

Although distributed over a wide area in Brazil, Paraguay, Bolivia and Argentina, this grassland seedeater appears to be very local and remains too little known for confidence, especially given the pressures of trapping on members of its genus and the mass conversion of its habitat in most parts of Central South America.

DISTRIBUTION The Rufous-rumped Seedeater is known to occur locally in north-east Argentina (Corrientes and Entre Ríos), Paraguay (including the humid chaco), north and east Bolivia and south-west Brazil, and its range appears to be continuous between these areas. Unless otherwise stated coordinates below are taken from OG (1955a), Paynter (1985, 1989), Paynter and Traylor (1991) and Paynter *et al.* (1975).

Argentina The Rufous-rumped Seedeater has only been recorded from Corrientes and Entre Ríos provinces, where records (north to south) are from:

Chaco Isla Cerrito (27°20'S 58°40'W: J. C. Chebez *in litt.* 1992), río Paraná, where a male was observed several times in January 1987 (Herrera 1988);

Corrientes Paso Mbaracayá (c.27°25'S 56°45'W), where a bird was observed in January 1978 (Nores 1986); marshy area 21 km east-south-east of Itá-Ibaté (27°26'S 57°20'W), where a male was taken in October 1967 (Short 1969); the projected Mburucuyá National Park (28°01'S 58°01'W), where the species was observed in April 1990 (J. Hutton *per* S. Krapovickas *in litt.* 1992, whence coordinates) and in March 1992 (D. A. Gómez *per* S. Krapovickas *in litt.* 1992); south of Laguna Iberá, where c.10 males were observed in January 1991 (D. Willis *in litt.* 1991);

Entre Ríos Puerto Boca (33°03'S 58°23'W), where a maximum of one male (possibly two) and two females (the latter presumably of this species) were observed on different occasions between 28 December 1991 and 21 January 1992 (E. I. Abadie, B. M. López Lanús and M. Pearman *in litt.* 1992).

Bolivia Records (west to east) unless otherwise stated refer to males, and are from:

Beni Reyes (14°19'S 67°23'W), where a bird was taken in December 1937; Bresta (c.14°33'S 67°20'W), where four birds (one juvenile) were taken in January 1938; El Consuelo (c.14°20'S 67°15'W), where a bird was procured in December 1937 and two more in January 1938 (all three from Gyldenstolpe 1945); Estancia Inglaterra, río Yata (c.13°30'S 66°30'W), where the species was regularly observed ("medio común", i.e. 3-10 birds per day) from 22 November to 26 December 1976 (Remsen 1986a);

Santa Cruz Buena Vista (17°27'S 63°40'W), where the type was collected in January 1912 (Todd 1915a), two in mid-January 1915 and one in May 1915, one in January 1920, one in January 1926, and a female in February 1927 (specimens in ASNP, CM and FMNH); Viru Viru airport, near Santa Cruz, where two males accompanied by six unidentified females were observed in early May 1991 (T. Bakker *in litt.* 1992); Palmarito (16°49'S 62°37'W), on the río San Julián, where five birds (three females) were collected between 21 and 24 May 1918 (specimens in AMNH and CM); western base of the Serranía de Huanchaca, south of Los Fierros (14°35'N 60°50'W; coordinates from Cabot *et al.* 1988), where 10-20 males were observed in August 1989 (Bates *et al.* 1992).

Brazil The species has only been recorded from the pantanal east of Corumbá, Mato Grosso do Sul, in October 1979 (Ridgely and Tudor 1989) and at Emas National Park (17°49'-18°28'W 52°39'-53°10'W: IBAMA 1989), in extreme south-west Goiás, in October 1984 (IBGE undated, Redford 1987; also Ridgely and Tudor 1989).

Paraguay Records (north to south) are from: (*Presidente Hayes*) near km 100, Trans-Chaco Highway, where two males and an unidentified female were observed in February 1991 (F. E. Hayes *in litt.* 1992); (*Central*) 5 km south-south-east of Villeta, where two males (c.200 m apart) were observed in October 1989 (F. E. Hayes *in litt.* 1992); (*Misiones*) between Santiago and Ayolas (27°24'S 56°54'W), recently (Contreras *et al.* 1989).

POPULATION The status of this little-known species is far from clear. Its breeding grounds and migratory behaviour are poorly known, and hence no judgement of population size or trend is possible.

Threatened birds of the Americas

Confusion with the similar and largely sympatric Tawny-bellied Seedeater *Sporophila hypoxantha* (M. Nores *in litt.* 1986, J. C. Chebez *in litt.* 1992), the difficulty of field identification of mixed groups of females and juveniles, and the low level of ornithological investigation in large areas of northern and eastern Bolivia, all lie behind the paucity of records.

Argentina Most records are of just one or two birds (see Distribution), Esteros de Iberá seeming to be the key centre, with c.10 males and numerous females and immatures present in January 1991, although only adult males were identified with certainty (D. Willis *in litt.* 1991).

Bolivia The species appears to have been greatly overlooked, given the scatter of localities at which it has been observed or collected (see Distribution). The records from Estancia Inglaterra, Beni, and near Los Fierros, Santa Cruz, indicate that it is at least locally common.

Brazil Its status in the country is unclear; the number of individuals recorded in the two known areas was not specified, although in Emas National Park it was considered uncommon (IBGE undated), and the birds observed east of Corumbá were apparently in mixed flocks with other seedeaters (Ridgely and Tudor 1989).

Paraguay Nothing is known beyond what is recorded under Distribution.

ECOLOGY The Rufous-rumped Seedeater has been reported near marshes, seasonal flooded grasslands, pastures, and savanna-like areas up to c.1,100 m (Remsen 1986a, Ridgely and Tudor 1989, Bates *et al.* 1992, M. Pearman *in litt.* 1992). In Emas National Park, Brazil, it is said to occur in buriti palm *Mauritia flexuosa* swamp and grassland (IBGE undated). Feeding habits are little known, but it has been reported foraging on grass seeds both in dry and near marshy areas (Ridgely and Tudor 1989, Bates *et al.* 1992). The breeding season has not been reported, but birds appeared to be paired in January (D. Willis verbally 1991) and frequent territorial disputes were observed at Puerto Boca in January 1992 between Rufous-rumped Seedeaters and both Entre Ríos *S. zelichi* and Marsh Seedeaters *S. palustris* (see relevant accounts), whose habitat requirements (at that locality) appeared to be identical. The gonadal condition of a bird taken on 28 October 1967 in Argentina suggested that it had already bred (Short 1969), although birds have been observed in mixed flocks with other seedeaters in October (see Distribution). The Rufous-rumped Seedeater may be “an austral migrant northwards” (Ridgely and Tudor 1989), although the available data are as yet inconclusive. Non-breeding birds appear to gather in mixed flocks of seedeaters (Ridgely and Tudor 1989, Bates *et al.* 1992).

THREATS Male seedeaters of various species are popular cagebirds in Brazil and Argentina, where heavy trapping pressure has led to serious declines in several species, especially the group (of which Rufous-rumped is one) known locally in Argentina as “capuchinos” (Narosky and Salvador 1985, Ridgely and Tudor 1989). The Esteros de Iberá are grazed by cattle, and the Iberá Natural Reserve is still inadequately protected (D. Willis verbally 1991, J. C. Chebez *in litt.* 1992). Threats affecting the grasslands of Mato Grosso, Goiás and adjacent states are outlined in Threats under Lesser Nothura *Nothura minor*.

MEASURES TAKEN None is known other than it occurs in the following protected areas: Iberá Natural Reserve and the projected Mburucuyá National Park, Argentina, and Emas and Pantanal Matogrossense National Parks, Brazil.

MEASURES PROPOSED Although the species cannot perhaps be considered under immediate threat, further investigation is required in order to clarify its range; it is particularly important to ascertain its breeding range in order to discover possible threats affecting it (see also Measures Proposed under Entre Ríos Seedeater and Strange-tailed Tyrant *Yetapa risora*).