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Manuscrito aprobado en marzo de 1995

## THE BLACK VULTURE (*CORAGYPS ATRATUS*) CONTINUES WANDERING IN CUBA

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On 8 July 1997, during a bird-watching journey in Pinar del Río province, we saw a Black Vulture (*Coragyps atratus*) flying in a flock of 13 Turkey Vultures (*Cathartes aura*) in the place known as "La Guabina," Cuba (latitude 22°29'; longitude 83°45'). The Black Vulture's different shape compared to the Turkey Vultures in the flock alerted us, and with the help of binoculars we verified it was not *Cathartes aura*, the common vulture in Cuba. Characteristic features of the Black Vulture were clear, including the shorter tail, shorter and wider wings, and black head that is held more elevated during flight, as compared with the Turkey Vulture.

The Black Vulture is considered a vagrant in Cuba (Garrido and Kirkconnell 1993). It has been reported from Cuba by several observers, including Cory (1891), who noted the it in March-April 1891. Danforth (1928) recorded four individuals flying around near the summit of a high hill above El Cobre, Santiago de Cuba, in the summer of 1926. Bruner (1940) saw a Black Vulture flying among about 50 Turkey Vultures over the Almendares River in Havana City, on 7 April 1940.

Albelardo Moreno (in preparation) saw 3 Black Vultures flying with several Turkey Vultures in "Finca La Jata," Guanabacoa, Havana City, on 13 March 1943, and recorded this species in "El Veral," Guanahacabibes, Pinar del Río, on 28 January 1971, again in a flock of Turkey Vultures. Luis S. Varona (in Garrido and García 1975) saw the species south of the Bacunayagua bridge, in Matanzas, in 1960, and another near La Salud, Havana, in 1961. Garrido and García (1975) reported the observation (by Garrido and R. Alayo) of a Black Vulture flying in a flock of 3 or 4 Turkey Vultures, near Candelaria, Pinar del Río, on 25 March 1962. Subsequently, Garrido saw a Black Vulture in Nortey, 12 km west of Cayajabos, near Candelaria, Pinar del Río, on 12 March 1968. In 1979, Garrido (1992) observed a Black Vulture near

the Zapata Swamp. Orlando Torres (pers. comm.) watched a Black Vulture flying among a flock of 17 Turkey Vultures, and land on a rock in La Gran Piedra, Santiago de Cuba, on 21 December 1980.

We can offer no good explanation why the Black Vulture has not become established as a breeding species in Cuba, since both species of vultures share similar habitats and habits in other latitudes (Prior 1990), and even are known to nest close to one another (Richardson 1989).

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