

*This enigmatic antbird is known from a single female specimen and from two sightings of males at the type-locality along the Rio Ji-paraná in Rondônia, Brazil, in 1986. Although its range almost certainly includes adjacent parts of Amazonas and Mato Grosso, rapid deforestation and hydroelectric projects in this part of Brazil must be considered threats to its survival.*

**DISTRIBUTION** All definite records of the Rondônia Bushbird (see Remarks) are from Cachoeira Nazaré, a locality along the west bank of the Rio Ji-paraná, Rondônia, Brazil (9°44'S 61°53'W, elevation 100 m): the type-specimen, a female with a fully ossified skull, was mist-netted on 22 October 1986 (Lanyon *et al.* 1990). One or two male-plumaged individuals were seen at the same locality, the first observation being made on 13 October 1986 (Lanyon *et al.* 1990). However, a male bushbird, presumably of this species (although with an apparently different song: Lanyon *et al.* 1990), was seen along the rio Teles Pires north of Alta Floresta, northern Mato Grosso, in early December 1989 (TAP).

**POPULATION** This species is presumably rare and local, as suggested by the fact that only one individual was mist-netted during 1,450 net-days and only two others were seen during 1,400 hours of fieldwork by five experienced observers; an additional 375 net-days and 250 field hours at a similar site 70 km away resulted in no further observations (Lanyon *et al.* 1990).

**ECOLOGY** Little is known of this seemingly elusive antbird. The few records are from mature *terra firme* forest dominated by dense vine tangles. A male was observed "approximately 1 m up in a large tree fall and worked up to 2-5 m in a vine tangle... pounding and digging at the vines with its bill" (Lanyon *et al.* 1990). The male probably of this species near Alta Floresta was observed at 0.5 to 1 m in dense tangles of a tree-fall inside tall *terra firme* forest along a small stream (TAP; "small ravine" in Lanyon *et al.* 1990).

**THREATS** Deforestation in Rondônia is rapid, proceeding at around 4,000 km<sup>2</sup> per year, and the rate of destruction has increased with the paving of the Cuiabá-Porto Velho highway in 1984 (Fearnside 1987, 1990). A more immediate threat to forest at the type-locality of the Rondônia Bushbird was the construction of a hydroelectric dam nearby (Lanyon *et al.* 1990).

**MEASURES TAKEN** The Rondônia Bushbird has not yet been found in a protected area of any kind. Pacaás Novos National Park (765,800 ha: IBAMA 1989) may support significant populations of many "Rondônia endemics" (see next section), but data are lacking, and the presence of cerrado habitats within the park suggests that adjacent forests may not be as biologically rich as those to the north of the Cuiabá-Porto Velho highway (TAP). On the other hand, recent avifaunal surveys in the rio Guaporé drainage as far south as 14°35'S in Noel Kempff Mercado National Park, eastern Bolivia, indicate that some Rondônia endemics do occur much farther south than was previously thought (Bates *et al.* 1989, 1992). Nevertheless, on the basis of what is indicated under Threats above, all of the remaining evergreen forest in Rondônia and adjacent portions of Amazonas and Mato Grosso should be considered at great risk of destruction.

**MEASURES PROPOSED** Current development activities in Rondônia threaten some of the richest bird communities yet reported on earth (nearly 400 species were found at Cachoeira Nazaré: D. F. Stotz *in litt.* 1990), including numerous bird species endemic to forests situated between the upper rios Madeira and Tapajós (see Cracraft 1985). Additional taxa whose small ranges are centred in this part of the Amazon basin (or not far to the north-east) include Dark-winged Trumpeter *Psophia viridis*, Crimson-bellied Parakeet *Pyrrhura rhodogaster*, Black-girdled Barbet *Capito dayi*, White-breasted Antbird *Rhegmatorhina hoffmannsi*, Pale-faced Bare-eye *Skutchia borbae*, Snow-capped Manakin *Pipra nattereri* and Tooth-billed Wren *Odontorchilus cinereus*. There is therefore an urgent need for the establishment of various kinds of forest reserve in the biologically rich areas along the northern edge of the Brazilian Shield in northern Rondônia and in adjoining parts of south-eastern Amazonas and northern Mato Grosso, for example along the rios Aripuanã, Juruena, and Teles Pires. Biological (including avifaunal) surveys are desperately needed in this vulnerable and important part of the Neotropics. The gradual elimination by the Brazilian government of incentives for cattle-ranching and inappropriate forms of agriculture should be supported by international development agencies, and this example should be followed by the

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governments of neighbouring countries. Financial and technological support for extractive reserves of all kinds will increasingly be needed throughout the Amazon basin if large areas of evergreen forest are to survive into the next century.

**REMARKS** This bird is closely related to the threatened Recurve-billed Bushbird *Clytoctantes alixii* (Lanyon *et al.* 1990); because these are the only members, the genus itself is threatened.