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RED-BILLED PIGEON (*COLUMBA FLAVIROSTRIS*) NEST PREDATED BY GROOVE-BILLED ANI (*CROTOPHAGA SULCIROSTRIS*)

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The Red-billed Pigeon (*Columba f. flavirostris*) inhabits lowland areas from the Rio Grande Valley of Texas south through Mexico to central Costa Rica (Howell & Webb 1995). The pigeon constructs a typical columbid nest of loosely placed sticks, rootlets and grasses 3–15 m above ground level in a variety of trees (Eitniear & Brush *in press*). One white egg is laid that is incubated by both sexes (Skutch 1964, 1983).

On 19 June 1999, while observing the reproductive behavior of the Red-billed Pigeon at Los Colorados Ranch (22°55'N, 97°49'W) in northeastern Mexico (see Enkerlin-Hoeflich 1995 for habitat description), nest predation by Groove-billed Ani (*Crotophaga sulcirostris*) was documented. The occurrence was recorded while observing a male Red-billed Pigeon incubating a single egg in a nest 10 m from the ground and 4 m from the trunk, on the branch of an ebony (*Pithecellobium ebano*) tree. When its mate arrived at 17:20 h, it was followed by three Groove-

billed Anis that proceeded to displace the pigeon from its nest. Both members of the pair flew to a distant woodlot. The egg was broken and partially consumed by the anis. After the anis left the nest, the female pigeon settled in the nest. Further investigation on 20 June verified that the nest was subsequently abandoned.

Groove-billed Anis occur sympatrically with the Red-billed Pigeon throughout the pigeon's range (Howell & Webb 1995). Groove-billed Anis are known to feed only on insects and fruits (Skutch 1959). While no reference to Groove-billed Ani robbing nests could be found, Wetmore (1927) and Alvarez (1975) detailed such activity by the Smooth-billed Ani (*C. ani*). In addition to consuming eggs, Smooth-billed Anis have been observed taking nestling Black-faced Grassquits (*Tiaris bicolor*) in Jamaica (Catherine Levy, pers. comm.).

No additional egg predation by Groove-billed Anis was observed despite several hun-

dred hours of nest observation. Nevertheless, since predation of eggs/young by Smooth-billed Anis has been documented, special attention should be given to observing activities of Groove-billed Anis near nests. The Groove-billed Ani should be added to the growing list of avian egg/nestling predators (Skutch 1976, Scott *et al.* 1992, Elliott 1999).

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