

ÑANKULAFKÉN

Conserving Birds of Prey and their Habitats

Monitoring Network of Threatened Raptors of Southern South America

Final Report

Tomás Rivas Fuenzalida



Fieldwork Area 2016 - 2017

*Between September
2016 and May 2017
we developed
fieldwork activities
in three main study
areas along Chile,
Argentina and Peru.*



In the southern temperate forests live a unique group of birds, very threatened by human pressures: the forest raptors. Through this project, a wide network of people from three countries generated a preliminary assessment of conservation status and major threats facing these species along their distribution.





Part of the staff in Lago Traful, Argentina, November 2016. From left to right: Nicol Asciones, Santiago Castrilli, Néstor Grees (Ruso) and Tomás Rivas Fuenzalida.

MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE PROJECT

- Expansion of the northern distribution range of the Rufous-tailed Hawk (*Buteo ventralis*) with new breeding sites found in the province of Curico (34°S), Maule region.
- First population of Rufous-tailed Hawk discovered outside mountainous areas, on the coastal plain of Arauco province, Biobío region.
- New records of reproductive territories of the White-throated Hawk (*Buteo albigula*) in south-central Chile and northwest of Argentine Patagonia.
- New data on the population status of Rufous-tailed Hawk in the Argentine Patagonia.
- First data on the dispersion of juveniles of Rufous-tailed Hawk and Chilean Hawk (*Accipiter chilensis*)
- First records of stopover and communal roosting use by the White-throated Hawk (*Buteo albigula*) during autumn migration in the Andes of northern Chile and central Peru
- Creation of the first long-term monitoring network for threatened birds of prey in southern South America.

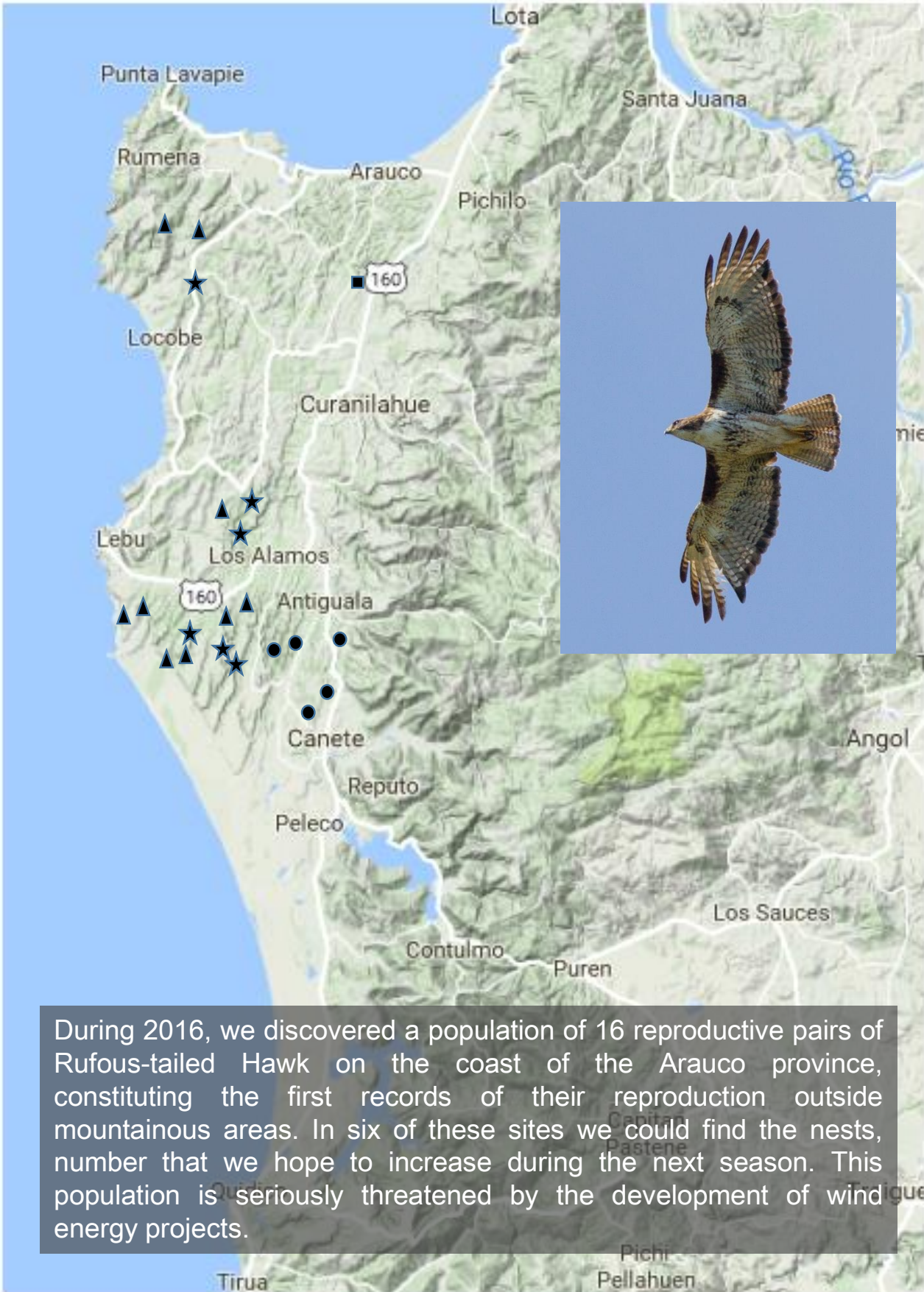
Range extension of the
Rufous-tailed Hawk (*Buteo*
ventralis) in Maule region,
central Chile



During the last surveys
of the species in the Maule region,
we find nine new breeding
territories, three of them
was located at 34°S. This
information allows to
extend his known
distribution range.



First population of the Rufous-tailed Hawk (*Buteo ventralis*)
discovered outside mountainous areas on the coast of the
Arauco Province, central Chile



During 2016, we discovered a population of 16 reproductive pairs of Rufous-tailed Hawk on the coast of the Arauco province, constituting the first records of their reproduction outside mountainous areas. In six of these sites we could find the nests, number that we hope to increase during the next season. This population is seriously threatened by the development of wind energy projects.



**New records of the White-throated Hawk (*Buteo albigula*) in
south-central Chile and northwest Argentine Patagonia**

During the 2016 season, we obtained new records of the White-throated Hawk on the coast of the Maule and Biobío regions, as well as in the northwest Argentine Patagonia, which contributes to a better approximation to their population status.

New data on the population status of the Rufous-tailed Hawk (*Buteo ventralis*) in Argentine Patagonia



In 2016 we completed three expeditions to Argentina in search of reproductive territories of the threatened Rufous-tailed Hawk. Although during our second visit, with Mariano Costa in January 2016, we were able to find the first nest of this beautiful raptor for the country (see above), in general there are very few places where we have registered the presence of the species.



Tomás Rivas and Santiago Castrilli searching Rufous-tailed Hawks at Los Alerces National Park, Argentina. Photo: Nicol Asciones

The causes of its rarity in Argentina could be a combination of natural and human factors. In several places where it was recorded, even with young, today it is no longer observed, having recorded deaths of specimens by local people, which means that their populations, naturally low, are declining even more because of human persecution. During the next season we will prospect in the southernmost forests of Chubut, Santa Cruz and Tierra del Fuego, to determine the conservation status of the species in Argentina, although everything indicates that it would be Critically Endangered.



Rufous-tailed Hawk (*Buteo ventralis*) Photo: Tomás Rivas Fuenzalida

First dispersion data of juvenile Rufous-tailed Hawks (*Buteo ventralis*) and Chilean Hawks (*Accipiter chilensis*)

In February 2016, in the framework of a project of forest raptors monitoring with Mininco S. A., we equip three juvenile females Chilean Hawks and a juvenile male Rufous-tailed Hawk with radio transmitters and rings to study their dispersion.

Juvenile female Chilean Hawk equipped with a radiotransmitter and ring

Between October 2016 and February 2017, during our Rufford's fieldwork in Nahuelbuta, we located the U3 juvenile Chilean Hawk and the juvenile Rufous-tailed Hawk 17 and 10 km from their natal areas, respectively.




Juvenile female Chilean Hawk newly released. Note the transmitter antenna and the black ring (U3) on his tarsus.



Movements of a juvenile female Chilean Hawk from its natal area (yellow star) to its possible definitive territory south of Lake Lanalhue (black star). Blue triangles show locations during the winter dispersal period.

Searching for the juvenile female Chilean Hawk at the hills south of Lago Lanalhue, Contulmo. Photo: Luis Villagrán



A photograph of a juvenile female Chilean Hawk perched on a thick, light-colored tree branch. The bird is facing right, with its head turned slightly towards the camera. It has a brown and white mottled pattern on its back and wings, and a lighter, streaked pattern on its underparts. Its eyes are yellow, and its beak is dark. The background is a dense thicket of green leaves and branches, creating a natural, forest-like setting.

Juvenile female Chilean Hawk found 8 months after being equipped with a radio transmitter and 17 km from her natal area

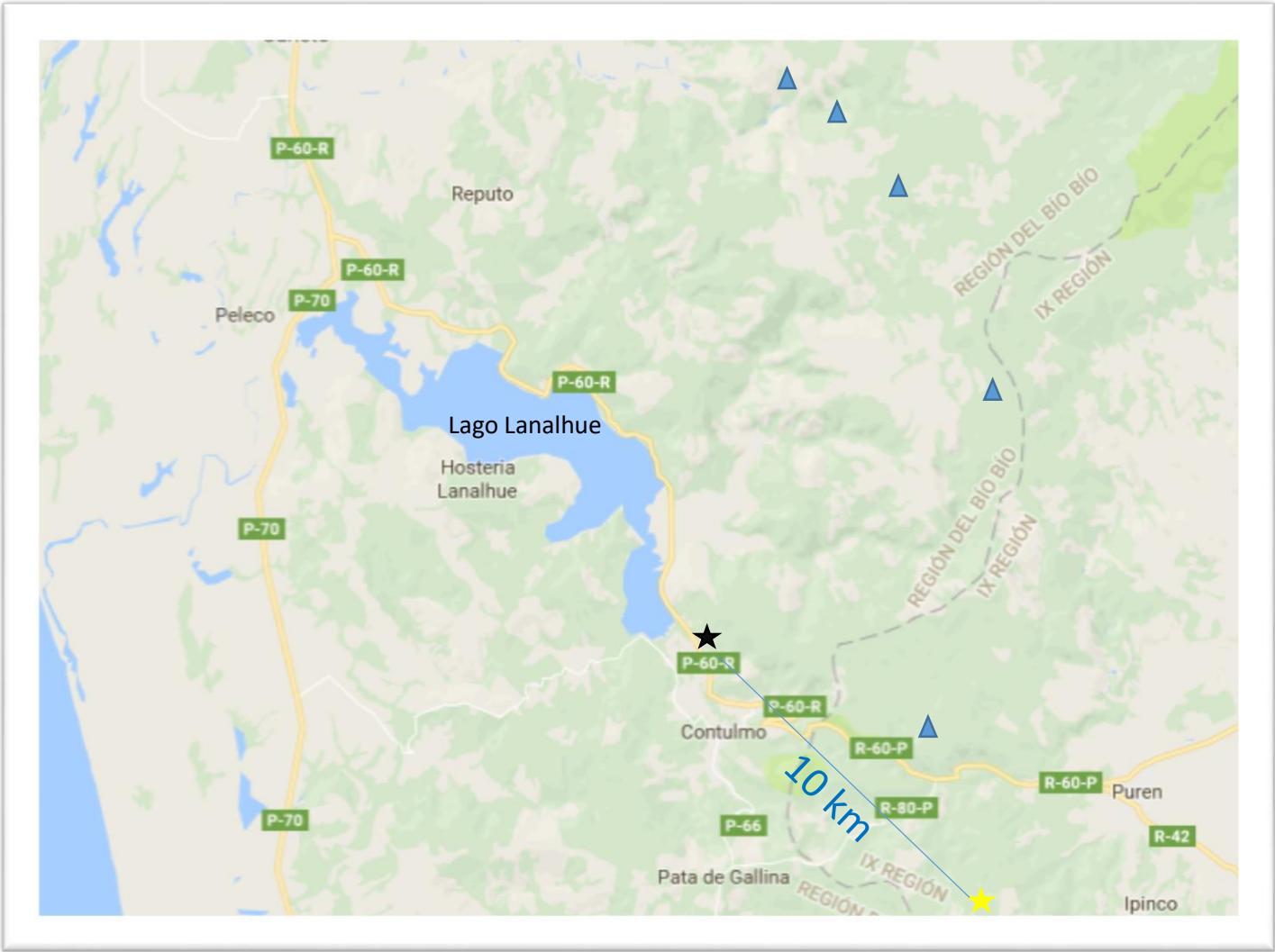


Rufous-tailed Hawk (*Buteo ventralis*) Photo: Antonietta Aedo Becker



Rufous-tailed Hawk (*Buteo ventralis*) Photo: Antonietta Aedo Becker

Juvenile male Rufous-tailed Hawk equipped with radiotransmitter and ring



Movements of a juvenile male Rufous-tailed Hawk from its natal area (yellow star) to its last location in February 2017 near Contulmo (black star). Blue triangles are positions recorded during the first week of dispersion.



First records of stopover areas and comunal roosting use by the White-throated Hawk (*Buteo albigula*) during the autumn migration in the Andes of northern Chile and central Peru

White-throated Hawk (*Buteo albigula*) Photo: Tomás Rivas Fuenzalida

“Lanahue” the first White-throated Hawk being monitored by the public during his migration from Chile to Colombia



In Contulmo (February 2017)
we trapped and equipped a
adult male White-throated
hawk (called "Lanalhue")
with a solar powered
satellite transmitter



Our objective was to discover its migratory route
and important stopover and wintering areas



On April 5, “Lanalhue” began migrating north. In only two weeks he crossed Chile bordering the driest desert on earth: the Atacama Desert, to follow course to Peru. He only stopped when he reached the Mantaro Valley located at 3.260 m.a.s.l., in the Andes of central Peru and 3.220 km from his breeding area in southern Chile. So we followed it hoping to find many other hawks in that area, which we assumed was a major stopover area.

Everything happened as we expected, because we find many other individuals of their species resting and feeding in the Mantaro Valley. We also find “Lanalhue”, after several days of searching, and he was in perfect health (See the first photo).

All the migration movements of “Lanalhue” are being uploaded to a map in our website (www.ñankulafken.cl) so everybody can be informed about his progress. Currently, “Lanalhue” is in his wintering area at Tatamá National Park in western Andes of Colombia, and we and many other people are waiting for his return to Chile.




Movements of “Lanahue” the adult male White-throated Hawk from its breeding area (yellow star) to its first migration stopover area in Mantaro Valley (black star). Red star indicates the location of another stopover area (Putre), where we find a communal roosting site.



Juvenile White-throated Hawk soaring at Mantaro Valley, central Andes of Peru

Thanks to “Lanalhue”, we find for the first time for science two areas used as migratory stopovers by the White-throated Hawk. These represent very important conservation sites, because many individuals refuel and rest in these areas to complete a successful migration..

A juvenile White-throated Hawk is perched on a thick, weathered tree branch. The bird has a white head with a dark brown cap, a yellowish-green beak, and a white breast with dark brown spots. Its wings and back are also covered in dark brown spots. The background is a clear blue sky with some blurred tree branches.

In Putre, we also find the first communal roosting site used by the species, which represents, as the stopover areas, a very important site for the White-throated Hawk conservation.

Juvenile White-throated Hawk enjoying the morning sun at the communal roosting site in Putre, northernmost Chile.

SHARING RESULTS

We share the project's results through our website, our Facebook page, and through the publication of scientific papers and Conference presentations including the more important findings.



Researchers and raptor biologists from Brazil, Costa Rica and Chile. Photo: Fundación Rapaces de Costa Rica

At the IV Neotropical Raptor Conference, held in La Fortuna, Costa Rica, we published the partial results of the project until October, through the oral presentation:

- **Monitoreo de Aves Rapaces del Bosque Templado Austral: Avances y desafíos.** Rivas-Fuenzalida, T., A. García J., C. González B., C. Peña, N. Asciones-Contreras, V. Rosales, M. Pavez, J. Díaz T., M. Costa, S. Castrilli y R. A. Figueroa.

The following articles are published or in preparation:

- **Rivas-Fuenzalida, T. 2017.** New observations on the breeding biology of the Rufous-tailed Hawk (*Buteo ventralis*) in a coastal area of southern Chile. *Boletín Nahuelbuta Natural* N°1: 31-38. (In Spanish with English summary)
- **Rivas-Fuenzalida, T. & Y. Quispe-Flores. In prep.** First records of stopover areas and communal roosting use by the White-throated Hawk (*Buteo albigula*) during the autumn migration in the Andes of northern Chile and central Peru.
- **Rivas-Fuenzalida, T., V. Rosales. F. Fadel, N. Asciones-Contreras & Ricardo Figueroa R. In prep.** Population status of the Rufous-tailed Hawk (*Buteo ventralis*) in the Maule region, central Chile.
- **Rivas-Fuenzalida, T., N. Fica, C. Salazar. In prep.** A new population of Rufous-tailed Hawk (*Buteo ventralis*) discovered in the coastal plateau of the Arauco Province, southern Chile with comments on his threats.
- **Rivas-Fuenzalida, T., S. Castrilli, M. Costa & N. Asciones-Contreras. In prep.** Conservation status of the Rufous-tailed Hawk (*Buteo ventralis*) in western Argentinean Patagonia.
- **Fundación Ñankulafkén. 2016.** Ñankulafkén Annual Report 2016 (In Spanish. An abstract of our 2016 activities and results including some of the Rufford's project results during that year)

OUR PEOPLE

