

Spotted Rail: first record from the Yucatan Peninsula, Mexico



Figure 1. Spotted Rail (*Pardirallus maculatus*) foraging at the edge of Lake Cobá, Quintana Roo, Mexico. Photo/D. D. Andrews.

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ON APRIL 16, 1982, WHILE ANDREWS was photographing birds along the shore of Lake Cobá, Quintana Roo, Mexico (20°30'N, 87°40'W), a Spotted Rail (*Pardirallus maculatus*) stepped into view from a clump of cattails. A photograph (Fig. 1) taken from a distance of 2 meters helps to document this first report of the species from the Yucatan Peninsula of Mexico. A rail was seen again July 10, 1982, at the same patch of cattails on the northeast corner of the lake near the entrance to the archeological ruins of Cobá. It fed on apple snails (*Pomacea* sp.) within 10 meters of observers (Scott, R. Barth, E. Lott). On January 3, 1983, MacKinnon and B. Elliott found two *P. maculatus* at the same spot. On March 14, 1983, MacKinnon and M. Palmer observed three individuals feeding on snails at dif-

ferent sites around the lake. Between December 26, 1983, and January 3, 1984, Elliott observed the species several times. Although none was found by MacKinnon in October 1984, when the lake was unusually full, a rail was seen in the original clump of cattails by MacKinnon and M. Traylor during January 27-30, 1985, in early morning and late afternoon. Other wading bird species seen among the cattails on one or more of the above dates were Least Bittern (*Ixobrychus exilis*), Ruddy Crake (*Laterallus ruber*), Purple Gallinule (*Porphyryla martinica*), Common Moorhen (*Gallinula chloropus*), Limpkin (*Aramus guarana*), and Northern Jacana (*Jacana spinosa*).

No records of *P. maculatus* for the states of Quintana Roo, Campeche, or Yucatán are listed in Friedmann *et al.* (1950), Paynter (1955), or in recent summaries of the species's distribution (Blake 1977, Ripley 1977, Parkes *et al.* 1977, American Ornithologists' Union 1983). The nearest recorded mainland

occurrence is a specimen (Bangs and Peck 1908) from Yacos Lagoon on the coast of Belize (16°17'N, 88°37'W), approximately 480 km south of Lake Cobá. This was the only record for Belize cited by Russell (1964). Our series of observations indicates that a small population of Spotted Rails is resident at Lake Cobá.

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