

*This poorly known small raptor of foothill forest interior is restricted to the Pacific slope of the Andes in south-western Colombia and north-western Ecuador.*

**DISTRIBUTION** The Plumbeous Forest-falcon (see Remarks 1) is known from a few localities on the Pacific slope in south-west Colombia and north-west Ecuador (coordinates below are taken from Paynter and Traylor 1977, 1981).

**Colombia** Records of this species come from: (*Chocó*) La Vieja (c.5°24'N 76°23'W), where a specimen (in AMNH) was taken at 300 m in October 1912; (*Cauca*) río Munchique, El Tambo (c.2°35'N 77°15'W), where a female (in ANSP) was taken at 915 m in October 1938 (also Bond and Meyer de Schauensee 1940); “La Costa”, El Tambo (c.2°25'N 76°49'W, 1,000 m, below Cerro Munchique) (Hellmayr and Conover 1949); Cerro Munchique (c.2°32'N 76°57'W, 40 km west of Popayán) (Hellmayr and Conover 1949); and (*Nariño*) La Guayacana (1°26'N 78°27'W: mistakenly called Guayana in Hellmayr and Conover 1949), where a male and juvenile were taken at 250 m in April 1944, with a female (in LACM) collected there at 225 m in August 1959 (von Sneider 1954: see Remarks 2).

**Ecuador** Localities are restricted to Esmeraldas province and are as follows: Carondelet on the río Bogotá (1°06'N 78°42'W, 18 m), this being the type-locality (Sclater 1918); Pulún (1°05'N 78°40'W, 50 m) where a male (in BMNH) was collected in the early 1900s (also Hellmayr and Conover 1949); El Placer, c.15 km west of Lita (c.0°51'N 78°34'W, 670 m), where two specimens (in ANSP, MECN) were collected at 670 m in August 1987; and río Zapallo Grande (0°44'N 78°56'W, c.100 m) (Hellmayr and Conover 1949).

**POPULATION** There is no information on numbers. Although the species is described as “rare” (Meyer de Schauensee 1948-1952, Hilty and Brown 1986), birds in the genus *Micrastur* are very inconspicuous (Thiollay 1984) and this particular form is extremely similar to the Barred Forest-falcon *M. ruficollis*, with which it is sympatric (Brown and Amadon 1968): for this reason, lack of records need not be wholly attributable to rarity.

**ECOLOGY** Records of this species appear to come from between c.20 and 1,000 m (see Distribution), and as such it inhabits lowland and foothill tropical forest, although Brown and Amadon (1968), and hence Blake (1977), speculated that the bird reaches the subtropical zone. The stomach contents of birds taken recently (in ANSP, MECN) at El Placer, Esmeraldas, were found to contain a crab and lizard. One of the specimens taken at La Guayacana, Nariño, in April 1944 was a “juvenile” (von Sneider 1954), while the female (in ANSP) taken at El Placer in August 1987 was deemed not to be in breeding condition.

**THREATS** Although considerable areas of primary tropical forest still remain within the range of this species (LGN), Gentry (1989) mentioned that in Nariño rapid deforestation is currently occurring, with many areas totally cleared. In Esmeraldas, human population pressure is similarly causing problems (Gentry 1989), and many areas have been cleared or degraded (Evans 1988b: see Measures Taken).

**MEASURES TAKEN** In Colombia, sites where this species has been recorded around río and Cerro Munchique are located within the Munchique National Park (44,000 ha) (CNPPA 1982); there is a second protected area nearby (Los Tambitos Natural Reserve: A. J. Negret verbally 1991) which is potentially important for it. Further areas are currently being surveyed with the aim of establishing new reserves (J. W. Beltrán verbally 1992). There appear to be no protected areas covering localities where this species has been recorded in Ecuador, although the Cotacachi–Cayapas Ecological Reserve (204,400 ha: IUCN 1992) is very close to El Placer and the río Zapallo Grande (CNPPA 1982) and undoubtedly holds the species, but despite its status as a reserve the tropical forest there is being opened up for logging (NK).

**MEASURES PROPOSED** The true distribution of the Plumbeous Forest-falcon, its population density and basic ecological requirements all need to be determined. Its range overlaps with the ranges of a number of other threatened species, namely Banded Ground-cuckoo *Neomorphus radiolosus* (both occurring in Munchique National Park: also see equivalent section under Multicoloured Tanager

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*Chlorochrysa nitidissima*) and Scarlet-breasted Dacnis *Dacnis berlepschi* (see relevant accounts and also equivalent section under Hoary Puffleg *Haplophaedia lugens*), and any conservation initiatives should where possible (and where sympatry occurs) consider the requirements of all these species.

**REMARKS** (1) Meyer de Schauensee (1966) thought this species a possible race of Lined Forest-falcon *M. gilvicollis*, and noted that Plumbeous would be considered a distinct species if Lined were merged with Barred Forest-falcon *M. ruficollis*, as suggested by Amadon (1964). However, Lined and Barred have been found to be valid species (Schwartz 1972), so Plumbeous may yet prove to be an isolated race of Lined. (2) Meyer de Schauensee (1948-1952) suggested that the three birds from La Guayacana were taken between 600 and 700 m.