

# Secrets of a Rare Bird:

## Breeding behavior of the Gray-breasted Flycatcher

### (*Lathrotriccus griseipectus*) in Ecuador

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Fig. 1. Photo of *Lathrotriccus griseipectus*.  
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### Introduction

The Tumbesian region in Southern Ecuador and Northwestern Peru is home to many different species of birds, and ~30% of these birds are found nowhere else on Earth. The Gray-breasted Flycatcher, *Lathrotriccus griseipectus*, (Fig. 1) is an endemic that is listed as Vulnerable by the IUCN due to its small distribution and ongoing habitat degradation. There is little known about the biology of this species. Therefore, gathering data about its life history is essential for conservation.



Fig. 2. The range of *L. griseipectus* and the location of Jorupe Reserve in SW Ecuador. Location of study site is pinned.



Fig. 3. The nest of *L. griseipectus* from Jorupe Reserve that we videotaped. Image from Greeney 2014.

### Methods

We discovered a nest of *L. griseipectus* in a cavity of a *Ceiba* tree in Jorupe Reserve in southwestern Ecuador (Fig. 2; Greeney 2014). We used a video camera to record behaviors at a single nest from February 10, 2010 to March 15, 2010. The video camera was placed 2 m from the nest from c. 06:00 to 18:20 h during incubation and the nestling period. We analyzed eighty hours of video at the University of Tennessee to record nesting behaviors of adults and offspring.



Fig. 4. Representation of an adult bird taking a fecal sac from a nestling.

### Results

#### Incubation

- 16 days of incubation period
- One adult (presumably female) incubated for 70.4% of the observation time

#### Nestling Period

- Of 53.4 hours (14 days) of recorded nestling time, a parent only brooded for 48 minutes. The rest was spent gathering food and cleaning the nest.
- Each nestling was fed an average of 7.1 times per hour and produced 0.8 fecal sacs per hour. The adults always carried the fecal sac away (see Fig. 4 for example of fecal sac removal).

#### Fledging

- The nestlings fledged at noon on day 14 of the nestling period.
- The parents were recorded bringing food to the nest for 30 minutes after fledging

### Discussion

Data gathered during this study provide valuable insight into the life history of a threatened species in the Neotropics. Knowing the timing of life history events, especially of young, provide valuable insight into reproduction that may help with conservation efforts of this rare species.



Fig. 5. Photo of *Lathrotriccus griseipectus*.  
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### Literature Cited

Greeney, H. F. 2014. Breeding biology of the Grey-breasted Flycatcher *Lathrotriccus griseipectus* in south-west Ecuador. Bulletin of the British Ornithologists' Club 134:14-18.