

PREVENTING EXTINCTIONS

Kaempfer's Woodpecker *Celeus obrieni*



Kaempfer's Woodpecker (© [Ciro Albano/www.nebrazilbirding.com](http://CiroAlbano.com))



Background

Kaempfer's Woodpecker was rediscovered in October 2006 near Goatins in Tocantins state, Brazil, 80 years since the type specimen was collected c.350 km away in 1926. By 2007, a total of 23 different individuals have been observed between São Pedro da Água Branca, Maranhão State in the north, and the municipality of Dianópolis, Tocantins State in the south; and Serra da Raposa in Maranhão State in the east, and the municipality of Miracema do Tocantins in Tocantins State in the west.

The main threats to the species are probably from habitat loss and degradation through fires, infrastructure development and conversion to soya crop. Preferred habitat (cerrados with bamboo patches), is frequently burned for cattle ranching; whether this practice destroys habitat or helps to maintain it remains poorly understood. Given that it went unrecorded for many years it was assumed to have a tiny population in an extremely small range. However, recent surveys have already confirmed it has a large range and the estimated population size is likely to be revised upwards in the future.

Actions being implemented

1. The current and potential **distribution of the species is being assessed**. As a result, there have been five new records of the species in Tocantins state. An expedition to the north-east of Tocantins state and central Goiás.
2. Research is underway to establish the **principal ecological and habitat requirements** of the species. Results so far have indicated a preference for the bamboo *Guadua panicullata* when searching for food.
3. Efforts are underway to analyse **threats**.

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