

This rare finch is confined to the northern part of the western Andes of Peru, where it inhabits arid scrub at 1,800-2,300 m. Although rendered vulnerable by its small distribution (known from three sites in two departments), it appears to be under no immediate threat.

DISTRIBUTION The Grey-winged Inca-finch has been found on both slopes of the western Andes, in the departments of Piura and Cajamarca, northern Peru.

Birds are known from three localities (coordinates from Paynter and Traylor 1983) as follows: (*Piura*) 2 km by road north-east of Huancabamba (5°14'S 79°28'W), on the road to Sapalache, where six specimens (in LSUMZ) were collected at 2,125 m in June and July 1980 (also Parker *et al.* 1985), with a minimum of eight birds (three males singing) seen in August 1989 (B. M. Whitney *in litt.* 1991); (*Cajamarca*) La Esperanza (6°36'S 78°54'W), c.5 km north-east of Santa Cruz, at 1,800 m on the upper río Chancay, whence comes the type-specimen (Zimmer 1952); Hacienda Limón (c.6°50'S 78°05'W), on the road from Celendin to Balsas (río Marañón drainage), where a specimen (in ANSP) was collected in September 1933, with 12 others (in AMNH, LSUMZ) taken in August 1975, all between 2,000 and 2,300 m (also Zimmer 1952, Parker *et al.* 1985, NK).

The Grey-winged Inca-finch undoubtedly occurs elsewhere in the region, although the presence of the Buff-bridled Inca-finch *Inca spiza laeta* at 1,500-2,750 m in the upper río Marañón drainage and Great Inca-finch *I. pulchra* at 1,000-2,750 m on the Pacific slope from Lima department north to at least northern Ancash department (Fjeldså and Krabbe 1990) makes it unlikely that *ortizi* occurs much further south.

POPULATION This finch was described as “uncommon” by Parker *et al.* (1982) and as “rare” (generally) and “uncommon” (where found) by Parker *et al.* (1985). However, the collection of six birds (in June and July 1980) and observation of at least eight (in August 1989) near Huancabamba, and the collection of 12 (in August 1975) at Hacienda Limón, seem to suggest that at least locally this species is not uncommon (see above).

ECOLOGY The Grey-winged Inca-finch inhabits dense, arid, montane scrub (Parker *et al.* 1982, 1985, Fjeldså and Krabbe 1990) at elevations ranging from 1,800 to 2,300 m (see Distribution). Near Huancabamba (basically a single rocky hilltop) birds were found in dense herbaceous scrub that averaged 1.5 m high: small *Acacia*, various cacti, including a large columnar *Cereus*-like species and an *Opuntia* sp., with terrestrial bromeliads common (Parker *et al.* 1985, B. M. Whitney *in litt.* 1991). At Hacienda Limón there is open *Acacia* wood, grass and thorny scrub, but no cacti or bromeliads, and the species has been observed in dense, thorny hedgerows (NK). Usually in pairs, it mainly forages on the ground under dense thorny scrub, only occasionally venturing into the open, though never more than a few metres from cover, in which it seeks shelter when alarmed (Parker *et al.* 1985, Fjeldså and Krabbe 1990).

Stomach contents of six specimens (in AMNH and LSUMZ: taken in June and August) were recorded as follows: seeds, gravel, vegetable (plant) matter, and insect remains (parts); one bird found to contain plant and insect matter was earlier seen carrying a caterpillar about 2 cm long (Parker *et al.* 1985).

Near Huancabamba most bird species were breeding in mid-June, males of the present species (which perch conspicuously atop bushes or short trees) were singing, and a female was seen carrying a caterpillar, while at the end of October, when conditions were much drier, most reproductive behaviour had ceased, and only a single male *ortizi* was singing (Parker *et al.* 1985); in mid-August at this locality, three males were found singing, which although the dry season was well advanced may have been a result of recent rains; no juveniles were recorded at this time (B. M. Whitney *in litt.* 1991). Juveniles have been collected in Piura in July, and Cajamarca in August and September; two birds with slightly enlarged gonads and one with enlarged gonads were taken in Piura in June (specimens in AMNH and LSUMZ), so breeding apparently mainly takes place from May to July. No nest of the genus has been described.

THREATS None is known, although near Huancabamba the valley and slopes across a broad altitudinal range have been cleared for cultivation and pasture, and there appears to be no other suitable habitat in the vicinity: if this single hilltop should be burned, this northernmost population of Grey-winged Inca-finch would surely be lost (B. M. Whitney *in litt.* 1991).

MEASURES TAKEN None is known.

MEASURES PROPOSED The priority for this rare and localized finch is to ensure the integrity of some suitable habitat at the sites from which it is currently known: surveys of such habitat in the intervening areas should also be initiated to determine more precisely its conservation status. This is one of a suite of birds meriting investigation and conservation in the upper Marañón valley (see equivalent section under Yellow-faced Parrotlet *Forpus xanthops*).