

Although records of this ground-feeding pigeon derive from a very wide area of interior Brazil, it remains extremely rare, possibly as the result of natural factors, although probably (at least now) also owing to massive habitat loss.

**DISTRIBUTION** The few records of the Blue-eyed Ground-dove come from Goiás, Mato Grosso and São Paulo states in central Brazil. Its listing for Minas Gerais (de Mattos *et al.* 1984) is apparently in error; although the species might conceivably occur in the westernmost parts of that state, it was not found there during an ornithological survey between February and November 1987 (A. Brandt *in litt.* 1987).

*Mato Grosso* Five specimens were collected (two of them “near the new barracks”) at Cuiabá in the period from December 1823 to February 1825 (von Pelzeln 1868-1871). The species was again found near Cuiabá once in the 1980s (D. M. Teixeira *in litt.* 1987). Birds were seen at the Serra das Araras Ecological Station (15°45’S 57°15’W), between Cuiabá and Cáceres, February 1986, although another observer apparently did not find the species there in 1987 (J. M. C. da Silva *in litt.* 1987).

*Goiás* Two specimens were collected (others were seen) on Fazenda Transvaal “near” Rio Verde (see Remarks) in the valley of the rio Claro, one between March and June 1940 (Pinto 1941, 1945) and the other in October 1941 (Pinto 1945, 1949).

*São Paulo* A specimen was taken at Itapura, left bank of the rio Paraná, state of São Paulo, in October 1904 (von Ihering and von Ihering 1907, Pinto 1937, 1945).

**POPULATION** Numbers are not known, though the small number of records and the broad scatter of localities indicate that this bird must be very rare; the total population could prove to be extremely low and restricted. Indeed, it has been considered one of the rarest Brazilian birds (Sick 1965, 1985), perhaps on the road to extinction (Pinto 1937, 1949), having avoided detection by collectors who explored the region of Cuiabá and elsewhere, and who obtained large amounts of zoological material during long stays in the interior (Pinto 1937, 1941, 1949). It has, however, been speculated that the species might often be misidentified, especially under poor conditions (D. M. Teixeira *in litt.* 1987). In the Serra das Araras Ecological Station “a small population” was found during brief observations in 1986 and the possibility of finding the species again in this area was expected to increase with increased survey work (J. M. C. da Silva *in litt.* 1986, 1987).

**ECOLOGY** The rarity of the Blue-eyed Ground-dove suggests some unknown but presumably natural factor influencing the species in what appears to be (at least until recently) extensive areas of various possible habitats in central Brazil (a similar consideration affects the Cone-billed Tanager *Conothraupis mesoleuca*: see relevant account). It has been recorded from grassland inside cerrado (J. M. C. da Silva *in litt.* 1986), and was once observed also in a rice field after harvest (D. M. Teixeira *in litt.* 1987). The specimens from Goiás were taken in open grassland (“campo descoberto”), and other individuals were seen by the collector, both singly and in pairs, always on the ground like other ground-doves (Pinto 1949). The specimens from Cuiabá were obtained in January, February and December; of these, two males (one from January) were in moult (von Pelzeln 1868-1871).

**THREATS** None has been positively identified, the reasons for the extraordinary historical scarcity of the species remaining a matter of speculation; however, in the past few decades in particular the grassland habitats of central Brazil have come under unsustainable pressure from agricultural development, which must have seriously compromised the survival of this species (see Threats under Lesser Nothura *Nothura minor*).

**MEASURES TAKEN** The Blue-eyed Ground-dove is protected under Brazilian law (Bernardes *et al.* 1990). The species has been recorded in the Serra das Araras Ecological Station, which covers 28,000 ha, and might also be expected in Emas National Park (18°45’S 52°45’W in Paynter and Traylor 1991), which covers 132,000 ha (see Redford 1987), the only other protected area within its range.

**MEASURES PROPOSED** Any general ornithological work in the areas from which the species is known, or where it might be expected (notably Emas National Park, also possibly the Iquê-Juruena Ecological Station: see equivalent section under Cone-billed Tanager), should where possible be extended to

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include searches to locate this species (also the Cone-billed Tanager), to provide information on its ecology, including possible seasonal movements, and to determine its conservation status. Surveys for this species should, however, be integrated into a major scheme of terrestrial reconnaissance and biological survey as adumbrated in the equivalent section under Lesser Nothura. Collection of further specimens should not be countenanced.

**REMARKS** Fazenda Transvaal (Transvaal) could not be traced by Paynter and Traylor (1991) but was placed in Rio Verde municipality, i.e. near Rio Verde. However, D. F. Stotz (*in litt.* 1988) has pointed out that the farm is c.100 km from the town, and that the municipality should be either Paranaiguara or Cachoeira Alta.