa Teresinha (PB)	07°01'S, 37°24'W	CA	Telino-Júnior <i>et al.</i> (2005)
19	Curimataú (PB)	06°40'S, 35°45'W	CA	Farias <i>et al.</i> (2006)
20	Areia (PB)	06°58'S, 35°44'W	CA	H. F. P. Araujo pers. obs.
21	Mataraca (PB)	06°33'S, 34°58'W	AF	Araujo <i>et al.</i> (2010)
22	Mamanguape (PB)	06°43'S, 35°10'W	AF	Almeida & Teixeira (2010)
23	Sumé (PB)	07°40'S, 36°57'W	CA	Araujo (2009)
24	Maturéia (PB)	07°15'S, 37°12'W	CA	H. F. P. Araujo pers. obs.
25	São José da Lagoa Tapada (PB)	06°57'S, 38°10'W	CA	H. F. P. Araujo pers. obs.
26	Serra Negra (RN)	06°34'S, 37°30'W	CA	Nascimento (2000)
27	Chapada do Araripe (CE)	07°14'S, 39°56'W	CA	Nascimento <i>et al.</i> (2000)
28	Pedra Branca (CE)	05°40'S, 39°38'W	CA	Olmos <i>et al.</i> (2005)
29	Mombaça (CE)	05°40'S, 39°41'W	CA	Olmos <i>et al.</i> (2005)
30	Milagres (CE)	07°22'S, 38°58'W	CA	Olmos <i>et al.</i> (2005)
31	Jati (CE)	07°42'S, 39°01'W	CA	Olmos <i>et al.</i> (2005)
32	Serra da Guia (SE)	09°59'S, 37°52'W	CA	Present study
33	Capim Grosso (SE)	09°45'S, 37°51'W	CA	Present study

As these records represent a considerable expansion of the species' known range, we reviewed the literature and consulted specimens in the ornithological collection of the Federal University of Pernambuco (UFPE) in Recife (Table 1). As a result, we identified an additional 28 localities for *P. fulvescens*, extending the limits of its known range in almost all directions, except west and north-west (Fig. 1). Three of these 'new' localities are on the left (north) bank of the São Francisco River in Alagoas and Pernambuco.

In addition to confirming that *P. fulvescens* occurs over a much wider area than previously thought (Ridgely *et al.* 2007), our records from Sergipe confirm its presence south of the São Francisco River, a major physical barrier to small-bodied forest-dwelling birds (Welty & Baptista 1988). It is therefore possible that the species is more widespread in Sergipe and even Bahia, although the current lack of records may at least partially reflect its

rarity therein (Wege & Long 1995, BirdLife International 2008).

The records reported here support the recent reclassification of *P. fulvescens* as Near Threatened rather than Vulnerable (BirdLife International 2008). In fact, this review suggested that the species may even warrant downlisting to Least Concern, and our study would support this, given the considerable expansion of this piculet's range. However, while the species is now known to occur over a relatively wide area, including a number of protected areas, Tawny Piculet does appear to be relatively rare throughout its distribution.



Figure 2. Adult male Tawny Piculet *Picumnus fulvescens*, Serra da Guia, Sergipe, Brazil, 19 December 2008 (Juan Ruiz-Esparza)

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