

bird of a pair and which had remained on the estate for fifteen years or more and has several times been mentioned in the columns of 'The Auk,' proved this year to be a female, built a nest on a small island in Quisset harbor and laid two eggs. One of these was broken but the other I rescued and sent to the Museum of Comparative Zoology.

Since our native Cranes are becoming so scarce would it not be a good plan to interest someone in liberating some of these interesting birds in Florida or elsewhere in the United States where they would be afforded some protection and see if they would not become acclimated, and increase?—LOMBARD CARTER JONES, *Falmouth, Mass.*

Proper Name of the Virginia Rail.—Not long after the appearance of the 1910 edition of the A. O. U. Check-List Mr. Roy Q. Curtis called attention of the Committee to the fact that the name *Rallus virginianus* long applied to the Virginia Rail was in reality based on the Sora (*Porzana carolina*). For some reason no action on the matter was ever taken although Mr. Curtis' contention is undoubtedly correct.

Linnaeus based his name on the descriptions of Catesby and Brisson and as the latter in turn quoted Catesby as his authority this author becomes the sole source of the name.

Catesby's description and plate clearly refer to the Sora so that the name *Rallus virginianus* Linn., 1766 becomes a synonym of the earlier *Rallus carolinus* Linn., 1758, and the Virginia Rail is left without a name. Dr. C. W. Richmond however informs me that there is an available name in *Rallus limicola* Vieillot. (Nouv. Dict. Hist. Nat., Vol. 18, 1819, p. 558) and hereafter the bird must be known by that name. It is inconceivable how our earlier ornithologists ever identified Catesby's figure, with its short conical bill, as the Virginia Rail.—WITMER STONE, *Acad. Nat. Sci., Philadelphia.*

A Rail Conundrum.—Early on the morning of April 27, 1930, I was "railing" over the broad expanse of fresh water marsh along the Whippany River, not far from Boonton, N. J., known as Troy Meadows. Upon a dry path I stood listening to a chorus of bird notes—the rolling whinney and frog-like *ker-wee* of the Soras; the sequenced grunts and paired *kaks* of the Virginia Rail a-wooing, and a mixture of whines and wails establishing the presence of a number of Florida Gallinules.

Suddenly, close to me—barely fifteen feet away—came a note which I had never heard. It was repeated several times. I wrote it *kik, kik, kik, kik, kik-keé er*, with the last notes slightly rasping but full and of a decidedly musical quality. It was, in fact, a song. As I looked toward the focus of these new sound waves a small bird crossed and re-crossed, quickly but in plain sight, over five feet of open marsh between tussocks. It was very close, and very black—much darker than the Virginia Rail still standing in the open, and I saw below the cocked tail on a dark-feathered background, narrow white bars. Light conditions could not have been better and I had no mental hesitation in calling the bird a Black Rail.