

*The main hope for this small insectivore appears to be an unprotected and rapidly diminishing tract of upland forest, only 1,500 ha in extent, near the type-locality in Alagoas state, Brazil, although three other sites are known, one in Pernambuco.*

**DISTRIBUTION** The Orange-bellied Antwren (see Remarks) is known from three localities on the south-eastern escarpment of the Borborema plateau in Alagoas, north-east Brazil, and at one site to the north along this coastal range in Pernambuco on forested mountain tops (as predicted in Teixeira 1987b).

*Pernambuco* Eight birds were seen in mountain forest at Água Azul, south of Timbaúba, in January 1989 (Willis and Weinberg 1990).

*Alagoas* The species was described from a female collected at Pedra Branca ("Serra Branca": see Remarks 2 under Alagoas Foliage-gleaner *Philydor novaesi*), 550 m, near Murici (9°19'S 35°57'W) in February 1979 (Teixeira and Gonzaga 1983a), and five further specimens, including three males, were obtained at this locality in November 1983, May 1984 and January 1986 (Teixeira 1987b), although it appears now to be present only in the remaining part of this area known as Fazenda Bananeira (see Threats, Measures Proposed under Alagoas Foliage-gleaner). The species has been reported also from near Novo Lino (9°01'S 35°40'W), at 300 m, but has not been found in the coastal lowland forests of the region (Teixeira 1987b), which have been well explored ornithologically (Teixeira and Gonzaga 1983a). In August 1989 seven were found and others heard, and in October 1990 two pairs, at Pedra Talhada Biological Reserve at about 700 m (B. M. Whitney *in litt.* 1991, B. C. Forrester *in litt.* 1992).

**POPULATION** Numbers are not known. Birds are difficult to locate owing to their small size and arboreal habits, having been seen "only four times" when the species was discovered (Teixeira and Gonzaga 1983a), but they call frequently even outside the breeding season, which may be of help in its detection (Teixeira 1987b). In August 1989 it was felt that the species is probably common at Pedra Talhada, but difficult to observe on account of its use of the upper canopy (B. C. Forrester *in litt.* 1992). In April 1992 it was fairly common, based on voice, at Fazenda Bananeira (M. Pearman *in litt.* 1992).

**ECOLOGY** The Orange-bellied Antwren inhabits the upper strata of forest, moving through the dense foliage looking for food amongst the leaves and amidst the debris adhering to branches (Teixeira and Gonzaga 1983a), and also in arboreal bromeliads (Teixeira 1987b). It is usually seen in the canopy of the middle storey, following mixed-species flocks of upper and middle canopy birds even during the breeding season, isolated pairs being rarely found away from these flocks, which may include more than eighteen species at once (Teixeira and Gonzaga 1983a, Teixeira 1987b; for a description of the composition of these flocks, see Teixeira and Gonzaga 1985). Its diet includes small insects (beetles, cockroaches), as the stomach content of the holotype confirms (Teixeira and Gonzaga 1983a). To judge from the available records of moult and gonadal development of birds collected, breeding probably starts in November and continues into February, when immature birds join adults in mixed-species flocks (Teixeira 1987b). A nest of the species was found on 19 November 1983 in the final stages of construction, attached to a fork in a nearly horizontal branch among the dense foliage of a middle stratum tree, about 10-12 m above the ground; it was a small cup, built with moss and a few filaments of fungi *Marasmius* (Teixeira 1987b).

**THREATS** Destruction of forest at Pedra Branca is the single most serious threat to this and all other upland forest species in Alagoas (see Threats under Alagoas Foliage-gleaner). Although the Orange-bellied Antwren seemingly survives even in forests which have suffered from severe selective logging, it is not present in degraded secondary growth, which nowadays constitutes an important portion of the few remaining forest areas in north-east Brazil (Teixeira 1987b).

**MEASURES TAKEN** The Orange-bellied Antwren is protected under Brazilian law (Bernardes *et al.* 1990). A population of the species stands to be secured by the new Pedra Talhada Biological Reserve (see equivalent section under Forbes's Blackbird *Curaeus forbesi*; but also that under Alagoas Foliage-gleaner).

**MEASURES PROPOSED** An initiative to preserve forest and its rich birdlife at Pedra Branca (specifically now Fazenda Bananeira) needs urgent impetus (see Measures Proposed and Remarks under Alagoas Foliage-gleaner).

**REMARKS** The full specific status of the Orange-bellied Antwren seems to be confirmed by specimens

obtained since its description (Teixeira 1987b). The species is apparently closely related to the Streak-capped Antwren *Terenura maculata* from south-east Brazil to Paraguay and north-east Argentina, with which it forms a superspecies (Teixeira and Gonzaga 1983a).