

A NEW RAIL FROM THE PLEISTOCENE OF FLORIDA

BY PIERCE BRODKORB

AMONG recently collected bird material from Pleistocene deposits in Florida are three humeri of a tiny rail of the genus *Laterallus*. The modern species of this genus are rare in collections, and this has been a handicap in determining the affinities of the fossil form. Fortunately this genus does not exhibit the marked sexual dimorphism in size shown by some other rails. Skeletal material of recent species of *Laterallus* was examined through the kindness of the curators of the Chicago Natural History Museum, United States National Museum, and the University of California Museum of Vertebrate Zoology. The drawings (Fig. 1) were made by Miss Esther Coogle.

Laterallus guti, new species

Type.—Nearly complete left humerus; collection of Pierce Brodkorb; Pleistocene at Dixie Lime Products Company quarry, one mile south of Reddick, Marion County, Florida; collected by H. James Gut, June 4, 1951.

Description.—Bone agreeing in general conformity with that of other species of *Laterallus*. Head of humerus rounded in outline, with slight indication of external tubercle; anconal surface relatively flat, with no pneumatic foramen; capital groove broad and deep and set at an angle of about 45 degrees to the shaft; proximal margin of bone faintly scalloped in region of capital groove; internal tuberosity broken off in type, but its internal margin not abruptly deflected from head; deltoid crest partly broken in type, but rising abruptly from palmar surface; ligamental furrow present but rather shallow; bicipital furrow obscure; shaft robust, bent inward at a slight angle above middle, and with a ridge along midline of proximal portion of anconal surface; a slight ectepicondylar prominence; internal condyle nearly the same length as entepicondyle, and both extended beyond external condyle; brachial depression pronounced and undivided. Color pale brownish.

Comparisons.—Of the species of *Laterallus* available for comparison, the fossil most closely resembles *L. jamaicensis* (Gmelin) of North America. The humerus of the fossil is only slightly longer than that of *L. jamaicensis* but is decidedly more robust. The capital groove is deeper, with its margin slightly more produced and less sinuate. The internal tuberosity is larger and has more nearly flat articular surface. The shaft is bent more strongly inward. The ectepicondylar prominence is larger and is concave distally where its lateral margin meets the external condyle. The internal condyle is larger in *L. guti*. The external distal border of the brachial depression is more raised. The olecranal fossa is deeper.

The fossil differs from *L. ruber* (Sclater and Salvin) of Middle America in lesser breadth of the distal end, although the width of the shaft is the same. The entepicondyle is not produced so far beyond the internal condyle in the fossil, and the internal condyle is smaller. The brachial depression is notice-

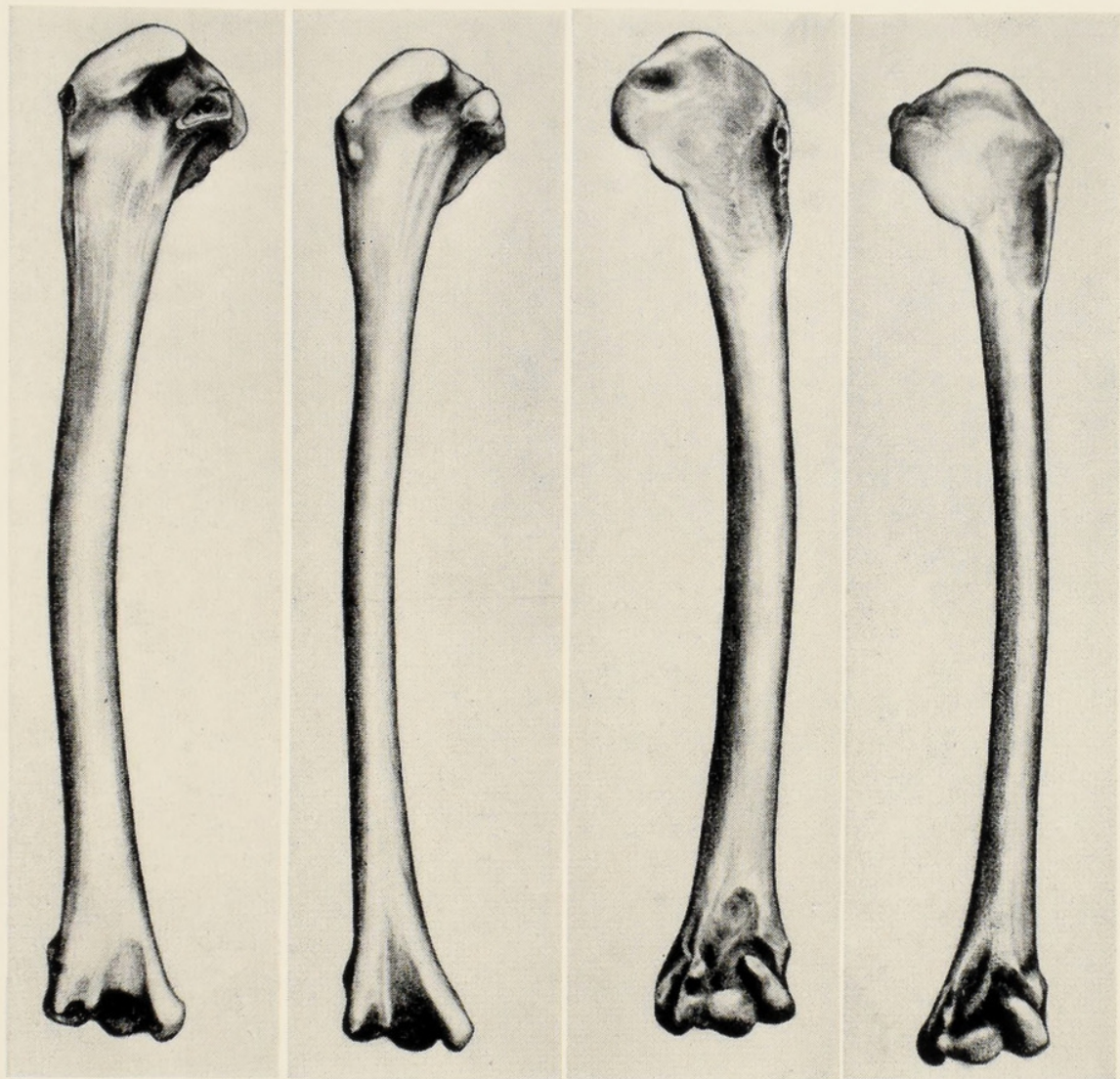


FIG. 1. Humerus of *Laterallus*. Left and third from left, *L. guti*. Second from left and right, *L. jamaicensis*. About three times natural size.

ably shallower than in *L. ruber*. The proximal end of the humerus of *L. ruber* is unfortunately not available.

From *L. viridis* (Müller) of South America, the fossil differs in having a decidedly smaller humerus in all measurements. The caput humeri of *L. guti* is more attenuate and less broad. The articular surface of the internal tuberosity is more nearly flat in the fossil, and there is less sinuation at the proximal border of the capital groove. The entepicondyle of the fossil is less

produced. In *L. viridis* the brachial depression is divided diagonally by a ridge.

From *L. leucopyrrhus* (Vieillot) of South America, the fossil differs in being smaller throughout. Further, the external tuberosity is much less pronounced, the external tricipital groove is shallower, the ectepicondylar prominence is larger, and the entepicondyle is not extended so far beyond the internal condyle.

I have also examined a partial skeleton of the Central and South American *L. melanophaius* (Vieillot). The humerus was not included, but the other skeletal elements indicate a bird nearly as large as *L. viridis*.

Referred material.—In addition to the type, two fragmentary humeri are available from the same locality. I collected the proximal portion of a right humerus on June 4 and the distal portion of a right humerus on June 24. At least two, and probably three, individuals are represented by the three specimens.

Measurements.—Measurements in millimeters of the fossil species and those of allied species are given below. For each measurement that of the type of *L. guti* is given first.

	<i>guti</i>	<i>jama- icensis</i>	<i>ruber</i>	<i>viridis</i>	<i>leucopyr- rhus</i>
Length of humerus.....	24.2	23.5	---	28.2	---
Width of proximal end	4.5, 4.8	4.0	---	5.7	5.6
Width of distal end....	3.3, 3.3	3.1	4.2	4.2	4.1
Width of shaft.....	1.5, 1.5, 1.6	1.2	1.5	1.8	1.7

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