



First record of the buff-fronted owl, *Aegolius harrisii* - (Cassin, 1849) (Aves - Strigidae) from the Brazilian state of Pernambuco

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The genus *Aegolius* includes five species (Gill and Donsker, 2018), but only the buff-fronted owl, *Aegolius harrisii* (Cassin, 1849) occurs in Brazil (Piacentini et al., 2015). This species is widespread in central and eastern Brazil, being found throughout the Northeast, and also in the states of Rio Grande do Sul, Mato Grosso, Minas Gerais, Espírito Santo, Rio de Janeiro, Distrito Federal, São Paulo, Paraná, and Santa Catarina (Sick, 1997; Girão and Albano, 2010; Grantsau and Palo Junior, 2010). In the Brazilian Northeast, *A. harrisii* has been recorded in three states that border Pernambuco – Alagoas (Sick 1997), Bahia (Antas et al., 1993; Lima and Castro, 1994; Studer and Teixeira, 1994; Girão and Albano, 2010), and Ceará (Girão and Albano, 2010). Sick (1997) referred to the expected presence of *A. harrisii* in Pernambuco, although this was not confirmed by documented evidence (Farias et al., 2008). No subsequent records have been obtained of the occurrence of the species in the state.

Aegolius harrisii is of low priority for conservation (Stotz et al., 1996) and medium priority for research, although it is classified as Near Threatened (Parker III et al., 1996; Holt et al., 1999), due to its sparse distribution and

the lack of data on its populations. This emphasizes the need for research on the biology of the species and its geographic distribution. *A. harrisii* may face local threats from the widespread devastation of its natural habitats in the Atlantic Forest, and in particular the cloud forest enclaves, known locally as “Brejos de Altitude” (Viana, 1997). It may have deleterious implications for remaining populations, due to the sensitivity of the species to habitat disturbance (Parker III et al., 1996).

The record of *A. harrisii* was obtained during fieldwork on the Fazenda Fojos (-8.892458°N, -36.558066°W) in one of the property’s largest forest fragments, known as Camapuã (22 ha), which is close to a fragment of 150 ha, located on the neighboring property. In May 2018, the mist-netting was extended to the nocturnal period, for the capture of bats. This resulted in the capture of a buff-fronted owl on May 20th 2018. This owl was subsequently released and photographed in its natural environment. The photographic record of the specimen (Figure 1) was deposited on the Wikiaves platform site (Oliveira, 2018), under catalog number WA2978376.



Figure 1. *Aegolius harrisii* recorded on the Fazenda Fojos in the municipality of Garanhuns, Pernambuco, Brazil (Photograph by A. J. S. Oliveira).

This record confirms the occurrence of the buff-fronted owl, *Aegolius harrisii*, in the Brazilian state of Pernambuco, which resolves a long-standing lacuna in the inventory of the state's avian fauna. Reports of this type are important for providing basic ecological data on poorly-known species, in particular distribution records, which are essential for the development of effective environmental management strategies (Piacentini et al., 2006; Godoi et al., 2012). Records of the rare, threatened or poorly-known species from data-poor areas are essential for the understanding of the local biota and the planning of effective conservation measures (Godoi et al., 2012).

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