

This species is restricted to lowland and foothill forests in south-west Colombia and north-west Ecuador, where it is poorly known, apparently rare and localized, and seemingly threatened by forest destruction.

DISTRIBUTION The Scarlet-breasted Dacnis is endemic to the Pacific slope and plain of south-west Colombia in Nariño department, and north-western Ecuador in Esmeraldas, Imbabura, and Pichincha provinces. Coordinates (unless otherwise stated) are from Paynter and Traylor (1977, 1981).

Colombia This species is only known from the Pacific slope of south-western Nariño department, where localities are as follows: La Guayacana (1°26'N 78°27'W; near the Ecuador border, on the río Cualquer), where birds (two males and a female in ANSP, ROM) were taken in May 1947, with another male in May 1948 (von Sneider 1954), and 10 km to the east, where two males were collected in August 1959 (Carriker 1959), all between 220 and 250 m; the río Güiza valley (= río Cualquer, 1°22'N 78°36'W), a locality mentioned by Hilty and Brown (1986), but which presumably refers to birds collected at and near Guayacana, although more recently (September 1991) two birds (probably this species) were seen at 600 m beside this river (Barlow *et al.* 1992); above Junín along the road to Tumaco, where the species has recently been recorded at 1,200 m (Hilty and Brown 1986, Ridgely and Tudor 1989); and apparently within La Planada Nature Reserve (J. E. Orejuela *in litt.* 1991).

Ecuador Records are from Esmeraldas, Imbabura and Pichincha provinces, where localities include: very near (south of) San Lorenzo (1°17'N 78°50'W: coordinates from IGM 1982) (R. S. Ridgely verbally 1991); Carondelet (1°06'N 78°42'W; on the coastal plain beside the río Bogotá and the railroad), where six specimens (four males, a female and an immature male in AMNH, BMNH) were collected at 18 m between 17 October and 3 November 1900; San Javier (1°04'N 78°47'W; also on the coastal plain), where a male and female (in AMNH) were taken at 18 m in July 1900; Ventanas (0°59'N 78°40'W; at 27 m, on the railroad), where at least two birds were seen in August 1986 (Evans 1988b); Lita (0°52'N 78°28'W; 900 m), where a male (the type-specimen) and female were collected in October 1899 (Hartert 1900, Chapman 1926); between La Unión and Muisne (0°42'N 79°52'W: coordinates from IGM 1982), where the bird was seen in September 1990 (R. S. Ridgely verbally 1991); and further south, at río Palenque (c.0°30'S 79°22'W: coordinates from IGM 1982), where the bird was recently seen by P. Greenfield (NK). This last record is from southern Pichincha province (NK: also Ridgely and Tudor 1989), but Isler and Isler (1987) referred to it as in northern Los Ríos.

POPULATION The Scarlet-breasted Dacnis has been variously considered uncommon or rare (Hilty and Brown 1986); scarce and/or local (Isler and Isler 1987); and rare, appearing never to be very numerous (Ridgely and Tudor 1989). However, six birds were collected during two weeks at Carondelet in 1900 (see Distribution), and it may be that the species is very localized in its distribution, but (at least formerly) not uncommon where it occurs.

ECOLOGY Records come from between sea level and 1,200 m (see Remarks), and Hilty and Brown (1986) referred to it as occurring at wet forest edges ("cloud-forest") and in tall (mature) secondary growth (reiterated by Isler and Isler 1987 and Ridgely and Tudor 1989). The birds at Ventanas were seen in relatively open habitat comprising an old grassy clearing with some trees, with mature lowland forest nearby (Evans 1988b). Food is unrecorded. The only evidence of breeding season is the immature male collected at Carondelet, Ecuador, on 26 October.

THREATS None is known, although extensive destruction of lowland (coastal plain) and foothill forests (see Threats under Plumbeous Forest-falcon *Micrastur plumbeus*) has caused a rapid decline in suitable habitat, and inevitably therefore in population: if the species only breeds at low elevations (as may be the case) it is severely threatened (NK).

MEASURES TAKEN The Scarlet-breasted Dacnis apparently occurs in La Planada Nature Reserve, a 1,650 ha protected area in Nariño department, south-west Colombia (J. E. Orejuela *in litt.* 1991; LGN). This species has not been recorded from any protected areas in Ecuador, although the Cotacachi–Cayapas Ecological Reserve (45,000 ha) and Awá Indigenous Forest reserve (over 100,000 ha) are within the bird's range (CNPPA 1982, IUCN 1992).

MEASURES PROPOSED The ecological requirements of this species are in urgent need of clarification, so that the nature of the threats it faces can be more precisely assessed. Combined with this, and for the same reasons, the present distribution of the bird needs to be determined, especially with reference to its possible occurrence within various protected areas. Its range overlaps with those of a number of other threatened species (for details of which see the equivalent section under Plumbeous Forest-falcon and Hoary Puffleg *Haplophaedia lugens*), and any conservation initiatives should where possible take into account the requirements of all these species. Proposed plans for a trans-border biosphere reserve (linking the La Planada area with the Awá reserve in Ecuador: Barlow *et al.* 1992) should be strongly encouraged.

REMARKS Hilty and Brown (1986) gave an altitudinal range of between 200 and 800 m (with a sight record up to 1,200 m), as did Isler and Isler (1987) and Ridgely and Tudor (1989): however, all eight specimens taken in 1900 at Carondelet and San Javier, and the two birds seen at Ventanas in 1986, were below 30 m, on the coastal plain (see Distribution). The complete lack of records during intensive surveys of the foothills of Esmeraldas (down to 350 m: NK) may suggest some degree of seasonal movement to lower altitudes.