

# Connecticut Warbler (*Oporornis agilis*) in a Peruvian White Sand Forest Habitat

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The wintering and migratory ecology of many species of migratory birds is still poorly known. Connecticut Warbler (*Oporornis agilis*) is a species that, due to its secretive behaviour, has remained particularly poorly known, especially in the South American portion of its life history (Herzog *et al.* 2009, Stouffer 2001). Documenting the presence of the species in South America can aid in our knowledge of this shy bird's life cycle (Pitocchelli *et al.* 1997). On November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2012 at 8:19 AM, we captured an adult female Connecticut Warbler in a white sand forest patch in the Allpahuayo Mishana National Reserve, Loreto, Peru (3°55'0.98"S/ 73°32'11.93"W, 133 m, Fig. 1). The species was not reported on the published species list of the avifauna of the reserve (Álvarez *et al.*, 2012), thereby adding to the already rich record of bird

species in this small but valuable protected area.

The bird was captured alone, in the mistnet pocket closest to the ground in a white sand forest habitat. Its age was determined by moult pattern, and the sex was identified by the somewhat duller plumage, pale throat and olive-grey forehead (Pyle & Howell 1997). We assessed the body condition and collected morphological data. The bird had muscle score of 2 (on a scale of 1-5), very little flight feather wear, no signs of any recent reproductive activity, and trace visible abdominal fat. Its wing chord measured 71 mm, the tail 50 mm, exposed culmen 8.4 mm, aperture 14.8 mm, and the tarsus was 20.3 mm long. The bird weighed 13.78 g. The same individual was recaptured and re-released the following day in the



**Figure N° 1:** Individual of *Oporornis agilis* captured in the Allpahuayo Mishana National Reserve in white sand forest habitat. Photo: Judit Ungvari Martin.

same location; we noted no change in body condition.

The habitat where the bird was captured is part of a large patch of white sand forest habitat (dry varillal) outside of the village of Yuto. The canopy height was relatively low ( $14.3 \pm 3.5$ m average) with a deep layer of leaf litter covering the sandy soil (depth  $41.7 \pm 20.5$ cm). The woody vegetation in this site was dense, with over 60 small stems (less than 2.5cm diameter at breast height; hereafter DBH) and ~14 large stems (greater than 2.5cm DBH) per 100m<sup>2</sup> plot. The average DBH of trees per 400m<sup>2</sup> plots was  $18.9 \pm 4.5$  cm (Ungvari Martin 2016). This vegetation structure is consistent with the descriptions of dry varillal habitat (García Villacorta *et al.* 2003).

This observation does not seem to differ from the species account in Schulenberg *et al.* (2007), however it is noteworthy that our encounter occurred in the latter part of November (similar to Jahn *et al.* 1999), in the Northern Amazonian region away from treefalls, edges or river islands (Robinson *et al.* 1995), whereas previous Peruvian records of the species are from the Southeast near Tambopata during the first half of the month (Sorrie 2016). Other Amazonian records include another from 2012 from central Amazonian Brazil in early November, just a few hundred kilometres further north than our field site (Diniz *et al.* 2014). Based on the two 2012 observations we speculate that the species may potentially stop over north of the Amazon, then continue southward to the southern edge of Amazonia (Herzog *et al.* 2009, Stouffer 2001). Tracking individuals would be needed to better understand their primary wintering area and preferred habitat.

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