



A new genus for three species of tyrant flycatchers (Passeriformes: Tyrannidae), formerly placed in *Myiophobus*

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Abstract

A new genus, *Nephelomyias*, is erected for three species of Andean tyrant flycatchers (Aves: Passeriformes: Tyrannidae) traditionally placed in the genus *Myiophobus*. An extensive study based on molecular data has shown that they form a well supported clade that is not closely related to other *Myiophobus* species. Instead, they form a small independent lineage in Tyrannidae, together with *Pyrrhomyias*, *Hirundinea* and *Myiotriccus*.

Key words: *Nephelomyias lintoni*, *Nephelomyias ochraceiventris*, *Nephelomyias pulcher*, Tyrannidae, taxonomy, phylogeny

Introduction

Recent phylogenetic studies, based on extensive molecular data (e.g. Ohlson et al. 2008; Tello et al. 2009), have greatly improved our knowledge of the relationships and evolution of the tyrant flycatchers (Tyrannidae). Several unexpected relationships have been revealed and a number of traditional genera have proven to be non-monophyletic, prompting taxonomic rearrangements. Here we erect a new generic name for three species traditionally placed in the genus *Myiophobus*, which were found by Ohlson et al. (2008) to belong to a separate clade within Tyrannidae. Higher level classification generally follows Tello et al. (2009). The tyrant flycatcher genus *Myiophobus* has traditionally been considered to encompass nine species (Traylor 1979): *M. flavicans* (P. L. Sclater), *M. phoenicomitra* (Taczanowski & Berlepsch), *M. inornatus* Carriker, *M. roraimae* (Salvin & Godman), *M. pulcher* (P. L. Sclater), *M. lintoni* Meyer de Schauensee, *M. ochraceiventris* (Cabanis), *M. cryptoxanthus* (P. L. Sclater) and the type species *M. fasciatus* (Stadius Müller). Except for *M. cryptoxanthus* and *M. fasciatus*, all species inhabit humid montane forest in the Andes, with *M. roraimae* also occurring in the Tepui region. All species traditionally placed in *Myiophobus* are small tyrannids with a typical flycatcher physiognomy, coupled to a sallying foraging technique. They are thus similar in external appearance to various members of Contopini, such as *Empidonax* and *Lathrotriccus*, but also to *Myiotriccus* and *Pyrrhomyias* in Hirundineinae. All species traditionally placed in *Myiophobus* share the presence of a semiconcealed coronal patch of bright yellow to orange-red feathers, a feature absent in most other genera traditionally placed in Fluvicolinae (e.g. Traylor 1979).

Myiophobus has long been suspected to be non-monophyletic and Lanyon (1986, 1988a, 1988b) presented anatomical evidence for placing *M. lintoni*, *M. ochraceiventris*, *M. phoenicomitra* and *M. roraimae* in the rather disparate *Phylloscartes* group in his *Elaenia* assemblage, and the other species in the *Myiophobus* group in his *Empidonax* assemblage. He did not have access to any material of *M. pulcher*. Ohlson et al.