

This rare tanager inhabits elfin forest at over 3,000 m in the departments of San Martín, La Libertad and Huánuco, north-central Peru. Several other species have a similar range, and reserves should be established before human pressure becomes a threat to this habitat.

DISTRIBUTION The Golden-backed Mountain-tanager is known from c.40 specimens and additional sightings, from three areas in three departments of north-central Peru, where localities (coordinates from Stephens and Traylor 1983) are as follows: (*San Martín*) Puerto del Monte (7°32'S 77°10'W), where birds were seen at the treeline in August 1981 (D. F. Stotz *in litt.* 1989); (*La Libertad*) Mashua (c.8°12'S 77°14'W), between 3,140-3,350 m east of Tayabamba on the trail to Ongón; and (*Huánuco*) in the Cordillera Carpish at Bosque Unchog, Quillacocha, and Sariapunta (9°41-43'S 75°54'-76°07'W), between 3,050 and 3,500 m (possibly 2,750-3,700 m) (Blake and Hocking 1974, Parker and O'Neill 1976, Isler and Isler 1987; specimens in AMNH, ANSP, FMNH, LSUMZ, MHNJP, USNM, and ZMUC). The birds presumably also occurs in the unexplored intervening region, but has not been found in similar habitat further north, in Cordillera de Colán, Amazonas department (Isler and Isler 1987).

POPULATION This species was considered uncommon by Parker *et al.* (1982), and during 27 days of fieldwork at Puerto del Monte, San Martín department, it was only recorded three times (three, two and two birds) (D. F. Stotz *in litt.* 1989).

ECOLOGY The Golden-backed Mountain-tanager is found at 3,050-3,500 m, where it inhabits elfin forest (notably *Clusia* and *Escallonia* trees: Fjeldså and Krabbe 1990), especially large islands of forest surrounded by grassland, but occasionally occurring in scattered low trees and scrub in open areas near forest (Isler and Isler 1987). It travels in pairs or small groups of 3-5 (sometimes up to seven), usually by themselves, but sometimes (probably for short periods only) with mixed-species flocks (Isler and Isler 1987). It flies just above the tree-tops between widely separated foraging sites, and after settling into the vegetation becomes difficult to observe (Isler and Isler 1987). Birds sometimes rest quietly for long periods whilst looking around: prior to flight, one bird will begin calling, and after taking off, be quickly followed by others, one at a time (Isler and Isler 1987).

The tanagers forage from the ground to the tree-tops, but most often at mid-heights in small trees and bushes, feeding on berries, fruit (e.g. of *Miconia* and *Cecropia*) and insects: a flock of five (studied for over 45 minutes) was feeding in moss-laden trees less than 3 m high scattered across grassland at the edge of a bog; each bird foraged for some time in one tree (without much movement) before flitting on to the next; they hung or leaned down to pick food out of mosses and lichens on branches, less often gleaning leaves, and then flew from shrubs to nearby stubble to glean twigs, leaning over to pick food (presumably insects) from grass (Isler and Isler 1987). The stomachs of six specimens (in LSUMZ, ZMUC) contained vegetable matter (in one case identified to *Phrygilanthus* fruit), with two also holding animal matter (including an 8 mm beetle) (Isler and Isler 1987). No nest has been found. Two females with brood-patches were collected in September, while four juveniles or immatures were taken in July, October and November (specimens in FMNH, LSUMZ, and ZMUC).

THREATS None is known. The region inhabited by the species is at present largely uninhabited by man.

MEASURES TAKEN Although it is rare there, this species is known to occur in the Río Abiseo National Park in San Martín department (D. F. Stotz *in litt.* 1989), a large reserve (274,000 ha: IUCN 1992) which holds a number of threatened species, some with restricted geographical and altitudinal ranges, and a number of wider-ranging but rare and local species (see Yellow-browed Toucanet *Aulacorhynchus huallagae* account for details).

MEASURES PROPOSED An additional reserve holding a viable population of this rare tanager would be desirable. Obviously any initiatives within its range should take into consideration the requirements of

Threatened birds of the Americas

the threatened and endemic species mentioned in the account for Yellow-browed Toucanet (see also Remarks).

REMARKS The range of this tanager overlaps almost precisely with that of the near-threatened Rufous-browed Hemispingus *Hemispingus rufosuperciliaris*, which is uncommon, secretive, and stays low in bamboo *Chusquea* and thickets of dense shrubs and small trees, at the tree-line and in upper montane forest down to c.2,600 m (Blake and Hocking 1974, Ridgely and Tudor 1989, TAP): conservation efforts in this region should therefore also consider the interests of this species.