

Wilson Bull., 101(1), 1989, pp. 115–117

Additional records of birds from Cat Island, Bahamas.—During 11–15 March 1986, we visited Cat Island (34 km southeast of Eleuthera) in the Bahamas. Here we report on 27 species of birds whose status on Cat Island is poorly known (Buden 1987), including eight for which no previous records exist. Also included are our observations of several species on Eleuthera during the winter of 1985–1986, to aid in understanding their occurrence on Cat Island.

Double-crested Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax auritus*).—Seventeen were sighted near Orange Creek on 12 March, and 15 at Gambier Lake on 14 March. Although several Olivaceous Cormorants (*P. olivaceus*) spent the winter on Eleuthera, none were seen on Cat Island.

Hérons.—During 11–15 March two Great Egrets (*Casmerodius albus*), one Snowy Egret (*Egretta thula*), and two Little Blue Herons (*E. caerulea*) were observed. All past records of these species are from late April to August (Buden 1987).

Blue-winged Teal (*Anas discors*).—The most numerous wintering duck on Eleuthera, a pair at Orange Creek on 13 March is the first Cat Island sighting.

Black-necked Stilt (*Himantopus mexicanus*).—Sixty-one near Orange Creek on 13 March were probably recently arrived summer visitors. On Eleuthera stilts were first observed on 24 February, the previous early date for that island being 5 March (Connor and Loftin 1985).

Other shorebirds.—Five species were observed that have previously been recorded on Cat Island only from May to August, including 12 Black-bellied Plovers (*Pluvialis squatarola*), 20 Greater Yellowlegs (*Tringa melanoleuca*), one Lesser Yellowlegs (*T. flavipes*), three Willets (*Catoptrophorus semipalmatus*), and four Least Sandpipers (*Calidris minutilla*). Spring migrant Willets on Eleuthera first were detected on 10 April; thus the three Cat Island sightings probably represent wintering individuals.

Laughing Gull (*Larus atricilla*).—None were seen on Cat Island, and only one was observed all winter on Eleuthera until a few appeared in mid-March. A similar pattern has been reported on New Providence (Brudenell-Bruce 1975), but this scarcity conflicts with findings by Buden (1987) on Cat Island (“common to very common resident”), and Connor and Loftin (1985) on Eleuthera (“more abundant in winter”).

Royal Tern (*Sterna maxima*).—One near Old Bight on 12 March either wintered locally or was an early migrant. On Eleuthera spring arrivals first were noted in early April.

Common Barn-Owl (*Tyto alba*).—The third Cat Island record was one flushed from a sinkhole near Old Bight on 12 March.

Gray Catbird (*Dumetella carolinensis*).—Three at Knowles on 13 March is the first report from Cat Island. This species was common on Eleuthera into early April.

Pearly-eyed Thrasher (*Margarops fuscatus*).—On 13 March one was seen briefly, 2 km northwest of New Bight, as it flew 30 m ahead of us across the road in dense brush habitat. It could not be relocated. This species was not found by Buden in May–July 1986, and breeding is unconfirmed in the Bahamas north of San Salvador (Buden 1987). One other Cat Island record (Paulson 1966).

Yellow-throated Vireo (*Vireo flavifrons*).—One at Old Bight on 12 March represents the first Cat Island record. This species was a rare winter resident on Eleuthera.

Cape May Warbler (*Dendroica tigrina*).—Four near Old Bight during 12–15 March are the first records on Cat Island.

Yellow-rumped Warbler (*D. coronata*).—Ten “Myrtle” Warblers (*D. c. coronata*) at three locations during 11–13 March are the first Cat Island sightings of this species, which was common on Eleuthera from mid-January to mid-March.

Yellow-throated Warbler (*D. dominica*).—Five were located at three locations during 11–13 March. One previous record (Buden 1987).

Black-and-white Warbler (*Mniotilta varia*).—One at New Bight on 11 March is the first Cat Island record.

American Redstart (*Setophaga ruticilla*).—One was at Arthur's Town on 13 March, the second island record. Redstarts are fairly common in winter on Eleuthera (Connor and Loftin 1985, pers. obs.).

Ovenbird (*Seiurus aurocapillus*).—Despite only one other record (Buden 1987), this species is probably widespread on Cat Island in winter. We found two at Old Bight on 12 March, and one at Arthur's Town on 13 March.

Northern Waterthrush (*Seiurus noveboracensis*).—One at Old Bight on 12 March, and two at Orange Creek on 13 March are the first island records. This species is common in winter on Eleuthera (Connor and Loftin 1985, pers. obs.).

Common Yellowthroat (*Geothlypis trichas*).—One was at Old Bight on 12 March, for the second island record.

Indigo Bunting (*Passerina cyanea*).—Apparently a common winter resident on Cat Island, as it is on Eleuthera. One previous record (Ridgway 1891), but we found 24 at three localities during 11–13 March, primarily foraging in casuarinas (*Casuarina equisetifolia*).

Northern Oriole (*Icterus galbula*).—A female "Baltimore" Oriole (*I. g. galbula*) at Old Bight on 12 March is the first report of this species on Cat Island. Two were located on Eleuthera in February 1986.

Observations of Cat Island birds have been limited; the eight additions reported here bring the island's species total up to 105. Six of those (Blue-winged Teal, Gray Catbird, Cape May Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Black-and-white Warbler, Northern Waterthrush) are common winter residents in the Bahamas, whereas the Yellow-throated Vireo and Northern Oriole are scarce (Bond 1980). In four months on nearby Eleuthera we detected 56 bird species that are presently unknown on Cat Island, suggesting that further field work, particularly during migration and winter, will add many species to the known Cat Island avifauna.

Acknowledgments.—These observations were recorded during a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service search for wintering Kirtland's Warblers (*Dendroica kirtlandii*) in the Bahamas, from December 1985 to April 1986. We thank P. W. Sykes, Jr., and the staff of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Southeast Research Station, University of Georgia, for organizing the Cat Island visit. This note benefited from comments by D. W. Buden, F. L. Knopf, D. H. White, and an anonymous reviewer. Permission to conduct research in the Bahamas was granted by the Bahamas Ministry of Agriculture and the Bahamas National Trust.

LITERATURE CITED

- BOND, J. 1980. Birds of the West Indies, fourth ed. Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston, Massachusetts.
- BRUDENELL-BRUCE, P. G. C. 1975. The birds of New Providence and the Bahama Islands. Taplinger Publ. Co., New York, New York.
- BUDEN, D. W. 1987. The birds of Cat Island, Bahamas. Wilson Bull. 99:579–600.
- CONNOR, H. A. AND R. W. LOFTIN. 1985. The birds of Eleuthera Island, Bahamas. Florida Field Nat. 14:77–104.
- PAULSON, D. R. 1966. New records of birds from the Bahama Islands. Notulae Naturae, Acad. Nat. Sci. Philadelphia 394:1–15.
- RIDGWAY, R. 1891. List of birds collected on the Bahama Islands by the naturalists of the Fish Commission steamer *Albatross*. Auk 8:333–339.

WILLIAM H. HOWE, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Ecology Research Center, 1300 Blue Spruce Drive, Fort Collins, Colorado 80524-2098; DANIEL M. TAYLOR, Dept. Zoology, Univ. Montana, Missoula, Montana 59812; AND DAVID A. JETT, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Patuxent Wildlife Research Center, Southeast Field Station, School of Forest Resources, Univ. Georgia, Athens, Georgia 30602. Received 18 May 1988, accepted 1 Sept. 1988.

Wilson Bull., 101(1), 1989, pp. 117–120

Notes on the rail *Rallus longirostris tenuirostris* in the highlands of central Mexico.—The King Rail/Clapper Rail (*Rallus elegans*/*R. longirostris*) complex is represented in the freshwater marshes of the highlands of central Mexico by a richly colored form described as *Rallus elegans tenuirostris* by Ridgway (1874). Warner and Dickerman (1959) provided the first natural history information on *tenuirostris* and greatly extended its known range, Hardy and Dickerman (1965) briefly noted these rails incidental to other studies, and Dickerman (1971) further clarified the range. As presently understood, *tenuirostris* occurs exclusively in freshwater situations at elevations of 800 m to 2500 m in the states of Nayarit, Jalisco, Michoacán, Guanajuato, San Luis Potosí, (Estado de) México, Tlaxcala, Puebla, and Guerrero and the Distrito Federal. With but one exception, all specimens reported as King Rails or Clapper Rails from the Central Highlands are referable to *tenuirostris* (Dickerman 1971, Banks and Tomlinson 1974). During my studies of waterbirds in Mexico, I observed *tenuirostris* on several occasions in the highlands of Jalisco and adjacent Guanajuato. These observations provide four new localities of occurrence, document the first reported nest of this race, extend the breeding season, and describe environmental factors governing the seasonal movements, breeding ecology, and status of this rail in central Mexico.

Taxonomic considerations.—The taxonomic position of *tenuirostris* is complicated by uncertainty about the status of King and Clapper rails with which *tenuirostris* shares characters. Noting that *R. elegans* and *R. longirostris* may interbreed, Dickerman (1971) suggested that the two were ecological replacements of each other and proposed lumping all races under *R. longirostris*, the older name. This treatment was also recommended by Blake (1977) and followed by Ripley (1977). However, the American Ornithologists' Union (1983) retained *elegans* and *longirostris* as separate species. Oberholser (1937), who accepted *elegans* and *longirostris* as distinct species, was the first to consider *tenuirostris* a race of the Clapper Rail, noting that even though *tenuirostris* "is the form that most closely approaches *Rallus elegans* in [coloration]" (op. cit.:337), it presented "no characters that are not bridged over by individual variation when all the forms [of *R. longirostris*] are considered" (op. cit.: 314). The placement of *tenuirostris* as a race of *R. longirostris* has been generally accepted during the past 50 years (e.g., Ridgway and Friedmann 1941, Blake 1953, Deignan 1961, Anderson and Ohmart 1985) and I have followed this trend. The American Ornithologists' Union (1983) still lists the form as a race of *R. elegans*.

Use of seasonal wetlands.—Warner and Dickerman (1959) found *tenuirostris* in many "extensive" marsh areas west of Mexico City, and I occasionally noted these rails at similar large permanent wetlands. However, I also found them in smaller seasonal wetlands in Jalisco after the onset of the summer rains, which typically begin in mid-June. In Jalisco, as throughout the range of *tenuirostris*, rainfall is the most pronounced seasonal variable. Guadalajara, located centrally in Jalisco, receives an annual average of 95 cm of precipitation, with 86% falling as rain during the June–September period (Wernstedt 1972). The effects