

This generally common furnariid inhabits evergreen, semi-deciduous and deciduous forests from 400 to 2,900 m on the foothills and slopes of the western Andes in south-west Ecuador and north-west Peru, where it is threatened by habitat destruction and disturbance.

DISTRIBUTION The Rufous-necked Foliage-gleaner (see Remarks 1) ranges from El Oro province, south-west Ecuador, to southern Cajamarca department, north-west Peru, at elevations from 400 to 2,900 m, in the foothills and on the Pacific slope of the Andes. Localities (coordinates, unless otherwise stated, from Paynter and Traylor 1977 and Stephens and Traylor 1983) are as follows:

Ecuador (*El Oro*) c.8-10 km west of Piñas, 3°42'S 79°42'W (two birds seen in July 1990: P. K. Donahue *in litt.* 1991) (see Remarks 2); (*Loja*) Cordillera de Celica: Tierra Colorada, 1,400-1,850 m, 4°02'S 79°57'W (sightings in February 1991: Best 1992); Quebrada Cebollal, 945 m, 3°55'S 80°03'W, September 1921; Alamor, 1,390 m, at 4°01'S 80°03'W, August and September 1921; Guachanamá, 2,500 and 2,760 m, at 4°02'S 79°53'W, October 1920; Celica, 1,300-2,000 m, at 4°07'S 79°59'-80°02'W, September 1920 (sources for the preceding four localities being Chapman 1921, 1926; specimens in AMNH, ANSP, BMNH and MCZ; also two in ANSP and one in MECN collected August 1989, and one in WFVZ taken in March 1991); between Celica and Alamor, 1,000-2,550 m (birds seen almost daily in August 1991: Williams and Tobias 1991); 5 km south-east of Gonzanamá, 4°15'S 79°53'W (specimens in MCZ collected in July and August 1965), where an isolated forest exists (LANDSAT 1986); 1 km east-south-east of Cariamanga, 2,300 m, at 4°20'S 79°33'W (specimen in MECN collected in April 1991); Utuana, 2,450 m, at 4°22'S 79°42'W (sightings in August–September 1989 and February 1991: Best and Clarke 1991, Best 1992, NK); between Utuana and Sozoranga, 1,750-1,800 m, at 4°20'S 79°46'W (sightings in February 1991: Best 1992); Quebradas Suquinda and Yaguana, between Sozoranga and Nueva Fátima, at 4°18'S 79°48'W (sightings in June, August and September 1989 and February 1991: Best and Clarke 1991, Bloch *et al.* 1991, Best 1992); Quebrada Hueco Hondo, 600-1,000 m, Tambo Negro, c.5 km south-west of Sabiango, at 4°24'S 79°51'W (sightings in August and September 1989 and February and March 1991; specimen in ZMUC taken in March 1991: Best and Clarke 1991, Best 1992, NK); Angashcola (near Amaluza), 4°34'S 79°22'W (1-2 seen in July 1991: Williams and Tobias 1991); La Laja, 610 m, 3°47'S 80°03'W (specimen in ANSP, taken in June 1933) (see Remarks 2);

Peru (*Tumbes*) El Caucho, 400 m, at 3°50'S 80°16'W (Wiedenfeld *et al.* 1985); Campo Verde, 750 m, at 3°51'S 80°12'W (Wiedenfeld *et al.* 1985), these first two sites being in the Cordillera Larga, a south-western spur of northern Cordillera Chilla; El Angolo, 700 m, 90 km north-west of Sullana (specimen in LSUMZ) at c.4°28'S 80°48'W, in the Cerros de la Brea (= Cerros de Amotape) in Tumbes and Piura departments (situated south-west of Cordillera Larga and probably part of the same geological formation: NK); (*Piura*) near Cerro Chacas, 2,625 m, at c.4°36'S 79°44'W (sightings in September 1989: Best and Clarke 1991); between (and below) Cruz Blanca at 5°20'S 79°32'W and Canchaque at 5°24'S 79°26'W, where there are records from 1,190 to 2,900 m (Chapman 1926, Zimmer 1935, Parker *et al.* 1985, B. M. Whitney *in litt.* 1991; specimens in AMNH, ANSP, FMNH, LSUMZ and MCZ); below (west of) Abra de Porculla, at 1,350 m (given as 1,280 m on label) and 1,600 m, 5°51'S 79°31'W, in south-west Piura near the Lambayeque border (Zimmer 1935; specimens in ANSP, LSUMZ and MCZ, taken in May 1933); (*Lambayeque*) hills east of Olmos, 1,000 m, 5°59'S 79°46'W (sightings in August 1989: B. M. Whitney *in litt.* 1991); Bosque de Chiñama, 2,200-2,500 m, at 6°02'S 79°27'W (6-7 specimens in MHNJP collected in August 1988; coordinates read from IGM 1967); (*Cajamarca*) in the isolated forest on the upper ríos Chanchay and Saña: Chugur, 2,750 m, at 6°40'S 78°45'W; Taulis, 2,700 m, at c.6°54'S 79°03'W; Seques, 1,520 m, at 6°54'S 79°18'W; and Paucal, at 7°00'S 79°10'W (Taczanowski 1884-1886, Chapman 1926, Zimmer 1935; specimens in AMNH and CM). The species probably also occurs in the isolated forest east of Sapillica at c.4°50'S 79°55'W (LANDSAT 1986; coordinates read from IGM 1982): there appears to be proper habitat along the Andean Pacific slope from c.4°25'S in Loja province, Ecuador, south to c.5°S (LANDSAT 1986), probably continuing south to c.5°25'S (NK).

POPULATION In Ecuador at Celica, the bird was fairly common at 1,300-2,000 m in August 1989, and a fair amount of habitat remained there at the time, the area presumably having a substantial population (R. S. Ridgely *in litt.* 1989). It was judged to be locally common there in March 1991 (L. F. Kiff *in litt.*

1991), and was found to be common and seen almost daily in the Celica–Alamor area between 1,000 and 2,550 m in August 1991 (Williams and Tobias 1991). Between Sozoranga and Nueva Fátima at 1,750 m, it was deemed to be fairly common with 1-3 birds seen several times daily in June 1989 (Bloch *et al.* 1991), and generally in the Sozoranga region it is common above 1,600 m and uncommon below 1,000 m (Best and Clarke 1991, Best 1992). In Peru the species was reported rare at El Caucho in June and July 1979 (Wiedenfeld *et al.* 1985) and uncommon below Cruz Blanca (Parker *et al.* 1985). In late July 1988 it was inconspicuous and apparently uncommon at Campo Verde, where only five individuals were recorded on one day (Parker *et al.* ms). The large number of specimens collected during 1988 in Bosque de Chiñama, Lambayeque, may suggest that the species is common there (T. S. Schulenberg *in litt.* 1989).

ECOLOGY The Rufous-necked Foliage-gleaner inhabits dense to moderately open forest understorey, especially bamboo, and middle storey in humid evergreen forest as well as humid, more or less evergreen patches (e.g. in shaded ravines, at springs or along streams) in semi-deciduous forest, occurring uncommonly in adjacent *Ceiba*-dominated deciduous forest and degraded scrub (e.g. at Tambo Negro): it ranges from 400 to 2,900 m, but is commonest above 1,600 m (Parker *et al.* 1985, Wiedenfeld *et al.* 1985, Best and Clarke 1991, Best 1992). Birds occur singly and in pairs or, during the dry season, in small groups of 3-4 (with 12-15 seen on one occasion), and (especially in the dry season) typically associates with mixed-species flocks, even if only a few other species are present (Parker *et al.* ms, R. S. Ridgely *in litt.* 1989, Best and Clarke 1991, B. M. Whitney *in litt.* 1991, Best 1992). This foliage-gleaner has been found most commonly associating with Scarlet-backed Woodpecker *Veniliornis callonotus*, Spot-crowned Woodcreeper *Lepidocolaptes affinis*, Speckle-breasted Wren *Thryothorus sclateri* and Rufous-browed Peppershrike *Cyclarhis gujanensis*, although the mixed flocks tended to be larger and more diverse than those joined by Henna-hooded Foliage-gleaner *Hylocryptus erythrocephalus*, with (depending on altitude) 14 other species recorded (Best and Clarke 1991: see relevant account).

The species characteristically forages in trees (often in close proximity to stands of bamboo), and probes the bases of arboreal bromeliads (also ferns, mosses and bark) on the larger limbs, as high as 10 m above ground, but it has also been seen hopping through dense tangles of bamboo where it probed the bases of leaf-shoots on stems, and once on the forest floor foraging in the manner of Henna-hooded Foliage-gleaner (Parker *et al.* 1985, Best and Clarke 1991, B. M. Whitney *in litt.* 1991, Best 1992, NK). Most sightings below Cruz Blanca and at Cariamanga were of individuals 2-3 m above ground (Parker *et al.* 1985, NK), while most in the Sozoranga and Celica regions foraged in the understorey and middle strata (Best and Clarke 1991, Best 1992). At Tierra Colorada a bird was seen pecking at the trunk of a burnt tree in a recently planted maize field (Best 1992). One specimen (in LSUMZ) had the remains of large insects in its stomach, and another (in MECN) small insects.

Birds with active gonads have been collected in May (in AMNH and ANSP); with slightly enlarged gonads in April, June, August and October (AMNH, LSUMZ and MECN); with inactive gonads in all months from June to December (AMNH, FMNH, LSUMZ, MCZ and MECN); juvenile or immature birds have been found in April, May and June (AMNH and ANSP), so apparently the species breeds during the wet season, from January to May (Brown 1941), as do probably most species in the region (Marchant 1958). No nest has been found.

THREATS Considerable trampling of the undergrowth by cattle and clearance of bamboo by local people for pack-animal food pose a threat to this and other undergrowth inhabitants such as Grey-headed Antbird *Myrmeciza griseiceps* (see relevant account) that are restricted to a relatively small and densely settled region (Parker *et al.* 1985). Despite the species's ability to tolerate considerable habitat disturbance, its preference for humid high-elevation forest makes it especially vulnerable to the combined effects of trampling, understorey clearance and rampant deforestation occurring throughout its range: all patches of forest holding the species in Ecuador may be gone, critically degraded, or be too small to hold a viable population within 10 years (NK, Best and Clarke 1991).

MEASURES TAKEN The species is known to occur in only one forest reserve, the Tumbes National Forest (75,100 ha: IUCN 1992), where, however, it is rare (Wiedenfeld *et al.* 1985), probably as the park lies at the lower limit of its altitudinal range (see Distribution). Bosque de Chiñama, a forest of some 1,200 ha (read from IGM 1967), is being vigorously protected by the local cooperative (I. Franke *per* T. S. Schulenberg *in litt.* 1989).

MEASURES PROPOSED Although still fairly common in some areas, this species may soon be gone, at least from Ecuador, unless immediate action is taken to protect some of the remaining patches of highland forest in western Loja province, either in the Sozoranga region or on the west slope of the Celica mountains, and preferably both (NK). In Peru continued protection of Bosque de Chiñama should be secured, and the forests near Taulis should be evaluated for conservation. All remaining habitat within the species's range should be mapped and surveyed. Comments on the conservation status of forests and the other threatened and endemic bird species in south-west Ecuador and north-west Peru are given in the equivalent section under Grey-backed Hawk *Leucopternis occidentalis* and Grey-headed Antbird.

REMARKS (1) The Rufous-necked Foliage-gleaner was considered a close relative of the Buff-throated Foliage-gleaner *Automolus ochrolaemus* by Zimmer (1935) and Vaurie (1980), but Parker *et al.* (1985) saw little morphological or behavioural similarity between *ruficollis* and any member of *Automolus*, and suggested that *ruficollis* (and *Simoxenops*), on the basis of streaked pattern, behaviour and strikingly similar vocalizations, might belong in the genus *Syndactyla*, and the case has been formally made out in Parker *et al.* (ms). Ecuadorian specimens have been described as a separate subspecies, *celicae*, with birds from Palambla being intermediate (Chapman 1921, 1926, Zimmer 1935). Birds from Tumbes, and presumably Cerros de la Brea (= Cerros de Amotape) in adjacent Piura, are probably referable to the Ecuadorian form (NK), as also happens with the subspecies of Henna-hooded Foliage-gleaner (Wiedenfeld *et al.* 1985; see relevant account).

(2) Concerning the locality "La Laja": it should be noted that IGM (1982), which is followed here for the position it gives, calls it "Las Lajas", while it is placed at 3°48'S 80°08'W in Tumbes department, Peru, by Stephens and Traylor (1983), and has also been misquoted as La Lejía, Piura, by Peters (1951) and subsequently misinterpreted by Vaurie (1980) as La Lejía in Amazonas department, Peru (NK).