

# EARLY ARRIVAL DATE FOR SORA

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This note reports a new early arrival date for the Sora (*Porzana carolina*) in Saskatchewan, and records its occurrence under unusual circumstances.

The Sora breeds throughout Saskatchewan (W. E. Godfrey. 1966. *The Birds of Canada*) and is common in the marshy areas of Prince Albert National Park (J. D. Soper. 1952. *The Birds of Prince Albert National Park, Saskatchewan*). It is closely associated with marshes, and I was therefore surprised to see one walking along the road near the Heart Lakes Hatchery canal on April 8, 1969. The circumstances were particularly unusual because there was no open water in the park, and, with the exception of roads opened by the snow plough, the ground was deeply snow-covered.

The earliest record of a Sora I can find for Saskatchewan is April 18, 1952 at Regina (M. Belcher, 1966. *Birds of Regina*). The early spring

of 1969 began with a warming trend on April 4, and for the following week daily highs varied from 52 to 65° F, and lows from 22 to 36° F. On April 8 the high and low temperatures recorded at Waskesiu were 57° and 30° F (Waskesiu Climatological Station Report, April 1969). The morning was clear with west winds at 5 m.p.h.; in the afternoon it was partly cloudy and calm. The Sora was walking along a snow-free patch of ploughed road in the early afternoon, occasionally pecking at something. When I approached in a station wagon, the Sora fluttered a few feet and continued walking and pecking. I approached more closely, and the Sora flew up and walked along a roadside bank. After taking five photographs I left, and on returning later in the day was unable to find it. This early record is especially interesting because all lakes and marshes were completely frozen at the time.