

FROM FIELD AND STUDY

Nesting Density of Virginia and Sora Rails in Michigan.—During the summer of 1950 I made observations on a breeding population of Virginia Rails (*Rallus limicola*) and Sora Rails (*Porzana carolina*) in a roughly oblong half-acre of marsh lying along the north edge of a fifteen-acre wooded swamp near Dixboro, Washtenaw County, Michigan. Throughout this particular marsh the water was about a foot deep (shallower along the north edge), the growth of cattail (*Typha latifolia*) and coarse sedge (*Carex* sp.) was fairly uniform, and there was a scattering of low buttonbushes (*Cephalanthus occidentale*). The marsh was more or less surrounded by higher vegetation—a dense fringe of shrubbery just to the north, and tall buttonbushes and willow trees (*Salix* sp.) in other directions.

I found five Virginia and four Sora nests in an area slightly less than half an acre in extent. So far as I could see, the two species chose exactly the same sort of nest site. Some nests were in small, more or less isolated clumps of sedge, others in larger, less definite mixed clumps of sedge and cattail. All the nests were a very short distance (2 to 5 inches) above water level.

The maximum distance between any two of the nine nests was 267 (measured) feet; the shortest distance between a Virginia and Sora nest, 14 feet, 2 inches; between two Virginia nests, 33 feet; between two Sora nests, 80 feet, 7 inches. The shortest distance between a nest (Virginia) and dry ground was 22 feet; the greatest distance (Sora), 102 feet. All nine nests were active simultaneously and at least eight of them were successful.

The earliest date on which I found a Sora nest was May 12; on that date I found two nests, one with 2, the other with 4 eggs. The earliest date on which I found a Virginia nest was May 16; on that date I found two nests, one with 3, the other with 7 eggs. Virginia eggs began hatching June 4, seven days later than in either 1948 or 1949, when nests were more widely distributed. Sora eggs began hatching June 2, ten days later than in 1948 (no Sora nests were found in the study area in 1949). Growth of vegetation was retarded by low temperatures in the spring of 1950 and the rails did not nest in certain adjacent areas they had occupied the two previous years. The existence of suitable cover within the circumscribed area, and the absence of it elsewhere in early May may therefore have been largely responsible for this concentration of nests there.—ANDREW J. BERGER, *Department of Anatomy, University of Michigan Medical School, Ann Arbor, Michigan, February 15, 1951.*

The Lucifer Hummingbird in the United States.—The Lucifer Hummingbird (*Calothorax lucifer*) was first recorded for the United States in the "American Sportsman" (1875, 5:328). Henshaw (Rept. Sec. War, 2(2), 1875:1070, 1082) listed a single individual (U. S. Nat. Mus. no. 72535) from near Camp Bowie, Arizona, on August 8, 1874. The female specimen in question was at that time reported as another species (*Doricha enicura*) but, when examined again by Lawrence, was correctly determined as *Calothorax lucifer* (Bull. Nutt. Ornith. Club, 2, 1877:108-109). Ridgway, in a monograph on "The Hummingbirds" (Ann. Rept. U. S. Nat. Mus., 1890 (1891):359-362), gave a detailed account of the Lucifer Hummingbird and referred particularly to the Camp Bowie specimen. In addition, he figured a female in plate 42 (opposite page 360), the caption of which stated "Female. (Cat. No. 115294, U. S. N. M. Arizona. Collected by O. T. Baron.)" The latter specimen could not be found in the National Museum collection, but reference to the Museum catalogue indicated that it was entered in the records on January 29, 1889, and that it was purchased for \$2.50. In a letter dated November 11, 1888, to Robert Ridgway, Baron apparently made reference to this bird by stating "The ♀ H. bird I shot in Arizona I shall send to you as soon as I get to S.[an] F.[rancisco] etc."

Oberholser (Auk, 19, 1902:300) was the first to list the species for Texas when he stated: "Taken in the Chisos Mountains." His statement was based on an immature male (U. S. Nat. Mus. no. 168401) which he secured in Pine Canyon at 6000 feet on June 6, 1901, and on a male and female collected by L. A. Fuertes at the same place on June 7, 1901. (The Fuertes specimens were recorded previously as May 7, 1901.) Mrs. Florence Merriam Bailey (Handbook of Birds of the Western United States, 1902:243) stated: "In the Chisos Mountains in western Texas, Mr. Bailey found the Lucifer hummer with several other species common [?] in June [1901] about the big agaves, which were then in full flower." Ridgway (U. S. Nat. Mus. Bull. 50, pt. 5, 1911:653) stated, "Chisos Mountains, breeding," and the A. O. U. Check-list (1931:179) listed the Chisos Mountains in the range of the species. Since