

*This poorly known bird inhabits dry forest in a limited area of interior eastern Brazil, living at reasonably high density but under threat from loss of habitat.*

**DISTRIBUTION** The Narrow-billed Antwren is known from only a few localities in interior Bahia and north-east Minas Gerais, eastern Brazil.

*Bahia* The species was described from “Villa Nova” (Bonfim, Senhor do Bonfim; see Pinto 1938, 1945: 280; also Remarks) (Cory and Hellmayr 1924), where two specimens in MZUSP (including the type) were collected in March 1908. It was next collected at “Iracema” (= Iramaia, 13°17’S 40°58’W in Paynter and Traylor 1991) 700 m, “Giguy” (= Novo Acre, 13°27’S 41°06’W in Paynter and Traylor 1991), 610 m, and Jaguaquara, 760 m, in September and October 1927, and at Boa Nova, 790 m, in June 1928 (Naumburg 1935, 1939). Near this last locality the species was observed again in December 1974 (Willis and Oniki 1981b), October 1977 (Sick and Teixeira 1979, H. Sick verbally 1988), September/October 1982, when four specimens were collected (in MNRJ), July 1988 (M. Pearman *in litt.* 1989), February 1989 (J. F. Pacheco verbally 1992), August 1989 (B. C. Forrester *in litt.* 1992) and June 1990 (Gardner and Gardner 1990b).

*Minas Gerais* The species is known from Divisópolis, 900-1,000 m, and Almenara in the valley of the rio Jequitinhonha (Sick and Teixeira 1979, Sick 1985), where it was first discovered in December 1973 (specimens in CGTM and MNRJ) and recorded until at least 1986 (G. T. de Mattos *in litt.* 1987).

**POPULATION** Numbers are not known, but in the localities where it was seen in 1977 in the same woodlands as the threatened Slender Antbird *Rhopornis ardesiaca*, it appeared to be the less numerous of the two (King 1978-1979). However, at Boa Nova in 1974 and 1983 it was considered “common” (Willis and Oniki 1981b, Teixeira 1987c) and in two woodlots at the same site in July 1988 it was “far more numerous” than Slender Antbird, with over 10 (mostly males) being found in one 20 ha woodlot, and five (a male and four females) in one 3 ha woodlot (M. Pearman *in litt.* 1989); this greater abundance was also the clear perception of subsequent observers (Gardner and Gardner 1990b, B. C. Forrester *in litt.* 1992) at this site.

**ECOLOGY** This species is very little known (Sick and Teixeira 1979). It has been reported from dry forest (King 1978-1979, Willis and Oniki 1981b, Teixeira 1987c, G. T. de Mattos *in litt.* 1987; see Ecology under Slender Antbird), where it is found commonly in the lower mid-levels (Willis and Oniki 1981b). Birds join mixed-species flocks that include Slender Antbird, Rufous Gnatcatcher *Conopophaga lineata*, White-browed Antpitta *Hylopezus ochroleucus*, Bahia Antwren *Herpsilochmus pileatus*, Silvery-cheeked Antshrike *Sakesphorus cristatus*, Flavescent Warbler *Basileuterus flaveolus*, Rufous-browed Peppershrike *Cyclarhis gujanensis*, Pale-legged Hornero *Furnarius leucopus*, Ochre-cheeked Spinetail *Synallaxis scutata* and Streaked Xenops *Xenops rutilans* (M. Pearman *in litt.* 1989). Individuals and pairs noted near Boa Nova and Jequié foraged in dense tangles of thin vines, branches and foliage 2-8 m above the ground (in vine-rich forest c.15 m tall, with closely spaced small and medium trees, and a dense cover of large terrestrial bromeliads): the birds probed in trapped dead leaves and appeared to scan green leaves and stems (TAP). The stomach of one specimen (in CGTM) from Minas Gerais contained “insects”. Testes of three specimens (in AMNH, CGTM) obtained in October from central Bahia and in December from northern Minas Gerais were not or only slightly enlarged.

**THREATS** The Narrow-billed Antwren is believed to face the same threats as the Slender Antbird in south-central Bahia, and to be “surely decreasing as its habitat dwindles” (King 1978-1979), but its range is not so restricted: at least in north-east Minas Gerais and adjacent southern Bahia, where part of its habitat has been cleared for coffee plantations, the species is not considered to be under immediate threat (G. T. de Mattos *in litt.* 1987; but see Threats under Slender Antbird).

**MEASURES TAKEN** This species was not protected by Brazilian law in the 1970s (*contra* King 1978-1979) but is now (Bernardes *et al.* 1990).

**MEASURES PROPOSED** The creation of a forest reserve of mata-de-cipó is desirable (Willis and Oniki 1981b, Teixeira 1987c) and could be done in conjunction with an experimental agricultural station, which

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is needed on the southern Bahian plateau because of its distinctive climate and soils (Willis and Oniki 1981b). Such a reserve would help also to preserve other threatened bird species which occur in the same region (see Remarks 4 under Slender Antbird). Clearly much more work on the biology of this species would be most valuable in determining the principles for its long-term management, and such studies might be combined with any on Slender Antbird.

**REMARKS** Cory and Hellmayr (1924) indicated this locality as falling within the Serra do Espinhaço, but this is mistaken.