

Project Update: April 2009

We conducted surveys in 22 rivers of the provinces of Jujuy and Salta in an altitudinal strip between 1600-1900 m above sea level from May to November 2008 (non-breeding period). In each river we recorded the presence or absence of the dipper along transects of 6 km long during early mornings and late afternoons. We were able to estimate dippers' relative abundance. Of the 22 rivers surveyed, we detected 73 dippers in only 14 rivers. Considering only those rivers with presence, we detected a relative abundance of 5.00 ± 2.94 dippers/river. The number of dippers detected did not differ between the 14 rivers where we detected the species (Kruskal – Wallis test = 16.71; $p=0.213$). The average number of individuals recorded in this study (0.92 ind/km) is similar to the recorded for Tarija's rivers in Bolivia (1.3 ind/km). This is the first study in Argentina that develops a systematic survey of rivers to evaluate the rufous-throated dipper's population status and distribution. Rivers where we did not detect dippers showed anthropogenic disturbances such as cattle, horses, goats, water channelling to fill dams for human consumption and crop irrigation, and extraction of materials (sand, rocks). We are analyzing the effect of those disturbances on dippers to delineate management recommendations and conservation strategies for *Cinclus schulzi* and its habitat. We have developed brochures for schools and locals with information on the status of the species and its threats to raise awareness. For more information visit www.cebio.org.ar