

MEXICAN NESTING RECORDS FOR THE AMERICAN BITTERN

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The southern limit of the nesting range of the American Bittern (*Botaurus lentiginosus*) is generally considered to be along the southern tier of states of the United States (American Ornithologists' Union, Check-list of North American Birds, 5th ed., 1957; Palmer, Handbook of North American Birds, Vol. 1, Yale Univ. Press, 1962). Although the species is known to winter in suitable localities throughout Mexico, it has not been reported nesting in that country (Friedmann, Griscom and Moore, Pacific Coast Avifauna no. 29, 1950).

The collection of the National Museum of Natural History (USNM) contains three specimens of American Bittern taken by E. A. Goldman at Lerma, Mexico, on 4 July 1904. One bird is an adult female (USNM 193851); the other two are nestlings, both labeled as males (USNM 193852, 193853). Although the young birds are mostly downy, body feathers on the neck and scapular region permit specific identification. They appear to be 10 days to 2 weeks old, as judged by the description of young given by Bent (Life Histories of North American Marsh Birds, U. S. Natl. Mus. Bull. 135, 1926). Goldman's journal for this period indicates that the species was "rather common and breeding." These specimens establish that the American Bittern bred in central Mexico 70 years ago.

On 3 July 1957 and 31 May 1968 R. W. D. heard the characteristic "pumping" of this species at Laguna del Carmen, Puebla, and on 12 July 1957 saw one individual there. These records probably indicate an additional breeding locality. R. W. D. also saw and collected the species at Laguna del Carmen in September 1961, saw it at Lago San Felipe, Puebla, in April 1962, and at Lago Coatetelco, Morelos, on 13 September 1961, and saw and collected it at Laguna Patzcuaro, Michoacán, in late August and September 1957. The April and August-September records suggest areas in which the possibility of breeding should be investigated.

Statements of the nesting range of *Botaurus lentiginosus* should be amended to account for at least occasional breeding in suitable portions of Mexico as far south as the states of Mexico and Puebla.

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