

= Tufted tit @-@ tyrant =

The tufted tit @-@ tyrant (*Anairetes parulus*) is a species of bird in the tyrant flycatcher family Tyrannidae . This species is found in western South America ; its range stretches from southern Colombia south along the Andes mountains to Tierra del Fuego . It prefers to live in upper montane forests and shrublands ; however , it is a habitat generalist and can be found across a wide range of ecosystems . The tufted tit @-@ tyrant has three subspecies , including the nominate subspecies *Anairetes parulus parulus* , *A. p. aequatorialis* , and *A. p. patagonicus* , and is very closely related to the Juan Fernández tit @-@ tyrant . It is very small with a distinctive and conspicuous crest . The bird 's head is black overall with white supraloral and postocular stripes . Its dull grayish @-@ brown back contrasts with its white throat and breast that are covered with black streaks and pale , unmarked yellow underbelly . There are few noticeable differences in plumage between the subspecies . It is a vocal flycatcher with a broad repertoire of songs .

This tit @-@ tyrant defends its territory only against other tit @-@ tyrants and , except for the southernmost population , is non @-@ migratory . The tufted tit @-@ tyrant feeds mainly on a variety of insects that it hunts on or from small shrubs , typically by perch gleaning . It normally hunts in pairs . The breeding season varies for this bird depending on its geographical location . Two to three eggs are normally laid twice a year in a cup @-@ shaped nest made of root fibers , grasses , and lichens and lined with small feathers . The tufted tit @-@ tyrant is listed as a species of least concern due to its large range and population .

= = Taxonomy = =

The tufted tit @-@ tyrant 's genus , *Anairetes* , is in the tyrant flycatcher family Tyrannidae and is believed to be most closely related to the tyrannulet genera *Mecocerculus* and *Serpophaga* ; however , there is no definitive evidence supporting this claim . The tufted tit @-@ tyrant was described as *Muscicapa parulus* by Heinrich von Kittlitz in 1830 from a specimen collected near Valparaíso , Chile . It was later moved from the genus *Muscicapa* , which today solely contains Old World flycatchers , to *Anairetes* ; however , this genus was too similar to the pre @-@ existing genus *Anaeretes* , so Harry Church Oberholser erected the genus *Spizitornis* for it and the other tit @-@ tyrants . However , *Spizitornis* was eventually abolished and the tit @-@ tyrants were returned to *Anairetes* . The tufted tit @-@ tyrant is believed to form a superspecies with the Juan Fernández tit @-@ tyrant . Members of the genus *Anairetes* are commonly known as tit @-@ tyrants because their active foraging behavior and crests are reminiscent of the true tits in the family Paridae , while the genus itself is part of the tyrant flycatcher family . The tufted tit @-@ tyrant is known in Spanish as the Cachudito , which means " little longhorn " in reference to the bird 's crest .

The tufted tit @-@ tyrant has three described subspecies . *Anairetes parulus aequatorialis* is the northernmost subspecies and is found in the Andes from southern Colombia to western Bolivia and northern Argentina . It was described by Hans von Berlepsch and Władysław Taczanowski in 1884 . The nominate subspecies , *A. p. parulus* , is found in western Chile and in southwest Argentina south to Tierra del Fuego and was described by Kittlitz in 1830 . The third subspecies , *A. p. patagonicus* , is found in western Argentina and was described by Austrian ornithologist Carl Eduard Hellmayr in 1920 .

= = Description = =

The tufted tit @-@ tyrant is a small bird , averaging 9 @.@ 5 to 11 centimeters (3 @.@ 7 to 4 @.@ 3 in) in length and weighing about 6 grams (0 @.@ 21 oz) . Its long , recurved crest is typically conspicuous and is often parted , giving the impression that the bird has two crests . The crest 's feathers are black and emerge from the center of the bird 's black crown , although occasionally there is a small patch of white hidden by the crest . The head is black overall with a white supraloral and postocular stripe . The bird 's iris is creamy white to pale yellow and the bill is black . This tit @-@ tyrant 's back is a dull , grayish brown , and the wings and tail are a duskier

shade of this color . The wings also feature two narrow white wingbars , while the outer tail feathers are white . The throat and breast are white and covered in dark gray to black streaks , which thin out further down the breast and along the sides . The belly is a pale yellow which fades as the plumage becomes more worn , while the bird 's legs are black . Males and females are similar in appearance , although females are typically smaller and may have smaller crests . Juvenile tufted tit @-@ tyrants are duller in coloration and have a shorter crest ; the juvenile 's wingbars are also buffy and there is no hidden white spot on the crown .

There are few variations in plumage between the three subspecies . *Anairetes parulus aequatorialis* tends to be browner than the nominate subspecies in its upperparts , with broader and more extensive breast streaks and broader and more distinct white wingbars . *A. p. patagonicus* has more variation from the nominate subspecies as it is paler gray overall , particularly on the crown , and the wingbars and breast streaks are broader and more distinct . *A. p. patagonicus* 's underbelly is also a paler yellow to white .

This flycatcher has a loud , high @-@ pitched song . It is also known to give a fast chuit @-@ chuit @-@ chuit @-@ chuit @-@ chidi @-@ didi song , and occasionally single notes of chuit are made in a slow series of calls . When foraging in pairs , tufted tit @-@ tyrants have been observed using a perr @-@ reet call to stay in contact with each other . The species ' contact call has been described as a pluit @-@ pluit . The tufted tit @-@ tyrant is also known to give a long , weak trill .

= = Distribution and habitat = =

The tufted tit @-@ tyrant has been recorded in Colombia , Ecuador , Peru , Bolivia , Argentina , and Chile . It is mostly restricted to the Andes mountains throughout the northern portions of its range , while in the south its range broadens to include the coast . It has also been recorded as a vagrant in the Falkland Islands . It is the most abundant and widely distributed of the tit @-@ tyrant species .

Its preferred habitat is upper montane forests and shrublands . Despite this preference , it is a habitat generalist and is also found in elfin forest , the edges of cloud forests , *Polylepis* woodland , brushy forests with *Chusquea* bamboo , disturbed humid scrub , temperate forests , and dry thorn scrub . It seems to move back into fire @-@ stricken areas at a normal rate for páramo birds , neither colonizing recently burned areas nor waiting for the area to completely recover . This tit @-@ tyrant is most frequently found between 1 @, @ 800 and 3 @, @ 500 meters (5 @, @ 900 and 11 @, @ 500 ft) , though it can be found at sea level in Chile and up to 4 @, @ 200 meters (13 @, @ 800 ft) in the Andes .

= = Behavior = =

This tit @-@ tyrant appears to be territorial in defending what it regards as its feeding territory , although it only displays territorial behavior against other tufted tit @-@ tyrants . Birds defending their territory , either alone or in a pair , tend to begin their defense by calling rapidly and displaying displacement behavior , such as bill wiping or wing flaring . They then raise their crest and chase the other tit @-@ tyrant through the shrubs , occasionally physically attacking the intruder . The victorious tit @-@ tyrant then returns to its normal foraging behavior . The southern subspecies , *A. p. patagonicus* , migrates to northern Argentina after the breeding season ; the other populations appear to be non @-@ migratory .

= = = Diet = = =

The tufted tit @-@ tyrant is a generalist feeder that eats insects . It is also known to eat seeds in rare circumstances . It is an active forager that hunts in pairs or , after the breeding season , small family groups . It has also been known to feed with mixed @-@ species foraging flocks , although this behavior is abnormal . When this does occur , it is most frequently seen foraging with the thorn @-@ tailed rayadito ; flocks of thirty tufted tit @-@ tyrants in these mixed @-@ species foraging

groups have been reported . Birds in pairs tend to feed leapfrog style and maintain constant visual contact with each other . This species feeds at all strata of its habitat from the understory to the canopy .

When feeding , this flycatcher makes many short flights from perch to perch , preferring to hunt in shrubs with small leaves , particularly those from the genera *Adesmia* , *Baccharis* , and *Porlieria* . A tit @-@ tyrant tends to land near the base of the shrub and make its way upwards while frequently flicking its tail upwards and shuddering its wings . It has also been observed pivoting on its perch throughout this process . While foraging , the tufted tit @-@ tyrant averages three attacks on prey items per minute . Its feeding style has been compared to that of a kinglet .

The tufted tit @-@ tyrant uses three different hunting strategies to catch its prey . Gleaning insects from a perch is its primary hunting strategy ; while gleaning , the bird sits upright with its wings dropped below the tail , which is pointing straight down . From this position the tit @-@ tyrant scans upwards into the vegetation for three to five seconds before attacking , making them surprisingly deliberate hunters for a small flycatcher .

The second most prevalent hunting strategy observed is hover gleaning , in which the tit @-@ tyrant flies upwards from its perch and then hovers midair while grabbing prey from the vegetation . A third and less frequently used strategy is flycatching , in which the bird flies away from its shrub to grab prey in midair . Prey can be grabbed either close to the bird 's perch or at a short distance , which often requires the bird to pursue its prey . When pairs flycatch cooperatively , one bird quietly lurks within the shrub while the other snatches nearby insects ; after about a dozen attacks , the birds switch positions .

= = = Reproduction = = =

This flycatcher typically raises two broods a year . The northern populations nest from January to June , while the southern populations nest from August to January . The male tufted tit @-@ tyrant is aggressive during the breeding season , frequently chasing potential rivals in undulating flights while making a whirring sound .

The tufted tit @-@ tyrant 's nest is built in shrubs or bamboo , often beside a stream , clearings , or path , and is frequently well hidden . The nest is small and compact , and is made in the shape of an open cup . The cup is made of root fibers , lichens , grasses , and the down of thistles , and small feathers line the interior of the cup . The tufted tit @-@ tyrant 's nests are remarkably homogeneous , varying only slightly in composition . Two to three creamy yellow eggs are laid in the nest . The eggs have an average size of 15 @. @ 1 mm (0 @. @ 59 in) by 11 @. @ 8 mm (0 @. @ 46 in) .

= = Conservation = =

The tufted tit @-@ tyrant is listed as Least Concern because of its large range of 2 @, @ 640 @, @ 000 km² (1 @, @ 020 @, @ 000 sq mi) and stable population , which , although not officially estimated , is believed to be well above 10 @, @ 000 individuals . It is uncommon to locally common throughout its range . This species is considered to have a low sensitivity towards human disturbances in its habitat .