



Isleria, a new genus of antwren (Aves: Passeriformes: Thamnophilidae)

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Abstract

A comprehensive molecular phylogenetic analysis of the family Thamnophilidae indicated that the genus *Myrmotherula* is not monophyletic. The clade composed of *M. guttata* and *M. hauxwelli* is only distantly related to other members of the genus and should be removed from *Myrmotherula*. The phenotypic distinctiveness of the clade argues against merging it with its sister group *Thamnomanes* and no generic name is available for the *guttata-hauxwelli* clade. Consequently, we describe the genus *Isleria* for these two species, and designate *Myrmothera guttata* as its type species.

Key words: *Myrmotherula*, *Isleria*, phylogeny, Thamnophilidae, antwrens

The genus *Myrmotherula* Sclater is one of the most species-rich avian genera in the New World (Ridgely & Tudor, 1994; Stotz *et al.*, 1996). Up to 35 species have been recognized (Zimmer & Isler, 2003) and additional species likely remain undescribed (e.g. Krabbe *et al.*, 1999). All species of *Myrmotherula* are small, short-tailed antwrens, but ecological, behavioral, and plumage differences among species have led to the recognition of different species assemblages within the genus (Hackett & Rosenberg, 1990; Ridgely & Tudor, 1994; Zimmer & Isler, 2003). Recent phylogenetic studies demonstrated conclusively that the traditional genus *Myrmotherula* did not represent a monophyletic group, suggesting that the recognized assemblages represent distinct evolutionary lineages that may have converged on similar morphotypes (Hackett & Rosenberg, 1990; Irestedt *et al.*, 2004; Isler *et al.*, 2006; Brumfield *et al.*, 2007). A subset of eight species, known as the “stipple-throated assemblage,” was recently placed in a new genus, *Epinecrophylla*, based on molecular, morphological, vocal, ecological, and behavioral evidence (Isler *et al.*, 2006).

A comprehensive molecular phylogeny of the Thamnophilidae shows that the polyphyly of *Myrmotherula* is more pervasive than previously acknowledged (Bravo *et al.* unpubl. data; Figs. 1, 2), which emphasizes the necessity of a thorough taxonomic revision of the genus. Here, we present phylogenetic results that illustrate the polyphyly of *Myrmotherula* (*sensu* Isler *et al.* 2006), the type species of which is *M. brachyura* (Hermann, 1783), and demonstrate that *M. guttata* (Vieillot, ca. 1825) and *M. hauxwelli* (Sclater, 1857) should be placed in a new genus. Neither of these species is the type of a previously erected genus (Cory & Hellmayr, 1924); consequently, we describe a new genus, as follows:

Isleria gen. nov.

Type species. *Myrmothera guttata* Vieillot, ca. 1825.

Included species. *Isleria guttata* (Vieillot, ca. 1825) *comb. nov.*, Rufous-bellied Antwren; *Isleria hauxwelli* (Sclater, 1857) *comb. nov.*, Plain-throated Antwren.

Diagnosis, morphology. Small birds of the family Thamnophilidae typically 8.5–11g and 8.5–9.5 cm long (Zimmer & Isler, 2003); rectrix 1 length 22–24.5 mm; rectrix 1 width 5.3–6.3 mm; wing chord 50–53 mm; primary