

Possibly extinct, this poorly known hummingbird is known from just one locality in northern Ecuador, in an area that has now been largely cleared of natural vegetation and where it has not been certainly recorded this century.

DISTRIBUTION The Turquoise-throated Puffleg (see Remarks) is endemic to northern Ecuador where it is confirmed from just one locality, and possibly south-western Colombia (coordinates are taken from Paynter and Traylor 1977, 1981: see Remarks).

Colombia Two “Bogotá” trade-skins (in AMNH) taken during the nineteenth century appear to be the only evidence of this species occurring within Colombia, although Hilty and Brown (1986) and hence Fjeldså and Krabbe (1990) suggested (presumably on the evidence of these skins) that the birds may have been taken south of Pasto (1°13'N 77°17'W) in southern Nariño.

Ecuador Four specimens (in AMNH, BMNH, FMNH) are from “Ecuador”, but the type-specimen (a male in BMNH) taken in 1850 appears to be the only one with any locality information, having been taken at Guailabamba (0°04'N 78°21'W, in Pichincha province) in ravines in the valley of the río Guailabamba, and south of the town of Perucho (R. Bleiweiss *in litt.* 1982). Since the turn of the century there have been no firm records of this species, although there is an unconfirmed sighting from near Quito in the Chillo valley, made in 1976 (R. Bleiweiss *in litt.* 1982).

POPULATION Nothing has been recorded concerning the past abundance of this hummingbird, and it is now quite possibly extinct, with no confirmed records of it this century.

ECOLOGY The Turquoise-throated Puffleg was recorded at the type-locality between 2,100 and 2,300 m in an area described as a hot (presumably arid) ravine within the valley (Hilty and Brown 1986, Fjeldså and Krabbe 1990). Fjeldså and Krabbe (1990) suggested, on the evidence of the “Bogotá” trade-skins and old unconfirmed statements, that the species may have occurred in temperate zones.

THREATS What is surmised to be this species's native habitat has been almost completely destroyed in the río Guailabamba valley, although remnants of apparently natural habitat can be found in steep-sided stream-cuts (in the arid upper Guailabamba drainage), and more extensively in the area of Volcán de Pulalahua and río Blanco (north-west of Quito) (R. Bleiweiss *in litt.* 1982).

MEASURES TAKEN The type-locality is not within any protected area. A search specifically for this species during 1980 at a large number of sites from the head of the Chillo valley north to Perucho, and from west of Perucho to Loma Porotopamba, failed, although remnants of suitable habitat were found and investigated (R. Bleiweiss *in litt.* 1982; see above).

MEASURES PROPOSED It must be hoped that the Turquoise-throated Puffleg still exists within remnant patches of suitable habitat, and should be searched for during fieldwork in any areas near the type-locality.

REMARKS This species closely resembles Glowing Puffleg *Eriocnemis vestitus*, and it has probably been overlooked because of the similarity (Hilty and Brown 1986): however, the taxon appears to be a valid species (Fjeldså and Krabbe 1990; also R. Bleiweiss *in litt.* 1982).