

APPARENT NESTING OF SOUTHERN LAPWING ON ARUBA

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*Abstract.*—During late March and early April 2004, a pair of Southern Lapwings (*Vanellus chilensis*) on Aruba behaved in a manner that strongly suggested active nesting. This species was not previously known to nest on any Caribbean island outside of Trinidad and Tobago.

*Key words:* apparent nesting, Aruba, Southern Lapwing, *Vanellus chilensis*

*Resumen.*—NIDIFICACIÓN APARENTE DEL ALCARAVÁN EN ARUBA. A finales de marzo y comienzos de abril del año 2004, una pareja de Alcaraván (*Vanellus chilensis*) en Aruba se comportaron de forma tal que sugirió fuertemente una nidificación activa. No se conocía previamente de intentos de cría de esta especie en cualquier isla caribeña fuera de Trinidad y Tobago.

*Palabras claves:* Alcaraván, Aruba, nidificación aparente, *Vanellus chilensis*

THE SOUTHERN LAPWING (*Vanellus chilensis*) is a widespread and common species of open pastures and short grasslands in South America (Hayman *et al.* 1986). It has recently increased in numbers and expanded its range in South America (Delaney and Scott 2002). It spread into western Panamá during the 1980s (Ridgely and Gwynne 1989), and there has been a subsequent increase in Costa Rican records (Jones 2003). In the Caribbean, Southern Lapwings were first recorded on Trinidad in 1961 and on Tobago in 1974, and by 1990 they were well established as a resident species on these islands (French 1991). Elsewhere in the Caribbean there are three previous records from Aruba on 6 June 1979 (Voous 1983), 30 May 2001 (Norton and White 2001), and 30 March 2003 (Mlodinow 2004), and one from Barbados on 29 July 1998 (Buckley *et al.* in press).

On 30 March 2003, Casey Beachell and I located two Southern Lapwings at the Tierra del Sol Golf Course, Aruba (Mlodinow 2004). These birds were placid upon encountering us. On 26 March 2004, we returned to the Tierra del Sol Golf Course and were surprised to find a pair of Southern Lapwings, roughly at the same place we found them a year before. Unlike 2003, however, these birds took immediate interest in our presence – calling loudly and flying aggressively towards us. At times, they passed within 1.5 m. Furthermore, they pursued us until we moved more than 100 m from the original point of interaction. This encounter was repeated on three later visits, despite our efforts to avoid agitating the birds. We last saw them on 3 April, the day we left the island. The pair's behavior suggested the

presence of young or eggs nearby, and we did not press them for fear of disturbing them further. On 27 March 2004 we encountered a lone bird elsewhere on the golf course, and it seemed rather unperturbed by our presence, much like the birds we found the year before. Local residents suggested that several Southern Lapwings inhabited the golf course as a whole.

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