

PREVENTING EXTINCTIONS

**Stresemann's Bristlefront**  
*Merulaxis stresemanni*



Digital artwork of Stresemann's Bristlefoot (© Tomasz Cofta/[www.rarebirdsyarbook.com](http://www.rarebirdsyarbook.com)).

**Background**

Stresemann's Bristlefront was known until recently from just two specimens, the last of which was collected in 1945. However, it was rediscovered in the wild in 1995 when a male was observed and tape-recorded at Fazenda Jueirana, near Una Biological Reserve, Bahia. Subsequent searches there have failed to produce further records, although the species was subsequently found in the Jequitinhonha valley, Minas Gerais, near the border with Bahia. Here, too, the future of the species seems to hang in the balance: it lives in a strip of humid valley-floor forest, much of which has recently been cleared to make room for agriculture and pasture. At least four birds were found in a 100 ha area, but it was thought unlikely that this density could be extrapolated for the whole 5,000 ha patch of forest. The latest surveys of the Macarani / Bandeira area near Balbina (Sossego do Arrebol Forest) found just six individuals. It is now suspected that there may be fewer than 50 birds remaining.

**Actions being implemented**

- 1. Surveys** are being carried out to assess population size, distribution and habitat preferences of the Stresemann's Bristlefront. By 2011, only 6 individuals (5 females and 1 male) have been found, all on forest slopes in the Macarani / Bandeira area, indicating that the species is locally rare and may show a strong bias in the sexual ratio within this area.
2. A total of 594 ha of the forest area where Stresemann's Bristlefront occurs has been acquired by Fundação Biodiversitas, with support from the American Bird Conservancy. The area will be transformed into a **private nature reserve**.
3. A **park guard** was hired and has been residing in the reserve since October 2010, undertaking regular patrols to control for illegal activities such as hunting and logging. The work of the guard has also been important for the development of reserve infrastructure including a nursery of native trees, fencing to restrict livestock access and series of firebreaks.



Left; Alexandre Enout (Reserve Manager) and Edilson dos Santos (Park Guard), in front of the guard's house. Right; Nursery of native trees recently built by the park guard.

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