

Andean Swift
Aeronautes andecolus

Description: These two clear photos are the best description I can locate. The sub-specific differences are provided below.





From the second photo above and half a dozen others on the internet, it is clear that the dark flanks shown as the sole form in the Handbook of the Birds of the World (HBW) and described in Chantler (1995) are not the only form in the real world. There are photos that do show the dark flanks. The one of the left was taken in the Arica region of Chile by Arthur Grosset (2007). The one on the right was taken in Chile by Howell (2011), where the lower markings are much darker than on those from the eastern slopes of the Andes. So are these dark marks a sex or age character? Or are they a regional or perhaps a sub-specific difference? Some of the marked and

unmarked birds come from the same region so it does not appear to be a sub-specific difference. However, Hellmayr (1932) suggests that pale sides are a feature of *A.a. peruvianus*, which rarely has dark sooty sides.

Hartert (1908) described a new subspecies from 2,330m at Jujuy, Mendoza in Argentina as *A. a. dinellii*, but that distinction is not currently accepted. He said it differed from the *A.a. andecolus* in having the “undersurface uniform greyish-cream colour, instead of whitish, and the sides brownish-black.” The measurements “are the same as in *A.a. andecolus*”. Hellmayr (1932) explains that “Hartert had mistaken the western form, represented in that collection (Brit. Mus.) by six skins from Arequipa and one from Matucana, for typical *andecolus*,”

On the little data available it appears the following key would identify most individuals to their sub-species:

<i>A. a. andecolus</i>	Incomplete nuchal collar,	Longer tail	Deeper tail furcation	Longest under-tail coverts wholly sooty.
<i>A. a. parvulus</i>	Incomplete nuchal collar,	Shorter tail	Shallower tail furcation	Under-tail coverts white.
<i>A. a. peruvianus</i>	Complete nuchal collar,			Under-tail coverts grey.

Measurements

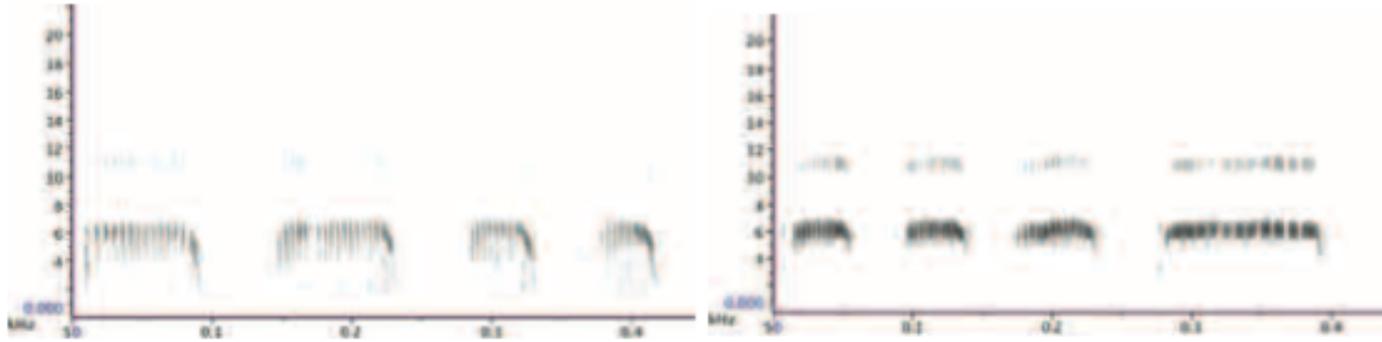
Ssp	Wing (mm)	Tail (mm)	Tl Furcation	Sample Size	Source
<i>A. a. andecolus</i>	135-146	65-72	16-22	11	Hellmayr 1932.
<i>A. a. parvulus</i>	135-143	58-63	13-15	6	Hellmayr 1932.
<i>A. a. peruvianus</i>	135-144	57-64	14-18	9	Hellmayr 1932.

Voice

Two shrill screaming calls are said to be commonly heard (Chantler & Driessens 1995): a *zeezeezeeer* and a slightly weaker *trritrrritri*. In addition a nocturnal call has been reported as a low *trp-rrie* (Fjeldså & Krabbe 1990). In addition variations between two of the ssp have been recorded as follows.

The left sonagram is of *A.a. parvulus* (Lluta Valley Chile) and the right is of *A.a. andecolus* (Cerro Tunari, Bolivia) both from Howell 2011.

Howell describes the calls of *parvulus* as higher, faster and shriller than those of the nominate ssp. He says *parvulus* has 10-11 shorter notes/0.05 sec. versus 5-6 longer notes/0.05 sec in *andecolus*.



A good range of these calls can be heard or downloaded at www.xeno-canto.org/species/Aeronautes-andecolus

Distribution:

A. a. parvulus Western Andes from NW. Peru, to N. Chile, (Tacna). (Hellmayr 1932). Peruvian records are from Paucal, above Lima, Matucana, Ica and Arequipa (Zimmer 1953).

A. a. peruvianus Peruvian valleys of SE & E Peru, including Urubamba & Marcapata Valleys. (Hellmayr 1932, Zimmer 1953, del Hoyo *et al* 1999).

A. a. andecolus Andes of Central Bolivia (including Tiraque Province, (Remsen *et al* 1986)) & W. Argentina. (Hellmayr 1932, Howard & Moore 1980).

In the Peruvian coast it is out-numbered by the nearctic migrant Chimney Swift, but in the West Andean valleys of Peru it outnumbers that migrant (Hughes 1988).

Habitat:

In Bolivia it was found between 2,050-3,100m (Krabbe *et al.* 1996, Herzog *et al* 1997), and between 2,050 – 2,800m (Herzog *et al* 1997). In Peru it is usually between 2,500-3,550m and in the south of its range between 2,000-2,500m (Chantler & Driessens 1995). The latter give one report from 350m, while one of the calls on Xeno-canto was made at 600m in Peru, so sometimes they descend to lower levels. They usually forage over mountainous semi-arid areas covered with scrub or even cactus, sometimes woodland but not usually forest.

Usually seen below 3,200m though one was observed above 4,150m at 1240h following a snow storm (Fjeldså 1991).

Breeding Behaviour:

The Cornell Lab of Ornithology says (2014) that due to its relatively inaccessible breeding locations on high, mountain cliffs, very little is known about its breeding biology; details about its clutch size, breeding phenology and nest form have never been described.

Feeding Behaviour:

Although this species does not migrate its foraging takes it over a wide area. While the Chimney Swift *Chaetura pelagica* is in the region this species mixes with it frequently in large foraging groups, particularly in the west of its range (Hughes 1988).

Conservation: Due to its widespread distribution the IUCN (vers. 3.2: publ. 2012) place its status as of Least Concern. It appears to be common in most of its range but patchy in Argentina and uncommon in the Chilean sector (del Hoyo *et al* 1999).

History:

Micropus andicolus D'Orbigny & Lafresnaye 1837.

Micropus andicola J.F.O. 1867, p. 167. & Hartert 1892.

Tachornis andecolus Gray, *Hand-l.* i. p. 64 1869. In Hartert 1892.

The copy of an old painting of this bird depicted in Wikipedia, shows the bird standing on a rock pinnacle, a stance you will not see in real life. Many errors have come from artists and researchers alike, copying from museum materials instead of real life.

Parasitology

One feather mite (*Chauliacia crescens*) has been found on *A. a. andecolus* in Peru (Peterson *et al* 1980), and although this is normal, some swifts have been found to harbour several species, though those species live on different parts of the feather tracts.

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