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Greater Ani (*Crotophaga major*) in Mexico

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The Greater Ani, *Crotophaga major* (Cuculidae), is the largest species of *Crotophaga* and is further distinguished by the characteristic "broken nose" shape of the bill and the light-colored iris. The species inhabits river swamps and marshes throughout the lowlands of South America to northern Argentina but has hitherto been known from Central America only in eastern and central Panama (Wetmore 1968, Smithsonian Misc. Coll. 150, pt. 2). Therefore, in examining the skin collection of Nelson D. Hoy, of Media, Pennsylvania, I was surprised to find two specimens of *C. major* collected by Mr. Hoy in Tamaulipas, Mexico. Hoy clearly remembered having collected the birds, which he had identified as Groove-billed Anis (*Crotophaga sulcirostris*), the only species of *Crotophaga* known to occur on the mainland of Mexico.

The specimens, which were lent to me for further examination, are a male and female taken on 23 and 21 April 1960, respectively, along the Río Tamesí, about 56 km SW of Ciudad Mante, Tamaulipas, Mexico. On comparing them with a series from South America and Panama, I could detect no differences in coloration. Sex for sex, however, both are larger (except for bill length in the female) than any of the specimens from farther south (Table 1). This suggests a resident population of somewhat larger birds, rather than vagrants. If this is the case, and no other undetected populations exist in Central America, the Mexican population would be separated by a distance of over 1,500 airline miles (2,400 km) from the nearest population to the south.

Such a distribution would seem to indicate that the range of *Crotophaga major* was more extensive in the past and that the Mexican population is a relict one. Apparent examples of similar range constriction are known for the Gray-breasted Crane, *Laterallus exilis* (Rallidae), and caracaras of the genus *Milvago* (Falconidae). *L. exilis* now occurs in South America, with a handful of specimens having been taken in Central America, but is also known from the Pleistocene of Florida (Olson 1974, Condor 76: 169-175). *Milvago* now occurs mainly in South America, ranging north to Costa Rica, but is likewise known from the Pleistocene of Florida (Olson 1978, Acad. Nat. Sci. Philadelphia Spec. Publ. No. 13: 99-112) and has an extinct representative in the Quaternary of Hispaniola (Olson 1976, Proc. Biol. Soc. Wash. 88: 355-366).

TABLE 1. Measurements (mm) of *Crotophaga major* from South America and Panama compared to two Mexican specimens.

	n	Range	Mean	Mexican
♂♂ wing (flat)	25	185-208	197.6	220
♂♂ bill*	22	31.4-35.7	33.7	36.8
♀♀ wing	14	184-194	189.6	202
♀♀ bill	13	29.4-33.2	31.6	31.7

\* Bill length from anterior margin of nostril to tip

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