

*This large icterid is known from just three localities in the lowlands of Chocó department, north-western Colombia, where four specimens were taken in 1858, 1940 and 1945; there have been no further observations of this seemingly very rare bird.*

**DISTRIBUTION** Records of Baudó (Chestnut-mantled) Oropendola (see Remarks 1) come from three localities in the vicinity of the isolated Serranías de los Saltos and de Baudó, Chocó department, north-western Colombia. The localities involved (coordinates from Paynter and Traylor 1982) are: Camp Albert (= Camp Abert; untraced) on the middle río Truandó (7°26'N 77°07'W), apparently “within the lowland where the Truandó begins to form sandy depositories” (Paynter and Traylor 1982), where the type-specimen (an adult male in USNM) was taken at c.100 m in 1858 (Richmond 1898, Paynter and Traylor 1982); the upper río Baudó, which flows south from the Alto del Buey (6°06'N 77°13'W), where two specimens (in ANSP) were taken at 275 and 365 m during July 1940 (Meyer de Schauensee 1948-1952; see Remarks 2); and beside the río Dubasa (5°19'N 76°57'W), an affluent of the upper río Baudó 60 km upstream from Pizarro, where at 100 m a female (in MHNUC; labelled as from Tubazá) was collected and nine others seen on 2 September 1945 (von Sneider 1954; see Remarks 3). Rodríguez (1982) mentioned that the species occurs in the río Jurado valley (7°06'N 77°46'W), although he presented no evidence for this.

**POPULATION** Numbers are essentially unknown, and the species has apparently been recorded on just three occasions (see above). Richmond (1898) reported that only one bird (later to become the type-specimen) was seen on the río Truandó expedition. However, von Sneider (1954) observed 10 birds together (prior to collecting a female), and suggested that the species was possibly abundant on the ríos Baudó and Dubasa, but that it had not been collected or observed more frequently owing to the difficulty in distinguishing it from other oropendolas when high up in trees or flying. Since 1945 there have been no confirmed records and either the identification of the species remains a problem or the bird is extremely rare or localized.

**ECOLOGY** The Baudó Oropendola is known from humid lowland forest and forest edge, between 100 and 365 m (Meyer de Schauensee 1970, Hilty and Brown 1986; see Distribution). Von Sneider (1954) observed birds together in high trees on the banks of the río Dubasa, and the occurrence of the species at Camp Abert (also beside a river) suggests that it may have a preference for forest growing on sandy deposits (see Distribution). Richmond (1898), referring to the sole individual seen, said that it was “very shy”.

**THREATS** It is highly probable that the extensive deforestation occurring throughout north-western Colombia (Ridgely and Tudor 1989) has caused a decline in the population of this species but, with so little known about it, specific threats are difficult to identify or assess. The Serranía de Baudó still retains large expanses of forest (A. J. Negret *in litt.* 1987), but has nevertheless been identified as the highest conservation priority within the Colombian Chocó (especially around Ensenada Utría) owing to the incursion of roads encouraging settlement, and to timber companies causing further deforestation (IUCN TFP 1988a).

**MEASURES TAKEN** None is known. The Ensenada Utría National Park (c.50,000 ha) protects some areas of the Serranía de Baudó (IUCN TFP 1988a), but it is unknown whether the Baudó Oropendola occurs in the immediate area. In any case, this reserve is threatened by road building associated with the construction of a hydroelectric dam (IUCN TFP 1988a). Fundación Natura is currently undertaking management studies and an inventory in this park (M. G. Kelsey *in litt.* 1992).

**MEASURES PROPOSED** The rediscovery of the Baudó Oropendola is of the highest priority, and searches should obviously be concentrated in the vicinity of the three known localities and where forest still occurs along rivers. Details of this species's ecological requirements are also urgently needed if an effective conservation plan is to be developed. Any measures for this species should be undertaken in conjunction with those proposed for the Chocó Tinamou *Crypturellus kerriae* (see equivalent section under this species for details). A protected area in the Serranía de Baudó, especially covering forest along

the ríos Baudó and Dubasa, rivers originating in the Sierra de los Saltos, and perhaps adjoining the Ensenada Utría National Park, is urgently required, owing to the threats it faces and its exceptionally high biological diversity (IUCN TFP 1988a) (see equivalent section under Speckled Antshrike *Xenornis setifrons* for further initiatives proposed for this area).

**REMARKS** (1) Meyer de Schauensee (1966) suggested that this bird should be considered conspecific with the Black Oropendola *Psarocolius guatimozinus*, Montezuma's Oropendola *P. montezuma* and Olive Oropendola *P. bifasciatus*. However, Ridgely and Tudor (1989), after examining the specimen (collected on the río Salaquí) supposedly intermediate between *cassini* and *guatimozinus* (Haffer 1975), concluded that it was a typical representative of the latter, and thus retained specific status for both. Ridgely and Tudor (1989) suggested the common name “Baudó Oropendola” in preference to Chestnut-mantled Oropendola, first to avoid confusion with Black Oropendola (both species have chestnut mantles), and second to indicate the species's restricted range. (2) Von Sneider (1954) it is suggested that only one bird was collected in that year. (3) This record of a specimen and nine birds observed on the río Dubasa in 1945 appears to have been missed in recent literature that mentions the oropendola (e.g. Haffer 1975, Hilty and Brown 1986, Ridgely and Tudor 1989), all of which suggests that the bird is unrecorded in life and known from just three specimens taken at two localities.