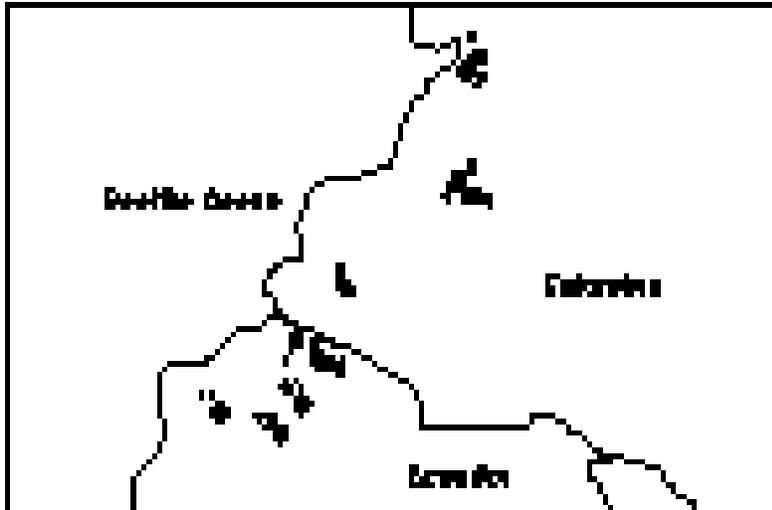


This ground-cuckoo inhabits wet foothill forests on the Pacific slope of the Cordillera Occidental of south-west Colombia and north-west Ecuador, where it is known from few localities and threatened by forest destruction. There have been three records (in 1988 and 1989) of single birds in Colombia since 1956, with just one (in 1992) in Ecuador since 1936, suggesting that the bird is truly rare and localized, but possibly overlooked.

DISTRIBUTION The Banded Ground-cuckoo has been recorded from a small number of localities on the Pacific slope of the western Andes in three areas of south-west Colombia, and also in adjacent north-west Ecuador.



Colombia Records in Colombia come from three areas on the Pacific slope of the Cordillera Occidental in Valle, Cauca and Nariño departments, where localities (north to south, coordinates taken from Paynter and Traylor 1981) are as follows: (*Valle*) near Jiménez¹ (c.3°45'N 76°45'W), where a female (in AMNH) was taken in July 1907 (apparently the first Colombian record) at 885 m; Alto Anchicayá² (near El Danubio, at 3°37'N 76°53'W), in Los Farallones de Cali

National Park, where a bird was recorded at c.600 m during February 1989 (F. R. Lambert *in litt.* 1989; also *World Birdwatch* 11,2 [1989]: 4); (*Cauca*) Cerro Munchique³ (2°32'N 76°57'W), where on the western slope a bird was collected at 1,000 m during September 1951 (von Sneider 1954); La Costa⁴ (variously described as 10 km north of or on the western side of Cerro Munchique: Paynter and Traylor 1981), where four specimens have been collected, including a female in January 1936 and two females in January 1937, at 1,000 m (von Sneider 1954, Negret 1991); río Mechengue⁵, near El Tambo (c.2°25'N 76°49'W), where a female (in ANSP) was taken at 730 m in July 1939 (also Bond and Meyer de Schauensee 1940) with another female (in YPM) taken at 800 m in August 1956; La Bermeja (untraced, but within Munchique National Park), where an individual was seen in August 1988 at 800 m (Negret 1991); and (*Nariño*) río Pambi⁶ (untraced, but between Junín and Barbacoas), where a bird was seen at 900 m in 1988 (G. Arango verbally 1991).

Ecuador This species has been recorded from just seven localities in north-west Ecuador in Esmeraldas, Imbabura and Pichincha provinces (coordinates from Paynter and Traylor 1977), as follows: (*Esmeraldas*) río Cayapas⁷ (c.1°13'N 79°03'W), where a female (in AMNH) was collected in October 1901 (see Remarks); 17.5 km by road past Alto Tambo towards San Lorenzo (c.0°58'N 78°43'W), where a single bird was recorded daily at 450 m, 13-15 February 1992 (NK); Quinindé¹¹ (= Rosa Zárate; 0°20'N 79°28'W), where a female (in FMNH) was collected in September 1936 (see Remarks); (*Imbabura*) Montes de Achotal⁸ (untraced, but apparently near Achotal, at c.0°50'N 78°25'W), where a male and female (in FMNH) were collected in August 1935; Paramba⁹ (= Hacienda Paramba; 0°49'N 78°21'W), where a male (in AMNH) was collected in May 1898, with a female (in AMNH) taken in June of the following year, both at 1,065 m (also Hartert 1898a); Intag¹⁰ (c.0°24'N 78°36'W), where the type-specimen was taken in about 1878 (Sclater and Salvin 1878b); and (*Pichincha*) Guala¹² (0°07'N 78°50'W), where a male (in NRM) was taken at 1,525 m in June 1920 (also Lönnberg and Rendahl 1922).

POPULATION The status of the Banded Ground-cuckoo is essentially unknown, with the only three recent records (i.e. post-1956) coming from Colombia (in 1988 and 1989), and with just one from Ecuador

since 1936.

Colombia Although Bond and Meyer de Schauensee (1940) referred to this species as “excessively rare” when they collected a female in the Cerro Munchique area in 1939, this area accounts for seven of the eight Colombian specimens, and von Sneider (1954) concluded that in this region the species was to be encountered with some frequency. That a population still exists there is confirmed by the observation of an individual within the national park in August 1988 (see Distribution). The recent (February 1989) observations of a bird at Alto Anchicayá, in the vicinity of Jiménez, where a bird was taken in 1907, and of one in Nariño (see Distribution) suggest the survival of two further populations. Hilty and Brown (1986) considered this species to be rare and local, and the evidence appears to confirm this, although it has been suggested (*World Birdwatch* 11,2 [1989]: 4) that it is not so much rare as overlooked.

Ecuador There are apparently just eight specimens of the Banded Ground-cuckoo from Ecuador, with no more than two taken at any of the localities, and with just one record since the last specimen was collected in September 1936 (see above). Hartert (1898a) regarded this species as a “very rare cuckoo”. However, local people at the Alto Tambo site recognized the bird from the plate in Hilty and Brown (1986) and claimed that it was fairly common in the area, occurring almost invariably in groups of 3-5 (NK).

ECOLOGY This ground-cuckoo inhabits wet forest, mostly in foothills and on the lower slopes of the Pacific side of the western Andes, from c.600 to 1,000 m in Colombia, and 450 to 1,525 m in Ecuador (Hilty and Brown 1986; see Distribution). At La Costa (Munchique National Park), von Sneider (1954) described the terrain as broken and covered in forest (for more details of the vegetation in Munchique National Park, see Negret 1991). F. R. Lambert (*in litt.* 1989) described the small patch of forest at Alto Anchicayá as apparently little disturbed (but secondary) moss-forest, isolated from other forest above by a 10 m wide swathe of rough grass (with electric pylons running through) and below by a road (see Threats); this moss-forest was dense, with a thick understorey (mainly of tree saplings), heavy epiphytic growth, and a canopy height of 8-12 m. The area where the bird was recorded near Alto Tambo supports wet primary forest, c.20-30 m tall (NK). A specimen label (in AMNH) gives this species's local name as “guide of the wild pigs” and Hartert (1898a) likewise translated the local name as “companion of wild boar”; with the collection of a specimen following collared peccaries *Tayassu tajacu* (Hilty and Brown 1986), and the 1988 observation of a bird in Munchique National Park following a band of this same species (Negret 1991), the suggestion could be made that peccaries are an important part of the bird's ecological requirements, and may indicate habits similar to those of the Rufous-vented Ground-cuckoo *Neomorphus geoffroyi*, which often associates with these ungulates and army ants (Hilty and Brown 1986, LGN). Locals at the Alto Tambo site independently claimed that this species is invariably found in groups of 3-5 birds following army-ant swarms (NK).

THREATS Forest clearance is the main threat to this species and has been intense throughout its Colombian range (LGN), and despite the persistence of large areas of apparently primary or old secondary forest on the Pacific slope in Cauca and Valle departments (F. R. Lambert *in litt.* 1989, G. Kattan *in litt.* 1992, LGN), agricultural and hydroelectric projects are causing local degradation of the vegetation within Munchique National Park (IUCN TFP 1988a), and gold-mining poses a threat to the area around Anchicayá (G. Kattan *in litt.* 1992). In north-west Ecuador, large areas of forest also remain, and human population pressure is not great: however, widespread deforestation has occurred, especially along the rivers and railways, and is becoming more of a problem as the human population increases and agriculture expands (Moore and van der Giessen 1984, Evans 1988b, IUCN TFP 1988b).

MEASURES TAKEN There are several parks encompassing localities where the Banded Ground-cuckoo has been recorded: in Colombia, Munchique National Park (44,000 ha) possibly encompasses all but three of the known localities (CNPPA 1982; see Distribution), and a newly founded private reserve within the buffer zone of this park provides further protection to the area's lowland wet forest (A. J. Negret verbally 1991); the Anchicayá-Verde watershed (covering the area from where both this species and the Yellow-green Bush-tanager *Chlorospingus flavovirens* have been recorded: see relevant account) surrounds two hydroelectric plants, and is protected by the CVC (Hilty 1977); this area is apparently an

ecological reserve (but illegal hunting and clearance for agriculture still occur: F. R. Lambert *in litt.* 1989, and Threats), and is within Los Farallones de Cali National Park (150,000 ha: CNPPA 1982, Areas Protegidas 1989, Hernández Camacho *et al.* undated), including large areas of forest on the Pacific slope which may support other populations of the species (G. Kattan *in litt.* 1992), although Hilty (1977) did not encounter it during fieldwork in the area.

In Ecuador, this species has been recorded from a number of localities in what is now the Cotacachi-Cayapas Ecological Reserve (204,400 ha), one of the main forest blocks left in the north-west of the country (CNPPA 1982, Moore and van der Giessen 1984).

MEASURES PROPOSED The guaranteed integrity of forest within the reserves mentioned above is essential if this and other threatened bird species are to survive (see below); where possible, other remaining forest blocks in this area need conserving. A management plan has been drafted for the Cotacachi-Cayapas Ecological Reserve (Moore and van der Giessen 1984), and the conservation of remaining forest in the south-west Colombia/north-west Ecuador region has been identified as of the highest conservation priority (IUCN TFP 1988a,b).

The true distribution, population density and basic ecological requirements of this species are essentially unknown: determining each of these is important, after which it may be possible to assess the bird's conservation needs and act upon them. The range of the Banded Ground-cuckoo overlaps with those of a number of threatened species: at Munchique National Park it probably occurs with Plumbeous Forest-falcon *Micrastur plumbeus* (see relevant account, and for species occurring higher than 1,000 m in this park see the equivalent section under Multicoloured Tanager *Chlorochrysa nitidissima*); at Alto Anchicayá it has been found with Yellow-green Bush-tanager, but in the vicinity of this locality and within the Los Farallones de Cali National Park a number of other threatened species occur, for which see the equivalent section under Multicoloured Tanager. Any conservation initiatives should consider the needs of all these species.

REMARKS The río Cayapas is in the lowlands of Esmeraldas and the exact location where the specimen was taken is unknown, although it seems likely that it was in the foothill forests near the headwaters of this or possibly a tributary river. A similar uncertainty attaches to the specimen locality Quinindé (= Rosa Zárate) which, at c.100 m, is seemingly too low for this species, and may refer to a locality further up the río Quinindé, on somewhat higher ground.