

I first observed foot-dragging on 22 March 1969 at a pond in the Big Cypress Swamp of southern Florida. Additional observations were made at Mrazek Pond in Everglades National Park on 10 December 1970. Certain conditions prevalent during the first series of observations are pertinent in accounting for the use of such active feeding techniques.

The pond, 0.25 hectares in area, is composed of two vegetation zones—a peripheral area of emergent grass (*Paspalum* spp.) and a central area which during periods of high water is filled with submerged naiad (*Najas flexilis*). During intervals of low rainfall, the water level in the Big Cypress Swamp drops. Fish and other aquatic organisms become concentrated within the pond from the surrounding swamp and marshlands. If low water levels occur at the proper time, these organisms provide a highly concentrated food source for numerous herons, storks and ibises which then frequent the pond. The feeding aggregation of wading birds and other aspects of the ecology of this pond were described by Kushlan (An ecological study of an alligator pond in the Big Cypress Swamp of southern Florida. M.S. Thesis, University of Miami, Coral Gables, Florida. 1972, 197 pp.). On 22 March 1969 herons began to arrive at the pond at 06:10 just after first light. Snowy Egrets first flew into the pond at 06:17 and began to feed immediately; by 06:45, 450 Snowy Egrets were feeding there. These birds were dispersed throughout the shallow emergent zone where they stood upon the trampled grass and used stand and wait feeding behavior exclusively. By 07:00 many herons including several hundred Snowy Egrets had left the pond. At 07:15 one Snowy Egret began feeding using foot-dragging behavior while flying from one side of the pond to the other. On each pass it flew low over the grass and upon reaching the open water of the central area it began to drag its feet in the water continuing this for the length of the pond—a distance of approximately 30 meters. Four other Snowy Egrets joined the first and these birds fed in this manner for 10 minutes. Meanwhile other Snowy Egrets continued to stand in the grass and although some successfully captured prey most did not attempt to feed.

In this instance stand and wait behavior was used early in the morning when the oxygen concentration of the water is lowest and fish are concentrated near the surface of the pond (Kushlan, op. cit.). Snowy Egrets began to use the more active technique when fish were less available and, from qualitative observation, success using stand and wait behavior was limited. These observations support the contention of Meyerriecks (Nat. Hist., 71:57, 1962) that such active feeding methods are resorted to when other methods fail or when other areas of habitat are not productive. Further evidence is derived from observations of Louisiana Herons (*Hydranassa tricolor*) at the pond. Few were present in 1969 during the period when the wading bird aggregation actively utilized the pond. However several fed in the pond on 30 March 1969 after the activities of wading birds had reduced fish density (Kushlan, op. cit.). At that time Louisiana Herons along with Snowy Egrets fed by hovering-stirring almost exclusively.—JAMES A. KUSHLAN, *Department of Biology, University of Miami, Coral Gables, Florida 33214, 4 October 1971.*

**Observations on the status, ecology, and behavior of Soras wintering in Trinidad, West Indies.**—The Sora (*Porzana carolina*) winters from the southern United States to northern South America, but it has been considered rare on Trinidad, West Indies (Leotaud, Oiseaux de l'Isle de la Trinidad, 1866, p. 495; Herklots, The birds of Trinidad and Tobago, Collins, London, 1961, p. 74). Belcher and Smooker (Ibis, 1935: 279–297, 1935), who found most of the other species of rails known from the Island,

never collected the Sora, although they did attribute to this species a nest, on which basis they hypothesized the existence of a local breeding race. Although the egg measurements they list do fall within the size range reported for the Sora by Bent (U.S. Natl. Mus. Bull., 135:305, 1926) no such race has been discovered, and the measurements also match those given by the same authors (op. cit.) for *Laterallus exilis*.

From February to May 1965, I studied the ecology of a freshwater impoundment on the northeastern edge of the Caroni Swamp in Trinidad, and during this time I saw and heard many Soras. My observations were made only during the dry season. I first observed Soras foraging on exposed mudflats among the extensive beds of rushes (*Cyperus articulatus* and *Eleocharis mutata*), and later flushed them from these rushes wherever there was standing water. I occasionally flushed Soras from the dense stands of the emergent arum (*Montrachardia arborescens*) on the banks of the Caroni River itself, but I did not find them among the lower emergent vegetation such as water hyacinth (*Eichornia crassipes*) and a "morning glory" (*Ipomea aquatica*) which were frequented by the smaller Yellow-breasted Crake (*Porzana flaviventer*). This latter species, only recently reported from Trinidad, (French and French, Wilson Bull., 78:5-11, 1966), was also common in the marsh.

As the dry season progressed, more and more of the marsh was left without standing water, and the Soras moved into the remaining wet areas with taller vegetation (up to 1.2 meters) which they had previously shunned. The same shift in habitat was noted for the Common Gallinule (*Gallinula chloropus*), Wattled Jacana (*Jacana jacana*), and Stripe-backed Bittern (*Ixobrychus involucris*), but not for the Spotted Rail (*Rallus maculatus*) nor Yellow-breasted Crake which are perhaps more tolerant of drier conditions.

Several authors (Bond, Birds of the West Indies, Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston, 1961; Slud, Bull. Amer. Mus. Nat. Hist., 128:84, 1964; and Wetmore, Smithsonian Misc. Coll., 150:350, 1965) have indicated that the Sora is not very vocal on its wintering grounds, and Soras which I observed elsewhere in the West Indies were, indeed, silent. On Trinidad, however, I often heard spontaneous calls which I attributed to Soras. Two notes, a brief nasal *ka* and a more plaintive *peeyanh* ending with a rising inflection were similar to call notes I have heard from Soras on their breeding grounds. Once in April I heard the typical "whinny" call. The size of the wintering Sora population was estimated from the number of birds flushed while walking transects through the marsh, from the number of spontaneous calls, and from calls elicited by exploding firecrackers. I estimated that no fewer than 40 and perhaps 50 to 80 Soras were present in 26 hectares of marsh. Of the birds seen well two-thirds were in immature plumage. Soras were encountered on all 15 visits from 25 February to 24 April, but despite careful coverage none were found on 4 visits from 30 April to 6 May. The maximum daily count was 30 birds on 20 March, but this probably reflects unusually extensive coverage rather than an influx of northbound migrants from South America. No birds were collected so information on stomach contents is not available, but on one occasion a Sora was observed apparently feeding on small gastropods adhering to the emergent vegetation.—MICHAEL GOCHFELD, Department of Ornithology, American Museum of Natural History, New York, New York 10024, 16 March 1971.

**Young Common and Roseate Terns learning to fish.**—There is very little information in the literature on young terns learning to fish for themselves. Palmer (Proc. Boston Soc. Nat. Hist., 41:93, 1941) observed the young birds following the adults in