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To: Pamela Diggle, Editor-in-Chief, *American Journal of Botany*

Dear Dr. Diggle,

We are writing to submit an original research article entitled “*Floral phenology of an Andean bellflower and pollination by Buff-tailed Sicklebill*” for consideration as a Brief Communication in *American Journal of Botany*.

The goal of this manuscript is to test hypotheses surrounding specialized pollination in the Andean bellflowers (Lobelioideae). This clade has received increasing attention following their taxonomic revision (Lagomarsino et al 2014, *Am. J. Bot.*) and a major study revealing unprecedented diversification rates driven in part by pollinator shifts (Lagomarsino et al 2017, *New Phytol.*). Although pollinator specialization is thought to play an important role in the rapid radiation of this clade, the pollination ecology of many species have yet to be elucidated.

In this study we focus on the Andean bellflower *Centropogon granulosus*; an understory vine with extremely curved floral tubes. Based on research conducted in Costa Rica, this plant is known to be pollinated by the White-tipped Sicklebill hummingbird. However, *C. granulosus* has an extensive continental range, occurring in southern Peru where little has been documented of its pollination ecology. Further, in Peru, White-tipped Sicklebill is replaced by its congener, Buff-tailed Sicklebill, of which no published research yet exists. We addressed this gap by making pollinator observations via camera traps and conducting a pollinator exclusion experiment. Moreover, we develop a protocol for measuring an overlooked trait, phenological type, and asses the results in the context of the visitation patterns of the hummingbird. We then consider how phenological types may further promote pollinator specialization. Thus, in addition to testing for specialized pollination, we also provide valuable ecological and natural history information for these understudied species in the southern portion of the *Centropogon*-*Eutoxeres* system.

We posit that in the era of advanced statistical methods for testing pollinator-mediated diversification, field studies are a core component of a larger framework for understanding the generation and maintenance of plant diversity. For this reason, we believe that this study will be of broad interest to the readership of *American Journal of Botany*.

Thank you for considering this manuscript,

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