

This cloud-forest owl is known from just two localities in the eastern Andes of northernmost Peru, where it was discovered as recently as 1976. Although apparently not yet threatened by habitat destruction, almost nothing is known about its range, ecological needs or population.

DISTRIBUTION The Long-whiskered Owllet (see Remarks) is known from just two localities on the eastern slopes of the eastern cordillera of the Andes in Amazonas and northern San Martín departments, northern Peru (coordinates are from Stephens and Traylor 1983).

The species was first discovered 10 km north-east of Abra Patricia (= Pardo de Miguel, c.5°46'S 77°41'W) on the road to Rioja in the río Mayo drainage (in San Martín department, although this locality is at a pass on the border of San Martín and Amazonas) during late August and early September 1976 (O'Neill and Graves 1977). The species is also recorded from close to the type-locality, east of Bagua (5°40'S 78°31'W) at 2,165 m in the Cordillera de Colán (a large, semi-isolated mountain range), Amazonas (Fjeldså and Krabbe 1990, J. Fjeldså *in litt.* 1992; also Stephens and Traylor 1983).

POPULATION Nothing is known. Three birds (seemingly a mated pair and a female) were collected at the type-locality (August 1976), and others, apparently this species, were heard in the immediate vicinity (O'Neill and Graves 1977), so that it seems likely that the bird is locally not uncommon.

ECOLOGY Records of this little-known owllet come from subtropical forest between 1,890 and 2,350 m where the forest is often shrouded in fog, soaking mist or rain brought in by the prevailing (moisture-laden) easterly winds (O'Neill and Graves 1977, Fjeldså and Krabbe 1990). At Abra Patricia, the resultant elfin or cloud-forest had a canopy at 6-9 m in the sheltered valleys, and only c.4 m on the exposed ridges: all parts of the forest were covered with heavy moss and laden with orchids, bromeliads, strap-leaved ferns and bryophytes, with *Chusquea* bamboo forming dense thickets in canopy openings and along small streams; a great number of tall, slender emergent palms and occasional tree-ferns all gave the forest a characteristic appearance (O'Neill and Graves 1977). The Long-whiskered Owllet was caught and heard (presumably this species) at night (including dusk) on ridge-tops where the forest was slightly more open (O'Neill and Graves 1977). What was presumed to be its song was heard in August 1976, at which time an apparently mated pair was collected: however, all three specimens showed only slightly enlarged gonads, and were deemed to be not breeding (O'Neill and Graves 1977).

THREATS None is known. East of Abra Patricia, in the watershed of the río Mayo, virgin forest stretched eastward to the Amazonian lowlands of north-central Peru (O'Neill and Graves 1977), and it would seem that owing to its inaccessibility the ridge-top elfin forest is currently under little or no threat.

MEASURES TAKEN None is known, although the species may prove to be present in the recently formed Río Abiseo National Park (see Yellow-browed Toucanet *Aulacorhynchus huallagae* account for details).

MEASURES PROPOSED Almost nothing is known about this species's distributional status or ecological requirements, and as such it would be desirable for a survey to concentrate on calling birds in the ridge-top forests of this area, aiming at discovering their distributional range and hence an approximate population size. Although the habitat is at present under little apparent threat, a protected area, perhaps in the Cordillera de Colán, incorporating habitats from the lowlands up to the ridge-top cloud-forest, would help guarantee the survival of this unusual species, and many other montane forest endemics (see Cinnamon-breasted Tody-tyrant *Hemitriccus cinnamomeipectus* account and, for areas to the south of its known range, Remarks under Yellow-browed Toucanet).

REMARKS The Long-whiskered Owllet was described as a new genus *Xenoglaux* (O'Neill and Graves 1977), in which it remains the only representative.