

This rare hummingbird apparently occurs primarily in lowland evergreen moist forest in a small area of western Ecuador, this being one of the most threatened forest types in the Neotropics.

DISTRIBUTION The Esmeraldas Woodstar is known from 12 specimens (in AMNH, ANSP and MNHN), three of which are of uncertain origin (see Remarks), the other nine having been taken at three localities in western Ecuador. The localities, with coordinates from Paynter and Traylor (1977), are as follows: (*Esmeraldas*) Esmeraldas (0°59'N 79°42'W), where three males and three females (in AMNH) were collected from October to December 1912 (also Chapman 1926); (*Manabí*) Chone (0°41'S 80°06'W), where two males (in AMNH) were taken at 20 m in December 1912 (also Chapman 1926); and (*Guayas*) on a ridge near the río Ayampe (1°40'S 80°45'W), on the border of Machalilla National Park (and with Manabí province), where a male was seen by P. Kaestner and R. Jones in March 1990, with one male taken (in ANSP) and three females seen there in January 1991 (R. S. Ridgely *in litt.* 1991).

POPULATION Nothing is known, although this species is obviously very localized and apparently uncommon, searches at the río Ayampe site during June 1992 failing to relocate the species (R. S. Ridgely *in litt.* 1992).

ECOLOGY Beside the río Ayampe the Esmeraldas Woodstar was found in the canopy along borders of semi-humid, second-growth woodland on a ridge at an altitude of 100-150 m, and was seen feeding from flowers of *Muntingia calabura* (Elaeocarpaceae), with the male also flycatching for tiny insects; the Little Woodstar *Acestura bombus* (see relevant account) was also present, but tended to feed lower in the vegetation (R. S. Ridgely *in litt.* 1991). The forest in this area was originally evergreen moist forest (see Dodson *et al.* 1985 for description), patches of which still survive in nearby areas (A. Gentry verbally 1991).

THREATS Widespread deforestation of western Ecuador south of the río Esmeraldas has surely led to a decline in this species (NK, R. S. Ridgely *in litt.* 1991). Dodson and Gentry (1991) discussed the conservation status of different forest types in western Ecuador, of which moist forest is the most threatened. Whereas several species of woodstar *Acestrura* are known to survive in degraded forests and second-growth, much of western Ecuador is devoid of any woody vegetation at all, and thus nearly all forest-dwelling species in the region are ultimately at risk (TAP). Most of the moist forest around the type-locality of this species (Esmeraldas city) has been replaced by pasture with scattered trees (TAP); however, in the vicinity of Chone though the habitat was very patchy, it still (in June 1992) appeared to be adequate for this species (R. S. Ridgely *in litt.* 1992).

MEASURES TAKEN The species occurs in Machalilla National Park (55,000 ha: IUCN 1992), Manabí province (see equivalent section under Grey-backed Hawk *Leucopternis occidentalis*).

MEASURES PROPOSED Effective protection of Machalilla National Park, the only protected area where the Esmeraldas Woodstar is known to occur, should be ensured (see equivalent section under Grey-backed Hawk). Maintaining the integrity of the small areas of moist forest near the coast just south of this park should also be a priority, and the more extensive tracts of forest on the higher ridges inside the park (e.g. Cerro San Sebastián) should receive immediate attention. This hummingbird should be looked for elsewhere in the coastal range, particularly farther north where several "islands" of moist forest survive (e.g. Cerro Pata de Pajaro, and adjacent ridges to the south in Manabí; and on ridges such as Cerro Mutiles, south and east of Esmeraldas city); the large block of wet forest north-east of Muisne in Esmeraldas may also support a population of this species (TAP).

REMARKS Two unpublished specimens in AMNH are labelled "Río Napo" with no other data, and the type-specimen, labelled "Ecuador", was also believed to have come from the río Napo (Chapman 1926). Although it is possible that the species also occurs (perhaps seasonally) in eastern Ecuador (see account of

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Little Woodstar), it seems safer at present to regard the “Río Napo” specimens as mislabelled (Chapman 1926).