

A Race of Virginia Rail from the Pacific Coast.—The writer has for some time been aware of certain size differences between Virginia Rails of the eastern United States and those of the far west, but has delayed formally naming the race of the latter area until a sufficient number of specimens had been examined to make sure that the supposed differences were correlated with distribution and were not purely individual in character. I now propose that the Virginia Rails of the Pacific slope be called

Rallus virginianus pacificus, subsp. nov. Pacific Virginia Rail.

Type.—Male, first winter; no. 11337, collection of Donald R. Dickey; 5 miles west of Corona, Riverside County, California; December 21, 1913; collected by A. J. van Rossem.

Subspecific characters.—Similar to *Rallus virginianus virginianus* Linnaeus of the eastern United States, but averaging larger in all measurements.

Range.—Pacific drainage of North America from British Columbia to Lower California, and probably eastward to the Rocky Mountains.

Remarks.—While I have seen only a relatively small number of birds from the middle western states, these are fully as small as Atlantic seaboard specimens. I have not been able to examine any from the Rocky Mountain area. Those individuals breeding on the western border of the Great Basin, in Inyo County, California, and from Laguna Dam on the lower Colorado River in winter, belong with the western race; and it is not unlikely that the new form will be found to extend eastward as far as the Rocky Mountains.

Specimens examined.—*Rallus virginianus virginianus*: Massachusetts, 11; New York, 1; New Jersey, 1; South Carolina, 4; Georgia, 3; Florida, 1; Minnesota, 1; Illinois, 1; Ohio, 1; Iowa, 1. Total, 25.

Rallus virginianus pacificus: British Columbia, 5; Washington, 3; California, 63; Lower California, 2. Total, 73.

My thanks are due to the San Diego Museum of Natural History, Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, Museum of Comparative Zoology, California Academy of Sciences, and the Los Angeles Museum for the courteous loan of specimens in their collections.

MEASUREMENTS

	Wing	Tail	Exposed culmen	Tarsus	Middle toe minus claw
♂ ♂ <i>pacificus</i>	104.0-113.5 (107.3)	42.0-51.0 (46.2)	38.2-47.1 (42.0)	36.0-39.3 (37.8)	33.5-38.5 (35.7)
♂ ♂ <i>virginianus</i>	98.0-105.0 (102.8)	40.0-47.5 (43.7)	35.8-42.5 (39.2)	32.5-37.0 (35.0)	30.1-35.7 (33.7)
♀ ♀ <i>pacificus</i>	96.5-107.5 (101.6)	40.0-48.5 (43.4)	33.4-41.3 (37.1)	31.7-36.8 (33.8)	30.5-35.4 (33.0)
♀ ♀ <i>virginianus</i>	92.0-101.5 (96.0)	38.0-43.0 (40.0)	32.0-36.9 (34.9)	30.6-33.4 (32.2)	29.2-32.6 (31.1)

—DONALD R. DICKEY, *California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, California, June 16, 1928.*

Notes on Some Birds of Western Montana.—I was interested in reading some notes on new birds from western Montana by Winton Weydemeyer of Libby, (see CONDOR, XXIX, 1927, p. 159). This observer mentioned seeing a flock of about forty Pinyon Jays flying over the town of Eureka, January 11, 1921. On August 21, 1924, his brother observed a small flock near Libby. He says there seem to be no previous records of this bird in Montana west of the divide. Perhaps, in this connection, my record would be of interest.

Pinyon Jay (*Cyanocephalus cyanocephalus*). On November 14, 1926, I observed a solitary Pinyon Jay in our city tourist park, which is west of the Continental Divide. The day was cloudy, after a rainy night. The bird seemed restless but not wild, flying from branch to branch and tree to tree, in a small yellow pine grove, sometimes alighting on the ground, and giving its call-note in a rather subdued tone. On returning to the park a few hours later I saw it again, but not after that date.

Northern Varied Thrush (*Ixoreus naevius meruloides*). In a Distributional List of the Birds of Montana by A. A. Saunders (Pacific Coast Avifauna No. 14, 1921)

the Northern Varied Thrush is not reported from Missoula. I have seen it a number of times here in March or April, in the years 1921, 1922, 1924, 1926, and 1928. In each case with but one exception one individual only was seen, usually a male. Nearly all were in our city park, a natural wood through which a mountain stream flows. Only once have I heard the full song, on April 7, 1926. The earliest record is for March 9, 1924, and the latest, April 16, 1922.

Townsend Solitaire (*Myadestes townsendi*). Seen here occasionally in March and April in our city park. I have seen as many as five individuals on one trip. The earliest records I have are for January 15, and 22, 1922. One was seen on February 24, 1927. I have heard the full song only once, April 9, 1927. My latest spring record is for May 7, 1922. For Missoula I have one fall record, September 17, 1921, but in the mountains a few miles from Missoula I saw one on November 18, 1923.—CAROLINE WELLS, *Missoula, Montana, June 10, 1928.*

Behavior of Saw-whet Owls in Yosemite Park.—On the morning of April 18, 1926, we had been out for our daily bird walk and were returning along the south road between Camp Curry and Yosemite Village. As we neared the village we came to the old cottonwood shaft where two years ago a pair of Red-shafted Flickers had drilled out a nest-hole. It was noted that the hole had recently been enlarged, there being fresh fractures where bits of wood had been chipped from the rim. We rapped on the stump and suddenly there appeared the face of a Saw-whet Owl (*Cryptoglaux acadica*) at the entrance. His round head and shoulders completely filled the aperture as he gazed down at us. For fifteen minutes we watched the owl and although only fifteen feet above us, he did not appear the least bit afraid, nor did he change his position. His yellow eyes blinked, occasionally he winked, but he did not move or utter a sound. As we watched, the owl apparently became very sleepy, and so we moved away silently that he might not be further disturbed. When last we looked his head still occupied the hole.

Twice during the next four days we visited the old stump and on both occasions the "yellow-eyed one" responded to our knock. And then on the morning of April 25 we were again in the neighborhood and when within one hundred yards of the owl's home we were attracted by the scolding chatter of many small birds. We soon located the center of concern in the upper branches of a young pine that grew in a thicket of young pines. The mob of small birds was pestering a Saw-whet Owl. The owl was about forty feet above the ground and perched like a knot on the branch close to the main axis of the tree. We shook the tree and the owl flew twenty feet to perch in relatively the same position in another tree. The little birds followed him, but in spite of the noise he closed his eyes and apparently went to sleep. Under the tree where the owl was first perched were numerous disgorged pellets. All pellets contained what we identified as the fur of meadow mice. There were also the jaw bones of some small mammal, and many other small bones which we could not identify. Leaving the sleepy owl in the pine wood we visited the owl tree and found a Saw-whet at home.

At eight o'clock of the same evening we were back at the owl tree in the bright moonlight. After waiting ten minutes an owl poked its head out from the hole, where it remained motionless for a full ten minutes. Finally it left the nest and flew up the light lane within four feet of us. Like a gray ghost shadow it moved without sound. In ten minutes the bird was back. It appeared to alight in the branches of a cedar near the nest-tree. Nothing more happened that we could see. However, it would have been possible for the owl to come to the nest and get away without our seeing it.

As the days went by we had many visits with the Saw-whet; but nothing new or exciting happened until the morning of May 12. On this day we were amazed to find a young owl in full plumage looking out from the nest-hole. The white markings on this bird's face were much more conspicuous than in the older bird, and its blue-gray crown and roach were not so streaked. Its feathers looked softer and fresher. The owl could apparently see very well in the bright light and was interested in all that was going on about him.

After discovering the young owl we went again to the tree that night, arriving at 6:45 P. M. One young owl could be indistinctly seen at the back of the hole, but