

## NOTES

### A NORTHERN JACANA IN TRANS-PECOS TEXAS

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At 0945 on 7 October 1982, Melissa J. Renfro and I found a single Northern Jacana (*Jacana spinosa*) on a pond at a site known as "The Post" (elev. 1200 m), located at the end of a county road about 8 km south-southwest of Marathon, Brewster County, Texas. We watched the bird, which was in typical immature plumage, for about 45 minutes, then we left the area. We returned that afternoon (1430-1900) and obtained a series of 27 color slides of the bird; representative slides were subsequently verified and deposited in the Texas Photo-Record File as No. 404, a-d (Texas Cooperative Wildlife Collections, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX 77843). The jacana was still present at the site on 11 October 1982, when it was seen by Geth and Edmund White of Alpine, Texas. I do not know if the bird was seen after that date; it was not present when I next visited the site on 18 October 1982.

The small (90 m × 13 m) pond was the result of a low dam across Peña Creek and seemed to be several decades old. Cattails (*Typha*) bordered the open water, which was almost completely choked with a dense stand of pondweed (*Potamogeton*), the pondweed forming a solid mat just below the surface. The jacana spent most of its time walking about on the vegetation mat and feeding actively, presumably on aquatic insects. At one point, however, it captured, dispatched, and consumed a large dragonfly. The bird was wary and alert and would fly to the center of the pond, calling loudly, if approached too closely or otherwise disturbed. There it would remain, watchful for a while, before resuming its feeding.

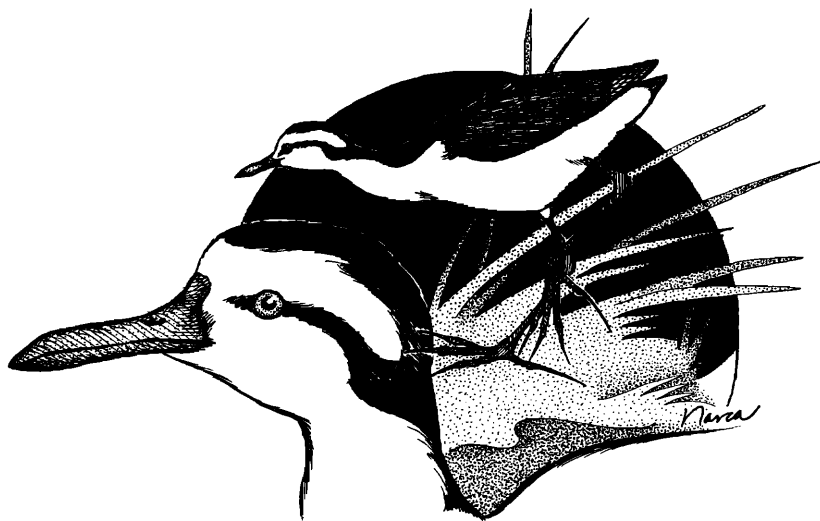
Marathon lies about equidistant (some 800 km) from resident Northern Jacana populations on the west coast in Sinaloa and on the east coast in southern Texas and Tamaulipas: it is less than half again as far from resident populations on the Mexican Plateau due south in Guanajuato, Jalisco, and Michoacan. There are scattered inland Texas records, presumably from the eastern population, in Real (Am. Birds 34:177, 1980), Kerr (Am. Birds 40:492 and 1223, 1986), Uvalde, Bexar, Webb, and Victoria counties (Oberholser, H.C., The Bird Life of Texas, Vol. 1:306, 1974; Univ. Tex. Press, Austin) (but not Mitchell County; see below), and an immature jacana was noted upriver in the Rio Grande valley at Santa Ana National Wildlife Refuge, Hidalgo County, 10-30 November 1982 (Am. Birds 37:200, 1983). Of interest, however, is a Pacific storm, Hurricane Paul, that crossed the Sinaloa coast in late September and tracked northeastward through the Trans-Pecos region of Texas on 30 September 1982, one week before I discovered the Brewster County bird. Also of interest are the many impoundments that now stretch northward across the Mexican Plateau, from central Mexico through Durango and Chihuahua to the United States border: these impoundments, typically recharged during the summer-fall rainy season, appear to be providing a northward avenue for several other waterbirds that are similarly common in the central highlands (S.O. Williams, unpubl. data). Because the Brewster County jacana could conceivably have arrived from any one of these three geographic areas, I believe it is incorrect to assume automatically that it originated from the east coast population. The recent (7 June 1985-3 January 1986) appearance of an adult jacana near Nogales, Arizona (Am. Birds 39:946, 1985; 40:311, 1986) which, after the Brewster County bird, represents only the second record for the southwestern United States, is of similar uncertain origin, there being but one record for adjacent Sonora, a specimen labeled only "Sonora, 1961" (S.M. Russell, pers. comm.).

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Contrary to the 5th and 6th editions of the American Ornithologists' Union's Check-list of North American Birds (1957:163, 1983:176), there is no record, valid or otherwise, of a Northern Jacana in Mitchell County in north-central Texas. The error apparently resulted from confusion of Mitchell Lake in Bexar County, site of a valid 1922 record, with Mitchell County.

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Immature Northern Jacana

*Sketch by Narca Moore-Craig*