

difference in growth by either measurement up to day 5. This agrees with Hussell's (1972, Ecol. Monogr. 42: 317-364) conclusion from clutch size manipulations that the parents' ability to feed young is unlikely the sole factor responsible for determining the number of eggs a bird will lay. It is nevertheless likely that had the nest not been prematurely terminated by predation severe brood reduction would have occurred, as by day 5 several nestlings were on the verge of being crowded out of the nest.

We thank Judy Smith and John Yee for showing us the location of the nest. Received 28 October 1977, accepted 15 December 1977.

### First United States Record of Paint-billed Crake (*Neocrex erythrops*)

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On 17 February 1972 Donald Baker, then an undergraduate in the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Sciences, Texas A&M University, caught a small rail in one of his traps for furbearers, along a stream south of College Station, Brazos County, in east-central Texas. The bird was brought to me and subsequently identified as a Paint-billed Crake (*Neocrex erythrops*), a Sora-sized South American rail. The specimen, a male weighing 51 g, was prepared as a skin and partial skeleton and deposited in the Texas Cooperative Wildlife Collections (No. 8930), Texas A&M University.

Meyer de Schauensee (1970) gives the range for *Neocrex erythrops (sensu lato)* as Columbia and Venezuela south through Brazil to Paraguay, Argentina, and Peru. Wetmore (1967) regards the northwestern populations (from Colombia west of the Andes and northwestern Ecuador) as a distinct species, *N. columbinaus*, and describes the single specimen known from central Caribbean Panama as a new subspecies, *N. c. ripleyi*. Harris (1973) records *Neocrex erythrops* from the Galapagos Islands, and it occurs widely in South America east of the Andes from Colombia eastward and southward. In examining specimens of *Neocrex*, the Texas specimen resembles material from the Galapagos Islands, i.e., *Neocrex erythrops*; it has the slate gray flanks barred with white, and the more open nostrils (Wetmore 1967). Storrs Olson has examined this specimen and concurs (in litt.) that it is from the *erythrops* rather than the *columbianus* group of populations.

As the occurrence of a single bird this far out of its range is both unusual and unexpected, I have attempted to locate a possible source from zoos and importers. No public zoo in Texas, nor the Audubon Park in New Orleans, Louisiana, the Cincinnati Zoo, Ohio, the St. Louis Zoological Gardens, Missouri, or the Lincoln Park Zoological Gardens, Chicago, Illinois have kept any South American rails. Inquiries to several major importers were also negative; according to F. M. Thompson (in litt.), the species has not been available. Finally, I checked the listings of birds imported into the United States for the years 1968-1971, as published by the Fish and Wildlife Service (Banks 1970, Banks and Clapp 1972, Clapp and Banks 1973a, 1973b). No *Neocrex* rails are included in these four listings.

It is impossible to eliminate every potential source of an escaped bird, whether brought into this country illegally or imported under some other name. However, most of the Rallidae on the import lists are large or brightly colored species, including coots, gallinules, and wood-rails. It is improbable that a person would smuggle into the country a small, secretive, and relatively dull-colored rail such as *Neocrex erythrops*. The possibility of natural occurrence cannot be dismissed, no matter how zoogeographically unlikely. The Texas bird was in good condition and showed no obvious signs of recent captivity (e.g., no noticeable feather wear, bill or toe deformities, and the soft part colors match published descriptions). Certainly, had the bird been in captivity, it had escaped some months prior to its demise and apparently had travelled some distance. Further, as a group, rails are noted for appearing in odd places (see Peters 1934: 157-213, for extralimital records and for the many oceanic islands inhabited by members of the family Rallidae). It is important, I believe, to record the occurrence of such unusual individuals; the credibility of these extralimital records may later be confirmed by similar occurrences.

Finally, I suggest that a method of marking/banding imported birds at the point of importation needs to be implemented immediately. Such a program would eliminate doubt in future cases of unusual, extralimital occurrences in the United States.

I thank Ned K. Johnson, Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, for loan of *Neocrex* specimens, and Storrs Olson for his comments on this record. George H. Lowery, Jr., commented on an earlier draft of this paper. This is contribution number TA 13738 from the Texas Agricultural Experiment Station.

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Received 12 October 1977, accepted 25 November 1977.

## A Nesting Threesome of Lapland Longspurs

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During the summer of 1976 I studied a nesting threesome of Lapland Longspurs (*Calcarius lapponicus*) at Karrak Lake, N.W.T., (67°15'N, 100°15'W), making daily nest checks except when inclement weather during laying and incubation interfered (Table 1).

Nest A was discovered 17 June on a large, vegetated rock drumlin on the west shore of Karrak Lake (for more detailed habitat description see Ryder 1969). The nest, lined with Rock Ptarmigan (*Lagopus mutus*) feathers, was on the south-facing side of a flat rock in a clump of Labrador Tea (*Ledum palustre*). The nesting female was observed 18 June in conflict with an intruding female that appeared to be driven from the territory. The male was present during the conflict but did not assist the female. The intruding female may have been involved in a possible dump nest situation as noted 20 June (Table 1). On 25 June, a second female was noted in Nest B, which contained no feather lining, 34 cm from Nest A. On 26 June a female was observed on a third nest (C), lined with Rock Ptarmigan feathers, 19 cm from Nest A and 24 cm from Nest B, which was unoccupied. On both dates Nest A was occupied by the territorial female. Nest B was abandoned after 26 June. Nest A contained seven warm eggs while neither of the other nests contained eggs. The incubating female always flushed when I was within 2–3 m, but the second female flushed at a greater distance when her nest (C) was approached.

On 26 June while the two females were on their respective nests, a male was observed feeding with

TABLE 1. Lapland Longspur nest history, 1976

Date	No. Eggs	No. Young	Time	Remarks
17 June	0	0	1300	Nest construction
18 June	1	0	1300	Eggs cold
19 June	2	0	1030	Eggs cold
20 June	4	0	1815	Possible dump nest
21 June	6	0	1900	Eggs warm
22 June	7	0	1300	Eggs warm
2 July	5	1	—	—
4 July	0	3	—	—
6 July	0	2	—	After Arctic Fox predation
12 July	0	0	—	Both young left nest