



## Taxonomy of “Mouse-colored Tapaculos”. I. On the application of the name *Malacorhynchus speluncae* Ménétriés, 1835 (Aves: Passeriformes: Rhinocryptidae)

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### Abstract

The type specimen of *Malacorhynchus speluncae* was described and illustrated as being “mouse gray with a bluish luster” on the upperparts and as having a “lighter color on the lower side of the body” which “becomes whitish towards the middle of the throat and breast”. It represents a taxon presently placed in the genus *Scytalopus*. Since 1907, the name *Scytalopus speluncae* has been attributed to the predominantly dark-gray species from the southeastern coastal Brazilian mountains. Recently, it was suggested that the name *S. speluncae* should be applied to a species that is light-gray with whitish belly and extensive barring on the flanks and that occurs predominantly in the Espinhaço Range, Minas Gerais state, to the west of the range of the dark-gray taxon. As a consequence, the dark-gray species, presumably without any available name, was described as a new species, *S. notorius*. However, on the basis of a critical analysis of the available information on the type specimen of *S. speluncae*, including the original description and illustration (Ménétriés 1835), and our examination of large series of museum specimens, we demonstrate that the type of *S. speluncae* falls within the known plumage variation of the dark-gray species and that it does not show the diagnostic characters of the light-gray form. Thus, we propose that the name *S. speluncae* be applied only to the dark-gray species. Consequently, *S. notorius* must be regarded a junior-synonym of *S. speluncae*. Because of problems related to the exact collecting sites of Ménétriés, and taking into consideration the distribution of the dark-gray species, we suggest “Serra dos Órgãos”, in Rio de Janeiro state, as the type-locality of *S. speluncae*.

**Key words:** Taxonomy, *Scytalopus speluncae*, *Scytalopus notorius*, individual variation, synonymy, type-locality

### Resumo

O espécime-tipo de *Malacorhynchus speluncae* foi descrito e ilustrado como tendo “a coloração cinza de um rato com um brilho azulado” na superfície dorsal, e superfície ventral mais clara, passando a brancacento no meio da garganta e peito. Esse espécime representa um táxon presentemente alocado no diversificado gênero *Scytalopus*. Desde 1907, o nome *Scytalopus speluncae* tem sido atribuído à espécie predominantemente cinza-escuro da região montanhosa do sudeste do Brasil. Recentemente, outros autores propuseram que o nome *S. speluncae* se aplicaria a uma população predominantemente cinza-claro, com ventre esbranquiçado e com extenso barramento nos flancos, distribuída