

This little-known spinetail occurs in undergrowth in humid forest between 200 and 1,070 m at a handful of localities scattered across Brazil (six), Colombia (one), Ecuador (one) and Peru (four), and may be suffering from habitat loss. Whilst at one site it was only found in bamboo thickets inside tall forest, which may partly explain its patchy distribution, competition from congeners also evidently plays a part.

DISTRIBUTION The Chestnut-throated Spinetail occurs disjunctly in six areas of Brazil (nominat *cherriei*), with equally disjunct populations of the race *napoensis* (including the synonymized *saturata* of Carriker 1934) scattered through the foothills of the Andes in south-eastern Colombia, Ecuador and Peru. Given the breadth of this range, however, it is inevitable that many more localities will eventually be discovered.

Brazil Localities for the species are as follows:

Rondônia Barão de Melgaço, rio Ji-paraná, where the type-specimen was collected in March 1914 (Cherrie 1916, Gyldenstolpe 1930), this locality (previously part of Mato Grosso) being indicated as at 300 m (Paynter and Traylor 1991);

Mato Grosso Alto Floresta, where a population was found in October 1989 (TAP); rio do Cágado, 250 m, 15°20'S 59°25'W, August 1987 and/or January 1988 (Willis and Oniki 1990, whence also coordinates);

Pará 52 km south-south-west of Altamira on the east bank of the lower rio Xingu, 3°39'S 52°22'W, August/September 1986 (Graves and Zusi 1990, whence coordinates); in and adjacent to the Serra dos Carajás, namely at "Manganês" in the Serra Norte; and also at Gorotire, 7°40'S 51°15'W, near São Felix do Xingu, mid-1980s (Oren and da Silva 1987, whence coordinates).

Colombia Two birds taken on 6 and 10 October 1967 at 300 m at Guascayaco (untraced), Putumayo (specimens in FMNH; identification supported by T. S. Schulenberg and D. E. Willard *in litt.* 1992), i.e. near the border with Ecuador, represent the first record for the country.

Ecuador The species has been collected at 900 m near the río Napo, Napo province (Gyldenstolpe 1930; see Remarks 1). A pair was found (evidently close to this earlier locality) about 2 km south-east of Archidona, Napo, at 0°57'S 77°52'W, at 690 m, in September 1989 (tape-recording by P. Coopmans identified by TAP), with sightings in July 1991 (P. Greenfield and R. S. Ridgely verbally 1991).

Peru Records are from (*San Martín*) Moyobamba, 6°03'S 76°58'W (coordinates from Stephens and Traylor 1983), in July 1912 (Cory and Hellmayr 1925 and specimen in FMNH) and again in October 1933, at 1,070 m (four specimens in ANSP), and río Seco, c.50 km west of Moyobamba at c.900 m (specimens in AMNH); and (*Ayacucho*) the mouth of the río Mantaro on the Cuzco border, at 470 m, where one was taken in August 1975 at 470 m (specimen in AMNH whose label gives 12°17'S 73°44'W), and Hacienda Luisiana, at 600 m, on the left bank of the río Apurímac, where three were taken in August 1965 (Terborgh and Weske 1969; specimens in AMNH, one of whose labels gives 12°39'S 73°44'W).

POPULATION In Peru the species has been considered "local and uncommon" (Parker *et al.* 1982). At Alta Floresta in Brazil at least four pairs held territories along c.400 m of trail through a c.50 ha bamboo thicket inside forest (TAP), which indicates that the species may be locally fairly common in its patchily distributed habitat. At Gorotire Oren and da Silva (1987) found that the Kayapó Indians had a name for the species (*purucheng*) derived from its voice, which suggests that it could not have been rare in the area.

ECOLOGY The Chestnut-throated Spinetail has been recorded at elevations ranging from 200 to 1,070 m, and its selection of habitat appears at least partly to be influenced by sympatric members of its genus, although at one site it exhibits characteristics of a bamboo specialist. In southern Peru it occurs in the understorey of mature humid forest (AMNH label data), and its habitat throughout its Peruvian range is judged to be humid terra firme forest (Parker *et al.* 1982; see Remarks 2); at Hacienda Luisiana it was the only one of four congeners to be limited to high forest (Terborgh and Weske 1969). The elevational range of the species averages higher than its close relative the Ruddy Spinetail *Synallaxis rutilans* (Carriker

1934), which occurs up to 500 m in Colombia (Hilty and Brown 1986) but only below 200 m in Ecuador (R. S. Ridgely *in litt.* 1991), so little competition may be inferred in this part of its range (but see below for Pará). In Ecuador near Archidona the Chestnut-throated Spinetail's habitat consists of the undergrowth of dense humid secondary woodland (R. S. Ridgely *in litt.* 1991, NK), which it shares with the much commoner Dusky Spinetail *S. moesta* and to some degree with the abundant Dark-breasted Spinetail *S. albigularis* (NK). In south-eastern Pará, Brazil, the species was recorded in maturing second growth and forest edge, but not in the interior of high rainforest (from which the Ruddy Spinetail presumably excluded it): thus at Carajás it was in “relatively well-lighted edge zones of the rain forest” covering a manganese deposit, and at Gorotire in the understorey of 25-40 year old second-growth forest with a canopy at about 8 m and at c.200-300 m altitude (Oren and da Silva 1987). At Alta Floresta, Brazil, Chestnut-throated Spinetails were found in an extensive (c.50 ha) area of tall bamboo (*Guadua* sp.) inside evergreen forest about 30 m tall, but were not in extensive bamboo thickets at forest edges bordering roads and large clearings, suggesting that only interior-forest thickets are suitable for them, a habitat they shared with a variety of other patchily distributed bamboo specialists, including Peruvian Recurvebill *Simoxenops ucalayae*, Crested Foliage-gleaner *Automolus dorsalis*, Striated Antbird *Drymophila devillei* (*subochracea*), Manu Antbird *Cercomacra manu*, Dusky-tailed Flatbill *Ramphotrigon fuscicauda*, and Black-and-white Tody-flycatcher *Todirostrum capitale* (TAP). During a return visit to the area in August 1991, three of four pairs were located within 50 m of where they had been found in October 1989, and territories were estimated to be less than 0.5 ha in size; the Ruddy Spinetail was found to be uncommon in adjacent forest with dense undergrowth, and one pair of *rutilans* was heard within earshot of a pair of *cherriei* (TAP).

At Alta Floresta the species was encountered in widely separated pairs that foraged in dense, dark tangles of dead bamboo stalks and fallen tree branches on or within 1 m of the ground, the birds probing and gleaning debris trapped in the tangles, especially dead leaves, and occasionally hopping on the ground and flipping leaves to uncover prey (TAP). In Pará birds were also observed foraging in the understorey, investigating suspended dead leaves near the ground, gleaning the upper and lower surfaces of green leaves usually within 3 m of the ground but up to 8 m on occasion; food included diptera, spiders and lepidoptera larvae (Oren and da Silva 1987).

The only information on breeding season appears to be that adults were accompanied by immatures in May and June in Pará (Oren and da Silva 1987).

THREATS In Peru forests on rich soils along the base of the Andes are being destroyed at an alarming rate, e.g. in the upper drainages of the ríos Apurímac and Huallaga (TAP). Deforestation is also proceeding rapidly in the Amazonian foothill zone in eastern Ecuador (TAP), and presumably in adjacent parts of Colombia. If the Chestnut-throated Spinetail prefers extensive areas of structurally similar habitat such as the bamboo near Alta Floresta, it would be vulnerable to the massive clearance of tall forest that is occurring throughout eastern Pará and northern Mato Grosso, Brazil. Its habitat at “Manganês” in the Serra dos Carajás has now been destroyed by mining operations (Oren and da Silva 1987).

MEASURES TAKEN None is known.

MEASURES PROPOSED At least two areas, each holding populations of substantial size, need to be identified and protected against habitat loss: one such perhaps might be around Alta Floresta, Brazil, and the other in Peru. However, with fuller knowledge of the species's voice there is greater opportunity to investigate its status in all the countries from which it has been recorded, and possibly thus it will prove somewhat more widespread than was previously apparent.

REMARKS (1) A sight record of the species from the lower río Aguarico, Napo province, near the Colombia–Brazil border (Hilty and Brown 1986) is now recognized to have been in error (R. S. Ridgely *in litt.* 1991). (2) Vaurie (1980) lumped the habitat of this species, White-bellied Spinetail *Synallaxis propinqua* and Red-shouldered Spinetail *Gyalophylax hellmayri* as “thick undergrowth in forest and savanna”, but given the knowledge now of *propinqua* as a bird of river islands (R. S. Ridgely *in litt.* 1991) this whole assessment can be ascribed to guesswork.