

This parrot occurs in the Andes of Venezuela and Colombia; all three races are confined to humid upper montane forest and scrub at 2,200 to 3,000 m, appear to be very local throughout their ranges, very rare at most localities, and threatened by habitat destruction.

DISTRIBUTION The Rusty-faced Parrot (see Remarks) appears to be patchy in its occurrence throughout its range in the Andes of Venezuela and Colombia.

Venezuela The subspecies *theresae* has been recorded in Mérida and Táchira states as follows: (*Mérida*) Quintero, 2,800 m, August 1941; Valle, 2,500 m; El Escorial páramo, 2,500 m; and La Culata páramo, 3,000 m, all four on the south slope of Sierra del Norte, c.25 km north-east, c.15 km north, c.10 km north-west and 17 km north-east of the town of Mérida, respectively; the Pico Humboldt trail, Sierra Nevada National Park, c.11 km east of the town of Mérida (flock of six seen in December 1983 just above the first refuge: C. S. Balchin *in litt.* 1988); (*Táchira*) Boca de Monte (Pregonero) in the interior Andes at 2,300-2,400 m, c.90 km south-west of the town of Mérida; along the Queniquea road in March 1981 (Phelps and Phelps 1958, Meyer de Schauensee and Phelps 1978, Paynter 1982, R. S. Ridgely *in litt.* 1988; specimens in AMNH, COP, FMNH and UMMZ). The species, including subspecies *amazonina*, is recorded as ranging from 2,300 to 3,000 m in Venezuela (Meyer de Schauensee and Phelps 1978), but the sight record of a pair along the Queniquea road was at 2,200 m (R. S. Ridgely *in litt.* 1988).

The subspecies *amazonina* is recorded from one locality in Venezuela: Páramo de Tamá, 2,500-3,000 m, Táchira department (Phelps and Phelps 1958, Meyer de Schauensee and Phelps 1978; also sightings in January 1983: C. S. Balchin *in litt.* 1988).

Colombia The subspecies *amazonina* is known from seven areas within the East Andes (coordinates unless otherwise stated are from Paynter and Traylor 1981): (*Norte de Santander*) Gramalote, east slope, at c.7°53'N 72°48'W, September 1946 (Carriker 1955a); Ramírez, west slope c.4 km north of Cáchira, at 7°48'N 73°05'W, October 1916 (Carriker 1955a); (*Santander*) La Pica, west slope north-east of Molagavita, at c.6°45'N 72°45'W, February 1917 (Carriker 1955a); (*Cundinamarca*) Valle de Jesus Forest, c.4°50'N 73°40'W, adjacent to the following locality, where 6-8 were seen feeding in secondary forest in July 1991 (A. Repizzo and L. M. Renjifo *in litt.* 1992); Chingaza National Park east of Bogotá (whence a feather), the adjacent La Bolsa area (whence a flock), recently (L. M. Renjifo *per* L. Rosselli *in litt.* 1991) and also the adjacent Carpanta Biological Reserve, 4°35'N 75°28'W, at 2,600 m, 1988 and 1989 (S. Arango *in litt.* 1992, L. M. Renjifo *in litt.* 1992, whence coordinates); Sumapaz Natural Reserve, c.4°N 71°25'W, above Cabrera, where one was seen flying over secondary habitat in August 1991 (L. M. Renjifo *in litt.* 1992); and El Roble, 2,438 m, above Fusagasugá, south-west of Bogotá on the west slope, at c.4°23'N 74°19'W (specimens in AMNH). (*Caldas*) The subspecies *velezi* was discovered in 1986; it is known from four specimens taken in 1969 and 1976 at two localities, both above Manizales on the north-western face of Nevado del Ruiz, in Municipio de Manizales, near the border of Tolima, sites being Cuenca Hidrográfica de "Río Blanco", 2,450 m, and Hacienda La Morena (Bosque del Taira), 2,400 m; several additional sightings of flocks above Manizales between 1969 and 1985 were at elevations between 2,250 and 2,650 m, at least one of these being at a reforestation plot in the Gallinazo watershed (Graves and Uribe Restrepo 1989); two were seen on the río Blanco at 2,400 m in December 1991 (J. A. Giraldo *in litt.* 1992).

There are recent sight records of *Hapalopsittaca* parrots, possibly of this form (at Finca Merenberg considerable red on the face was noted) from the upper Magdalena valley: in 1973 on the east slope of the Central Andes in Puracé National Park, Cauca department; in 1976 on the west slope of the East Andes in Cueva de los Guácharos National Park, Huila department, at 1°35'N 76°00'W; and in 1976 on the east slope of the Central Andes at Finca Merenberg, Huila department, at 2°14'N 76°08'W (Ridgely and Gaulin 1980, Hilty and Brown 1986). These records may indicate that the range of *velezi* extends south along the east slope of the Central Andes to the head of the Magdalena valley (Graves and Uribe Restrepo 1989; see also Distribution under Fuertes's Parrot *Hapalopsittaca fuertesi*).

POPULATION The species is very locally distributed in Venezuela (Phelps and Phelps 1958), and its status in the country is critical (Desenne and Strahl 1991). In Colombia it is rare, with no recent records from the northern part of the East Andes (Hilty and Brown 1986), although some substantial and hitherto

remote forest areas still do exist within its range, particularly in Santander and Boyacá (Ridgely 1981a). Although Chapman (1917a) recorded it as "common" at El Roble, a region now completely deforested, no-one has since reported it in any numbers (Ridgely 1981a). There have been several sightings of flocks, presumably of *velezi*, above Manizales between 1969 and 1985, the largest and latest being of 25 individuals (Graves and Uribe Restrepo 1989), but unless its range is found to be considerably larger than currently known, the total population of *velezi* must be small. Other recent records of *Hapalopsittaca* parrots in Venezuela and Colombia are of two to seven individuals (Hilty and Brown 1986, C. S. Balchin verbally 1989), and so few that the total population would seem to be very small. It is possible that the species has invaded the Central Andes of Colombia in the course of this century (Graves and Uribe Restrepo 1989; see also account of Fuertes's Parrot).

ECOLOGY The Rusty-faced Parrot mainly inhabits very wet cloud-forest at 2,500 to 3,000 m, sometimes ranging down to 2,000 m into adjacent subtropical forest (Chapman 1917a, Meyer de Schauensee and Phelps 1978, Ridgely 1981a, Hilty and Brown 1986), although the subspecies *velezi* has as yet been recorded only between 2,250 and 2,650 m, albeit in *Alnus acuminata* reforestation plots as well as in patches of cloud-forest (Graves and Uribe Restrepo 1989). It probably usually flies high above the forest like its close relative the Red-faced Parrot *H. pyrrhops* (see relevant account), in pairs or groups of four to seven (Ridgely 1981a, Hilty and Brown 1986), although as many as 25 *velezi* have been seen together (Graves and Uribe Restrepo 1989); it perches conspicuously in treetops (Hilty and Brown 1985, C. S. Balchin verbally 1989). The type-specimen of *velezi*, taken on 20 July 1976, had seeds and fruit in its stomach, and inactive gonads (Graves and Uribe Restrepo 1989). Birds in Carpanta Biological Reserve have been seen eating *Clusia* fruit and the berries of mistletoes (S. Arango *in litt.* 1992); this conforms with the perception that the genus *Hapalopsittaca* may exploit mistletoes extensively (see Ecology under Red-faced Parrot). There appear to be no breeding data beyond the inactivity of the type of *velezi* in July.

THREATS Up to the end of the 1970s the Rusty-faced Parrot had never been held in captivity, probably not even locally (Ridgely 1981a); even in the 1980s there was little evidence of trade, at least in Venezuela (Desenne and Strahl 1991). All the subspecies have declined seriously owing to widespread forest destruction (Ridgely 1981a); thus for example the one area where the species was ever described as common (El Roble in Colombia) is now entirely cleared (see Population), and the forest within its range in western Venezuela is being rapidly destroyed, such that the two protected areas there, El Tamá and Sierra Nevada National Parks, are among the most threatened in Venezuela (Desenne and Strahl 1991). The inclusion in the El Tamá National Park management plan of a provision for a mining concession covering 10,000 ha (within the park) is especially worrying (M. L. Goodwin *in litt.* 1992).

MEASURES TAKEN In Venezuela the species occurs in Sierra Nevada National Park and presumably El Tamá National Park (see Distribution), but this is of little comfort (see Threats). In Colombia Los Nevados (possibly), Puracé, Cueva de los Guácharos and Chingaza National Parks all hold the species, at least seasonally, as does Finca Merenberg (Hilty and Brown 1986, Graves and Uribe Restrepo 1989), Carpanta Biological Reserve (for which see *Fundación Natura Ann. Rep.* 1989: 5-6; 1990: 4-6) and Sumapaz Natural Reserve.

MEASURES PROPOSED Establishment of additional protected forest areas is obviously very much needed, as is more effective protection of those areas which have already been established (Ridgely 1981a); current efforts to protect forests in the relevant protected areas, namely Chingaza, Carpanta and Sumapaz, deserve greater support, the first needing help with its lower forest, the second two being too small for good populations, while the Valle de Jesus Forest should be legally protected (L. M. Renjifo *in litt.* 1992). Clearly more work must be done on the distribution and ecology of this species in both countries, with particular emphasis on determining management options (Desenne and Strahl 1991). The forests in the Cordillera de Mérida require urgent protection (this especially applies to forests in the Sierra Nevada and El Tama National Parks, Venezuela), not only for this species, but also for the 25 other endemic birds found there (ICBP 1992, Crosby *et al.* *in prep.*), of which five are threatened, namely: Northern Helmeted Curassow *Pauxi pauxi*, Táchira Emerald *Amazilia distans* (at lower altitudes), Táchira Antpitta *Grallaria chthonia*, Hooded Antpitta *Grallaricula cucullata* and Rufous-browed Hemispingus *Hemispingus goeringi* (see relevant accounts: also Remarks 1 under Flame-winged Parakeet *Pyrrhura*

calliptera). A number of other areas are important for Rusty-faced Parrot, and in turn harbour other threatened species: (1) Chingaza National Park and Carpanta Biological Reserve also embrace a population of Bogotá Rail *Rallus semiplumbeus*; (2) the río Blanco watershed appears to be an ideal area for protection, and harbours a population of Bicoloured Antpitta *Grallaria rufocinerea*; (3) Puracé National Park holds populations of five other threatened species which are listed in the equivalent section under Bicoloured Antpitta; and (4) Cueva de los Guácharos National Park (where this species probably occurs) holds four other threatened species which are listed in the equivalent section under Moustached Antpitta *G. alleni*.

REMARKS The Rusty-faced Parrot was considered conspecific with the Red-faced Parrot (see relevant account) by Peters (1937), a treatment not followed here. Fuertes's Parrot (see relevant account), though first described as a full species (Chapman 1912), was later also treated as a race of *amazonina* by Peters (1937), a view adopted by several subsequent authors (e.g. Forshaw 1973, Morony *et al.* 1975), but with the finding that the new form *velezi* was virtually sympatric with *fuertesi* it became evident that the latter must again have full specific status (Graves and Uribe Restrepo 1989).