(1980) observed 113 Herring Gulls at SMI in March 1976 and Garrett and Dunn (1981) reported 300 to 500 adult Herring Gulls at SMI on 24 March 1973. Red crabs were also present in waters of the SCB in 1972/1973.

The abundance of red crabs and their susceptibility to predation by gulls may explain the unusual abundance of Herring Gulls at San Nicolas and San Miguel islands from January through March 1983. Swarms of red crabs at San Nicolas Island also appear to account for the difference in Western Gull roosting patterns compared to previous years. Crabs were consistently and readily available as prey to Western Gulls in waters adjacent to their normal roosts in winter and early spring. Western Gulls were apparently feeding primarily, and perhaps solely, on red crabs during this period and most gulls were apparently not foraging at their usual areas. This suggests that in most years gulls spend much of each day either travelling from the island to feeding areas and back, or searching for food in nearby areas.

El Niño events usually cause a depletion of food resources for seabirds (Barber and Chavez 1983). Our findings at San Nicolas and San Miguel islands, however, appear to constitute an instance in which this 1982/1983 "warm event" increased food availability to a local avian population. Alternatively, the increased numbers of Herring Gulls at SNI and SMI and the changes in behavior of Western Gulls may be a secondary consequence of food depletion in areas where these gulls normally feed. In either case the presence of pelagic red crabs did provide an additional, easily exploited food source for these gulls during the 1982/1983 El Niño.

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NOTES ON THE SPECKLED CRAKE (*COTURNICOPS NOTATA*) IN BRAZIL

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The Speckled Crake or Darwin's Rail (*Coturnicops notata*) is a small (14 cm, 30 g) South American rail with contrasting black-and-white plumage, a blackish bill, sooty brown tarsi, and a bright yellow iris, marked by a wide red ring around the pupil. Its taxonomy was revised by Meyer de Schauensee (1962) but its biology is virtually unknown (Ripley 1977). The species is represented in scientific collections by only 16 skins (Blake 1977).

The patchy distribution of this crake extends from Colombia, Venezuela, and Guyana south to Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay, and Argentina (Blake 1977). In Brazil, the bird has been reported only from Rio Grande do Sul (Hamburgo Velho) and eastern São Paulo (Ypiranga and Pindamonhangaba; see Pinto 1938, 1964, 1978). Recently, however, we have found it in Taubaté, northeastern São Paulo (23°01'S, 45°33'W), and we report here our fragmentary observations on its habits.

Taubaté is largely an agricultural region (elev. 500 m) and has a hot climate (average annual temperature about 23°C). Here we have found Speckled Crakes in the dense and flooded rice fields of the Paraíba river drainage. Eight other rails in this habitat are *Ortygonax sanguinolentus, O. nigricans, Pardirallus maculatus, Porzana albicollis, Poliolimnas flaviventer, Laterallus melanophaius, Gallinula chloropus,* and *Porphyrula martinica.* Still another crake, *Laterallus leucopyrrhus,* occurs nearby in small marshes on lower hillsides.

Speckled Crakes usually inhabit dense vegetation and are glimpsed only when bursting into flight, as when frightened by a person or a harvesting machine. On such occasions they fly as high as 6 m and drop back into the vegetation after traveling about 70 m. Despite their contrastingly patterned plumage, they are difficult to see in the field, being obscured in the dim light of their habitat.

Two specimens have been obtained in our study area. An adult male was collected on 14 May 1976 by Herculano Alvarenga and is now in his private collection. Its testes were well-developed and its stomach contained small (about 1 mm) seeds of Graminae (80%), pieces of small arthropods (15%), and fine gravel (1–3 mm; 5%). The second bird, captured on 21 August 1982, is still alive in captivity with us as of this writing, and we have learned some details of behavior by watching it.

When alarmed, many rails flick the erect tail, in some cases showing contrasting spots on the crissum and under tail coverts. Our captive Speckled Crake, however, seems to show alarm by remaining motionless in a horizontal position, with the tail held downward and fully opened. The wings are folded but held obliquely upward, showing the whitish tips of some secondaries and exposing the profusely white-spotted underparts.

The Speckled Crake is diurnal, retiring to roost at dusk. As do some other rails (e.g., *Aramides cajanea* and *A. ypecaha,* Teixeira 1981), our captive roosts on a perch up to 2 m above the ground. It sleeps with its head under its wings and with one foot retracted into the belly plumage.

The bird also calls frequently at night from its perch, at least in captivity. Unlike other rails, its vocalizations are inconspicuous and easily confused with or masked by other marsh sounds. When giving its distinct two-syllable call, the crake stands upright with neck erect. In this call, "kooweee-cack," the "kooweee" is high and brief, and the "cack" is louder and drier, ending abruptly. We have also heard a whistling "keeee" in an alarm situation and a single high "kyu."

This species has been thought to be rare, occurring locally over a large region (Blake 1977). Although it is not common at our study area, our experience indicates that it is not so much scarce as difficult to find. The same is true of other small, timid, and supposedly rare crakes such as *Laterallus xenopterus* and *Micropygia schomburgkii,* which inhabit dense vegetation.

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THE WHITE BELLBIRD (*PROCNIAS ALBA*) IN THE SERRA DOS CARAJÁS, SOUTHEASTERN PARÁ, BRAZIL

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The known geographical distribution of the White Bellbird (*Procnias alba*) encompasses eastern Venezuela, the Guianas, and Brazil north of the Amazon, including the lower and middle Rio Negro (Novaes, Ann. Soc. Sul-Riograndse Ornitol. 1:5–7, 1980; Snow, D., The cotingas. Cornell Univ. Press, Ithaca, NY, 1982). Here we report a population of White Bellbirds south of the Amazon River in the Serra dos Carajás, southeastern Pará, Brazil. This extends the range of the species some 1,000 km south and helps explain certain records of the species distant from previously known populations.

The Serra dos Carajás, a region of about 18,000 km^2 between the Araguaia/Tocantins and Xingu rivers, is centered at approximately 6°00′S, 50°30′W. The serra is of Cretaceous age and reaches over 800 m at its highest points. The region is exceptionally rich in minerals, including iron, manganese, copper and gold. The vegetation of the slopes is high Amazonian rain forest in most places, while a rupicolous scrub known as "canga" or "campo rupestre" covers exposed iron ore deposits on some of the high plateaus. The observations reported here were made during six visits to the Carajás region in 1983: January (FCN), July (PR), August (DCO), and May, June and September (Goeldi Museum technicians). The specimens reported were collected in August and September 1983. We thank Helmut Sick for sharing information he obtained during a visit to Carajás in May 1969.

In the Carajás region, White Bellbirds occur in montane forest at altitudes of 500 to 750 m. Much of the high Amazonian rain forest on the slopes is especially luxuriant with a canopy over 35 m high, while in other places it is more open with many emergents. White Bellbirds are locally common, at least seasonally, but with a patchy distribution. The males' loud calls were conspicuous from June to September, but they were not noted during visits in January and May. It is unclear whether this indicates migration away from Carajás outside the breeding season,