First photographic documentation of Small Andean Swift *Aeronautes montivagus* in Suriname

Observations were made during the Roosevelt expedition of the Mulokot Foundation in Wayana Territory, southern Suriname.

Key evidence: approximately 100 individuals photographed on 15 June 2024 at Rooseveltpiek; multiple plumage types documented; first photographic documentation for Suriname according to available literature and accessible records.

Abstract

We report the first photographic documentation of Small Andean Swift *Aeronautes montivagus* in Suriname. On 15 June 2024, Stijn Nollen observed and photographed a flock of approximately 100 swifts at Rooseveltpiek, between Apetina and Palumeu, in Wayana Territory, southern Suriname. The birds were recorded at 3.36160° N, 55.16244° W, flying above the mountain and surrounding forested slopes. Photographs show individuals with extensive white plumage markings, individuals with white mainly around the lower body and legs, and birds with less extensive white patterning. To our knowledge, based on available literature and accessible records, these observations represent the first photographic documentation of *A. montivagus* in Suriname.

Introduction

Small Andean Swift *Aeronautes montivagus* is a high-flying swift associated with mountainous regions of northern South America. The species is typically observed in groups and may occur above higher terrain and forested mountain systems. Available range summaries do not list Suriname among the known countries of occurrence. During the Roosevelt expedition of the Mulokot Foundation in Wayana Territory, southern Suriname, a large flock of *A. montivagus* was observed and photographed near Rooseveltpiek. Here we document this record as the first photographic evidence of the species in Suriname.

Study area and observations

Observations were made during the Roosevelt expedition of the Mulokot Foundation in Wayana Territory, southern Suriname. On 15 June 2024, a flock of approximately 100 swifts was observed near Rooseveltpiek, between Apetina and Palumeu (3.36160° N, 55.16244° W). The site lies in a remote mountainous landscape with forested slopes and exposed higher terrain. The birds were observed flying high above the Rooseveltpiek area, often in loose groups. Multiple photographs were obtained by Stijn Nollen. The photographs show variation in plumage pattern: some individuals show extensive white markings, others show white mainly around the lower body and legs, while some birds show relatively little white patterning. No perched individuals or nesting sites were observed.

Results

The photographed birds were identified as Small Andean Swift *Aeronautes montivagus*. The observation involved a flock of approximately 100 individuals, rather than a single bird. The photographs provide documentary evidence of the occurrence of the species in Suriname. The variation in plumage visible in the photographs may reflect differences between adults and younger birds, or individual variation, but this requires further assessment from the photographic material.

Discussion

This record represents an important addition to the known avifauna of Suriname. To our knowledge, based on available literature and accessible records, this is the first photographic documentation of Small Andean Swift *Aeronautes montivagus* in the country. The observation of a large flock near Rooseveltpiek suggests that the species may occur in suitable mountainous habitats in the southern interior of Suriname. The location lies in remote Wayana Territory, a region that remains poorly surveyed ornithologically, particularly around isolated peaks and higher

forested terrain. The presence of approximately 100 individuals suggests that the species may be more regular in this landscape than currently documented. Further surveys of Rooseveltpiek and nearby mountain systems between Apetina and Palumeu are needed to clarify whether *A. montivagus* is a regular or seasonal visitor, or possibly resident, in southern Suriname. Additional photographic documentation, sound recordings and repeated observations would help clarify its status in the country.

Acknowledgements

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References

Available literature and accessible record databases consulted for this note should be listed here before submission. Suggested sources to verify include national checklists for Suriname, eBird/Macaulay Library, Avibase, Birds of the World and regional literature on the avifauna of the Guiana Shield.