

White-Necked Crow

*Corvus
leucognaphalus*



Family: Corvidae
Order: Passeriformes

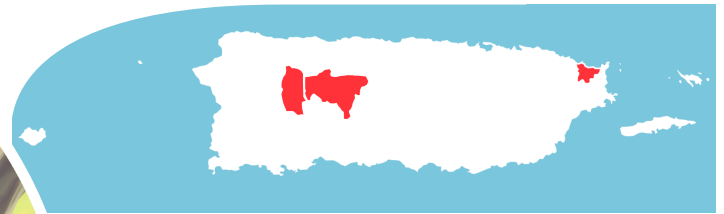
Description

The white-necked crow is one of the native crow species that used to be found in Puerto Rico. At 18 inches (46 centimeters) long, this crow is one of the biggest crows in the Caribbean. Females are a bit smaller than males. This species has a plumage that usually looks black, although when seen in direct sunlight, it may appear as a deep blue-violet. The feathers at the base of the neck are white; this is what gives the crow its common name. This bird's beak and legs are black, and its eyes are reddish ochre. The species has not been heard or seen since 1963, which suggests it may be extinct in Puerto Rico. Today, it may be found in Hispaniola (Dominican Republic and Haiti).

Biological Information

Reproduction

The white-necked crow nests in branches near the top



Distribution

of trees and palm trees. Their nests are made of small twigs, and lined with dry grass. Breeding season begins in February and ends in June. This species usually lays 3 or 4 greenish blue, spotted eggs. The incubation period usually lasts between 18 to 22 days. The hatchlings abandon their nest 35 to 44 days after hatching. At this time, there is no nest registry in Puerto Rico.

Habitat

In Puerto Rico, this species used to be found in the center and east of the island, usually in high, forested areas, and moist, karst areas.

Diet

They primarily feed on wild fruits and seeds, although they may also feed on small amphibians, reptiles and invertebrates.

Distribution

The white-necked crow was found between the municipalities of Lares and Utuado, near the center of the Island. On Puerto Rico's eastern side, the species was seen in the Luquillo Sierra, El Yunque, among other places in the region.

Threats

Widespread habitat destruction and modification, as well as uncontrolled hunting, were the major factors in the decline of this bird species in Puerto Rico to the point of extinction; that is to say, this bird is no longer found in Puerto Rico. This bird was hunted extensively in order to protect crops, and in the Dominican Republic, it was hunted as a source of food. Areas in which the species was formerly found in have been deforested, developed, and used for agriculture. This species has been searched for in Puerto Rico, but no specimens have been found.

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Conservation Measures

The white-necked crow was included in the Endangered Species list in 1991. Although the species has not been heard or seen in many years, it cannot be concluded that it has been completely eradicated. More intensive surveys into the historical locations for this species, as well as other places apt for it, are needed before such a determination can take place.

The Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended prohibits the killing, harassing, trapping, purchasing or selling any species, as well as parts and products derived from the species.

References

- Biaggi, V.1997. Las aves de Puerto Rico. Editorial de la Universidad de Puerto Rico, San Juan, Puerto Rico, 389 pp.
- Raffaello, H.A.1989. A guide to the Birds of Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 254 pp.
- Raffaello, H.A., et al.1998. A guide to the birds of the West Indies. Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 511 pp.
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 2010. White-necked Crow 5-Year Review, Boquerón, Puerto Rico. 14 pp.

Additional Information

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