

EL PELÍCANO NORTEAMERICANO *PELECANUS OCCIDENTALIS CAROLINENSIS* (AVES: PELECANIDAE) CRÍA TAMBIÉN EN CUBA

JOSÉ A. MORALES¹ Y ORLANDO H. GARRIDO²

¹Instituto Pedagógico de Camagüey, Camagüey, Cuba; y ²Museo Nacional de Historia Natural, La Habana, Cuba

EL PELÍCANO O ALCATRÁZ es relativamente común en determinados sitios de las costas de nuestro territorio. Se encuentran dos subespecies: *Pelecanus occidentalis occidentalis* Linneo, que es nuestra forma residente, y la raza norteamericana *P. o. carolinensis* Gmelin, que ha sido reportada prácticamente todos los meses del año en base a individuos anillados en Florida y Carolina del Sur (Bond 1956). Bond además planteó la posibilidad de que la subespecie norteamericana *P. o. carolinensis* pudiese anidar en cayos de la costa norte de Cuba. El planteamiento de Bond ha sido corroborado con este nuevo hallazgo.

Sin embargo, a pesar de ser una especie común y bien distribuída, son muy pocos los lugares de cría que se conocían: Cayo Mono Grande y el Canal del Toro (entre Cayo Coco y Cayo Guillermo) en la costa norte y Cayo Piedra y Cayo Largo del Sur en la costa sur (Bond 1956, Garrido y García Montaña 1975; J. de la Cruz, comun. pers.).

El autor senior mientras estudiaba aspectos ecológicos de una colonia nidificante, descubrió, pelícanos que anidaban en los manglares de la zona conocida como "Pueblo de los Pájaros," en el "Estero de la Mojarra," de la desembocadura

del Río Máximo, al norte de la Provincia de Camagüey. El macho de una de la parejas estaba anillado con la inscripción oficial del U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, lo que corroboraba su origen norteamericano. La hembra no tenía anillo, y los dos pichones fueron retratados en el nido en abril de 1987.

Aunque la raza norteamericana es mayor y fácil de identificar en la mano en base a las medidas de la curvatura del ala y del largo del pico; en el campo, y durante la época de cría los plumajes son muy semejantes y, por lo tanto, muy difíciles de separar a menos que sean colectados, por lo que para evitar molestias en la colonia no se hicieron esfuerzos por averiguar qué cantidad de individuos pertenecían a una u otra raza.

LITERATURA CITADA

- BOND, J. 1956. Check-list of birds of the West Indies. Acad. Nat. Sci. Philadelphia.
GARRIDO, O. H., Y F. GARCÍA MONTAÑA. 1975. Catálogo de las aves de Cuba. Acad. Ciencias de Cuba, La Habana.

REGIONAL EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

ORNITHOLOGICAL EDUCATION AND RESEARCH AT CARIBBEAN UNION COLLEGE, TRINIDAD

FLOYD E. HAYES

Department of Biology, Caribbean Union College, P.O. Box 175, Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago
E-mail: cucns@aol.com

SNUGGLED AMONGST SCENIC, CLOUD-CAPPED MOUNTAINS in the Maracas Valley of Trinidad, Caribbean Union College is a private tertiary institution whose degree programs are affiliated with Andrews University in Michigan, USA. Several years ago the College constructed a new science building and began offering a Bachelor of Science degree in biology with a concentration in zoology. Enrollment increased dramatically—far beyond the expectations of the institution's administrators—and the first graduates of the program were produced in 1994. Currently more than a hundred students are enrolled in the program. Most come from a variety of Eastern Caribbean countries, with less than half from Trinidad; each year a small but increasing number of students come from various African countries.

In 1993, I was recruited to instruct the program's natural history courses. Having spent several years studying South American birds, I jumped at the opportunity of exploring a new, biologically rich country: Trinidad and Tobago. Representing the interface between the Caribbean and South America, Trinidad and Tobago boast a mixture of continental and island biotas—an irresistible paradise for a tropical ecologist.

After arriving in Trinidad, I was disappointed to learn that there were no formally trained ornithologists in the country, especially given the country's reputation as a mecca for visiting foreign birders. Furthermore, ornithology had never been taught at the tertiary level in the country. Perceiving an untapped opportunity, I took up the challenge of developing what I suspect is the first program of ornithological education and research at a tertiary institution in the English-speaking Caribbean. And I hope that my experiences, detailed below, will stimulate other tertiary institutions in the region to recognize the economic and aesthetic importance of birds (e.g., as environmental indicators and as a source of revenue from ecotourists), and to develop a similar program of ornithological education and research.

During each of the past three academic years I have taught an upper division course in ornithology for four quarter units of credit. Thus far 80 students have completed the course, which includes three hours of lectures per week for ten weeks, and five days of instruction in the field with an emphasis on the identification of local birds. After a few mornings spent identifying birds on the campus, a full day is spent birding at the Asa Wright Nature Centre, Aripo Savannas