

Endemic to gallery forest on the rio Branco and some of its tributaries in Roraima, Brazil, this antbird is relatively common, but has a minute range and is very poorly known.

DISTRIBUTION The Rio Branco Antbird is known only from northern Roraima in northernmost Brazil, where it has been found on the rio Branco north of Boa Vista and along the rio Mucajaí (see Remarks). The only known localities are as follows: on the east bank of rio Tacutu, c.2 km above its mouth, where the bird was recorded in October 1988 (D. F. Stotz *in litt.* 1988); Fortaleza de São Joaquim (3°01'N 60°28'W; 28 km above Boa Vista: Paynter and Traylor 1991), where the type-series of 22 birds was collected in late 1831 (von Pelzeln 1868-1871, Pinto 1966); on the east bank of rio Branco, 15 km north-east of Boa Vista, and the west bank of rio Branco, 10 km north-east of Boa Vista, birds being recorded at both sites in October 1988 (D. F. Stotz *in litt.* 1988); on Ilha São José and Ilha Boa Água (untraced, but on the rio Branco north of Boa Vista), where birds were noted and one female was collected in October 1988 (D. F. Stotz *in litt.* 1988), birds also being seen on Ilha São José in August 1992 (B. C. Forrester *in litt.* 1992); and on the rio Mucajaí (south of Boa Vista), where one bird was taken in April 1962 (Pinto 1966, 1978), with at least 12 (in FMNH, LACM) taken there in February and March 1963.

POPULATION In 1988, this antbird was found to be relatively common in suitable forest (at least 18 birds seen or heard: D. F. Stotz *in litt.* 1988), an assessment that appears to reflect the abundance encountered when first 22 birds (in 1831) and then 12 (in 1963) were collected in the same general area (see Distribution): five males and a female were found on Ilha São José in August 1992 (B. C. Forrester *in litt.* 1992). D. F. Stotz (*in litt.* 1988) calculated that there was c.150 km (linear) of suitable habitat (of varying widths), supporting a population of between 1,000 and 10,000 birds (c.10 pairs per km²).

ECOLOGY In 1988 the bird was found exclusively in gallery forest (D. F. Stotz *in litt.* 1988).

THREATS The gallery forest within the range of this antbird appears to be relatively intact and currently under little pressure; however, the fact that such habitat is so limited in extent indicates that the species would be vulnerable to even small changes in forest use (D. F. Stotz *in litt.* 1988).

MEASURES TAKEN None is known.

MEASURES PROPOSED The distributional limits and precise ecological requirements of this species need further elaboration, and areas of gallery forest require protection. Any initiatives for this species should be carried out in conjunction with those for Hoary-throated Spinetail *Synallaxis kollari* (see relevant account).

REMARKS Peters (1951) cited a record of Jet Antbird *Cercomacra nigricans* from Caracarái (south of Boa Vista): this record should if possible be checked as referring to Jet Antbird rather than Rio Branco Antbird, as it brings the two species to within c.50 km of each other.