

Known only from a single specimen collected in 1938 in dry forest in Mato Grosso, Brazil, this small bird needs to be searched for in two nature reserves in the region.

DISTRIBUTION The Cone-billed Tanager is known only from the type-specimen from Mato Grosso, central Brazil (Meyer de Schauensee 1966), collected on 25 August 1938 (Berlioz 1939). The stated type-locality, “Juruena, north-east of Cuyaba” (Berlioz 1939, 1946), cannot be traced but probably does not refer to the rio Juruena (J. Berlioz *per* H. Sick verbally 1988), in whose proximity lies the only locality with this name in the state of Mato Grosso (12°51’S 58°56’W in Paynter and Traylor 1991), about 400 km north-west of Cuiabá. The designation of the city of Mato Grosso (15°01’S 59°57’W), about 400 km west of Cuiabá, as the type-locality of this bird (Sick 1985, Isler and Isler 1987), is in error (H. Sick verbally 1988).

POPULATION Numbers are not known, although the species must be rare and local to have avoided detection for so long.

ECOLOGY Nothing is known other than that the type was taken amidst bushy vegetation in dry forest in a seemingly transitional zone between Amazonian rainforest and central Brazilian open woodland (Berlioz 1946). The rarity of the Cone-billed Tanager suggests some unknown factors influencing the species in what appears to be (at least until recently) extensive areas of various possible habitats in central Mato Grosso (a similar consideration affects the Blue-eyed Ground-dove *Columbina cyanopis*: see relevant account). Obviously if this bird is dependent on open cerrado it might be particularly vulnerable to the clearance and degradation of habitat through agricultural expansion in the region (see Threats under Lesser Nothura *Nothura minor*).

THREATS None is known.

MEASURES TAKEN The species is protected under Brazilian law (Bernardes *et al.* 1990).

MEASURES PROPOSED Surveys are needed to rediscover the species and to provide information on its ecology and status. Any ornithological work in the state of Mato Grosso, including the only two nature reserves in the region, the Iquê-Juruena Ecological Station (12°00’S 59°00’W) and Serra das Araras Ecological Station (15°45’S 57°15’W), and other areas where the species might be expected, should where possible be extended to include searches to locate it (also the Blue-eyed Ground-dove and other species listed in the equivalent section under Lesser Nothura).

REMARKS Although originally placed in its own genus (*Rhynchothraupis*), the Cone-billed Tanager is clearly related to the (curiously scarce, hence near-threatened) Black-and-white Tanager *Conothraupis speculigera* (Zimmer 1947, Storer 1960), and indeed it has been claimed that the differences between the two birds “can be no more than subspecific” (Zimmer 1947); nevertheless, subsequent authors have preferred to consider them distinct species (Storer 1960, Meyer de Schauensee 1966, Sick 1985) whose known ranges are separated by about 1,500 km (Isler and Isler 1987; not 1,500 miles as in Storer 1960), although this gap may actually prove smaller given the nomadic tendencies of the Black-and-white Tanager (Isler and Isler 1987). Not having been seen in the wild for over 50 years, by CITES criteria the Cone-billed Tanager could now be considered extinct.