

Deforestation is probably the single threat to this forest-haunting flycatcher of north-east Brazil, known from only five areas in three states.

DISTRIBUTION The Buff-breasted Tody-tyrant (see Remarks) is endemic to north-east Brazil in the states of Ceará, Pernambuco and Alagoas, where it is known from five basic areas.

Ceará Three birds (including the type) were collected at São Paulo (not located) on the plateau (c.800 m; but see Ecology) of the Serra da Ibiapaba, in June 1910 (Snethlage 1925), and two other specimens were later obtained in the Serra de Baturité (Pacoti municipality) in July 1958 (Pinto and de Camargo 1961). The species was again encountered in both serras in September 1991, at Fazenda Gameleira, Tianguá, in the former and at Guaramiranga in the latter (J. F. Pacheco *in litt.* 1992).

Pernambuco Cory and Hellmayr (1927) pointed out that there was a possible record from Garanhuns, September 1880 (Forbes 1881), and Zimmer (1953b) confirmed this identification when mentioning two specimens collected at Brejão (some 20 km south of Garanhuns); these were taken at 750 m in February 1927 (specimens in AMNH). Birds “probably of this species” were observed in the Tapacurá Ecological Station, São Lourenço da Mata, November 1976 (Coelho 1979).

Alagoas An adult female was collected at Engenho (Fazenda) Riachão, north of Quebrangulo, in November 1951 (Pinto 1954a), and the species was relocated at the same site, now Pedra Talhada Biological Reserve, in July 1989 (M. Pearman *in litt.* 1991) and October 1990, when the altitude was noted as 710 m (J. F. Pacheco *in litt.* 1992).

POPULATION There is no information on the abundance of this species. It seems, however, to be rather uncommon wherever it has been recorded; Forbes (1881) only found it “once or twice... usually singly”.

ECOLOGY That this is a bird of forest in the lowlands (Sibley and Monroe 1990) is wrong: the type-locality, though not located, is known to have been at around 1,000 m (Paynter and Traylor 1991), in Serra de Baturité it was also found in the highlands, not the lower-lying areas (Pinto and de Camargo 1961), while in Alagoas the only altitude recorded is 710 m (see Distribution). Habitat in general is seasonally dry semi-deciduous woodland on isolated serras, 700-860 m (B. M. Whitney *in litt.* 1992): in Pedra Talhada was large-leaved bamboo, in Serra de Baturité it was rather humid forest understorey with little bamboo, in Serra da Ibiapaba it was dry forest understorey with many tall *Orbignya* palms (J. F. Pacheco *in litt.* 1992); but in general the species was to be found in areas of dense, tall vine tangles patchily distributed throughout the woodland, such as around old “light gaps” (B. M. Whitney *in litt.* 1992). In Pernambuco it was found “actively hopping and creeping about the thick scrub which is so prevalent there” (Forbes 1881). The species is said, however, to adapt to secondary formations, surviving in good numbers even in degraded capoeira (Teixeira *et al.* *in press*), although its very patchy distribution then suggests some other constraint in play. Birds forage from c.1.5 to 10 m above ground, most often at 2-5 m, scanning actively for arthropod prey and making laterally or upwardly directed sally-strike (most less than 1 m) to foliage or vines, taking small prey items (B. M. Whitney *in litt.* 1992). The stomach contents of two specimens in MNRJ are given as “insects”. The ovaries of a female in AMNH from Pernambuco, February, were not enlarged.

THREATS The history of north-east Brazil has been one of chronic and continuing deforestation (see, e.g., Teixeira 1986), such that any forest-dependent species endemic to the region – even if capable of surviving in second growth – must be considered at risk. Thus while in 1958 substantial areas of forest still remained in the Serra de Baturité, Ceará (Pinto and de Camargo 1961), 30 years later the massif was being “totally destroyed by advancing agriculture (including banana plantations)”, such that a mere 5% of remaining forest (the wettest in the state) was believed to be primary, and the situation in the Serra da Ibiapaba was considered even worse (R. Otoch *in litt.* 1987, 1988).

MEASURES TAKEN Efforts to preserve the forests in the Serra das Guaribas at Quebrangulo (Studer 1985) resulted in the creation, by the Decree No. 98.524 of 13 December 1989, of the 4,500 ha Pedra Talhada Biological Reserve (A. Studer verbally 1990).

MEASURES PROPOSED The relatively gentle climate in the Serra de Baturité was identified as the

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reason why the area appeared to be rich in endemic forms of wildlife (Pinto and de Camargo 1961), although this presumably refers largely to subspecies and to birds in particular; nonetheless this interesting remark indicates the importance of ensuring the conservation of the area not just for the Buff-breasted Tody-tyrant, and among other birds present are the isolated race *griseipectus* of the White-eared Parakeet *Pyrrhura leucotis* (see Forshaw 1989), the threatened nominate form of the Bearded Bellbird *Procnias averano* (see King 1978-1979), and a population of the threatened Moustached Woodcreeper *Xiphocolaptes falcirostris* (see relevant account). Similar considerations may apply to the Serra da Ibiapaba, which merits closer biological investigation.

REMARKS This bird appears to form a superspecies in a relict group with two other threatened flycatchers (see Remarks under Kaempfer's Tody-tyrant *Hemitriccus kaempferi*). Birds in Ceará differ slightly from those in Alagoas (B. M. Whitney *in litt.* 1992).