

**A Fossil Rail from the Pliocene of Arizona.**—For several years Dr. Allan Phillips and others have made periodical examination of a fossil deposit attributed to the Upper Pliocene, located on the Gray Ranch, near Wikieup post office, Mohave County, in northwestern Arizona. This has yielded a number of bones of birds. Among these is the tarsometatarsus of a medium-sized rail that has been placed in my hands for study and that proves to be a species hitherto unknown. The description is as follows:

*Rallus phillipsi* sp. nov.

*Characters.*—Tarsometatarsus (fig. 1) generally similar to that of the living Clapper Rail (*Rallus longirostris* Boddaert) but definitely smaller, being intermediate in size between that species and the living Virginia Rail (*Rallus limicola* Vieillot); compared with *Rallus longirostris*, fourth trochlea relatively smaller; middle trochlea, viewed from the outer side, narrower.

Total length 47.4 mm., transverse breadth across head 5.6, transverse breadth at center of shaft 3.2, transverse breadth across trochlea 5.9.

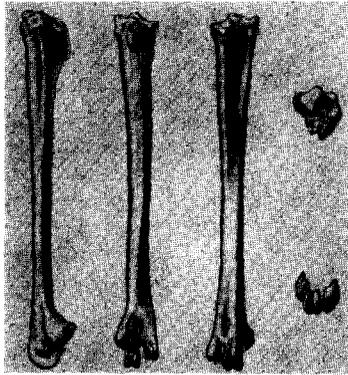


Fig. 1. Type of *Rallus phillipsi*,  $\times 0.5$ .

*Type.*—Right tarsometatarsus, collection of Allan R. Phillips no. L.135 (on deposit in the United States National Museum), collected in April, 1952, complete except for the tendinal loop on the upper anterior end of the shaft below the head.

*Remarks.*—The new species is larger than *Rallus prentici* Wetmore from the Upper Pliocene of Meade County, Kansas, this being the only other rail of its genus with which it needs direct comparison, except for the two living species mentioned above; remains of both living species have been found fossil in Pleistocene deposits. In some of its characters *Rallus phillipsi* approaches the genus *Porzana*, as represented by the living *Porzana carolina* (Linnaeus), suggesting a closer affiliation of this genus with *Rallus* through the species that lived during the latter part of the Tertiary. The bird here described, however, may be placed in *Rallus* since it agrees with *Rallus longirostris* and *Rallus limicola* and differs from *Porzana* in the definitely greater posterior projection of the second trochlea and the greater and more open gap between the distal end of this segment and the base of the third trochlea.

The type of *R. phillipsi* is light grayish white in color and is well fossilized. Although the area of the head is slightly porous, suggesting an immature bird that has only recently attained its growth, the appearance throughout is such as to leave no uncertainty as to full development of the characters that mark the adult stage. The drawing illustrating it is the work of Lawrence B. Isham of the Department of Geology in the United States National Museum.

The species is named for Dr. Allan R. Phillips in recognition of his detailed studies of the living species of birds found in Arizona.

In an earlier note (Condor, 45, 1943:120) I reported a broken coracoid of a large swan as *Cygnus* sp. from this same deposit near Wikieup. At that time it was supposed that the beds concerned were of Miocene age, but further observations have placed them in the Pliocene. This correction relative to the swan specimen should be noted. In this connection Dr. Phillips informs me that further swan

material from this quarry seems to represent the subgenus *Sthenelides*. It is probable that the earlier, badly preserved specimen may belong in this same group.—ALEXANDER WETMORE, *Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., January 9, 1957.*

**Bay-breasted Warbler off California Coast.**—On the morning of October 6, 1956, a specimen of the Bay-breasted Warbler (*Dendroica castanea*) was obtained 24 miles south-southeast of San Clemente Island, almost due west of San Diego, California. This location is out of sight of any land mass, and the bird, after circling the ship for approximately ten minutes, attempted to land. The crew of the vessel, a commercial chartered fishing craft, indicated that it was not uncommon to find small land birds off the coast, and that "many were picked up and released when they returned to port." This bird, following unsuccessful attempts to land on the rigging, slipped into the water and was netted by the crew.

The specimen, now number 134974 in the collections of the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, was checked for identification by Dr. Harrison B. Tordoff. The bird is an immature, as shown by the plumage, having only a faint suffusion of buff on the breast, and by the skull, which was only partly ossified. It was a male, and it was considerably emaciated.

No reference can be found to the occurrence of this warbler in the western United States, although numerous reports are available concerning vagrant warblers taken or seen at sea near the California coast and on the Channel Islands off southern California. It would seem most likely that passerine birds would appear away from shore during conditions of unusual wind velocity. At the time the Bay-breasted Warbler was taken, there was no storm, nor had there been high winds. The bird was alone; no other passerines were observed on this particular day.

One must concede that, particularly among migrants, the mortality is great because of straying from regular migration routes. Grinnell (*Auk*, 34, 1922:373-380) discusses such vagrants carefully, and we can but conclude with him that this Bay-breasted Warbler was a "pioneer . . . sacrificed in the interests of the species."—M. DALE ARVEY, *Long Beach State College, Long Beach, California, February 20, 1957.*

**Blue and White Swallow in México.**—On May 24, 1954, Alvarez collected a swallow from a mixed flock of *Petrochelidon fulva* and *Progne chalybea* which was roosting within a building in Tuxtla Gutiérrez, Chiapas, México. The bird was presented to the Museum of Comparative Zoology (no. 280768), where it was identified as an immature example of the Blue and White Swallows, *Atticora cyanoleuca patagonica*; the race involved breeds from Bolivia southward and winters to the north. The specimen has light-colored underwing coverts and its crissum is white with the longest feathers tipped with the dusky—characters which unequivocally distinguish *patagonica* from the other races.

Howell (*Condor*, 57, 1955:188-189) recently found this swallow in Nicaragua; his record at the time was the most northern station for this form, which commonly winters north to Colombia and Panamá. The addition of a record from México suggests that *patagonica* may be a regular migrant north of Panamá. If this is true, the specimen from Tuxtla Gutiérrez would seem to represent the longest known migration of a South American non-marine species, although, of course, some stray birds have travelled even farther.—RAYMOND A. PAYNTER, JR., *Museum of Comparative Zoology, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts*, and MIGUEL ALVAREZ DEL TORO, *Instituto Zoológico del Estado, Tuxtla Gutiérrez, Chiapas, México, November 30, 1956.*

**Translocated Golden-crowned Sparrows Return to Winter Range.**—On February 4, 1956, several Golden-crowned Sparrows (*Zonotrichia atricapilla*) were trapped and banded in a residential garden at San Jose, California. After acclimatization to cages they were shipped by commercial aircraft to Pullman, Washington, on February 14 for use in studies in the physiology of avian migration. On March 6 they were placed in individual activity-recording cages designed to determine their 24-hour activity patterns. The cages were exposed to the weather on the roof of the Science Building on the campus of the State College of Washington. By accident, two birds escaped from their cages on March 19 and one on April 4.

On December 1, 1956, Golden-crowned Sparrows were again trapped in the same residential garden at San Jose. Among them were the two which escaped at Pullman on the previous March 19. The escapee of April 4 has not been seen.