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## COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS - SIGHT RECORD FORM

NEW STATE RECORD UNUSUAL RECORD 

Please print or type. Attach photographs and additional pages if necessary.

Species: Black Rail  
(Vernacular Name)*Laterallus jamaicensis*  
(Scientific Name)Date(s): 30 April 1982Number of birds seen: 1 Sex: unk Plumage: \_\_\_\_\_Locality: Elevation Open Space Area, Elevation: \_\_\_\_\_Nearest town: FORT COLLINS County: LarimerTime(s) observed: 1930 hrsDuration of observation (e.g. 1 sec., 5 min., etc.): 5 seconds

Other observers who saw the bird with you (give names, addresses, telephone numbers):

noneOther observers who saw the bird independently (give names, addresses, telephone numbers):  
noneLight conditions (position of bird to light and shade, direction and strength of light):  
sunlight behind me and directly on bird, no shade, strong sunlight  
1/2 hour before sunsetOptical equipment used (e.g. power, types): 7 x 35 BinocularsDistance, and how measured: approximately 10 feet, estimatedIf photographed, type of equipment and film: —Who else photographed the bird? —Describe the bird's behavior (e.g. flying, feeding, or habits used in identifying):  
Bird flushed from small group of cattails by dog. Bird flew towards me and landed in water then walked into cattails 10 feet in front of me. Bird then flew, low over the water into a large marsh. All the flights were low and very short (less than 10 feet)

Describe in detail the bird's relative size, overall shape, plumage and color pattern. Include details of bill, wing and tail shape. Give particular emphasis to marks you used to identify the bird. Reference to its resemblance to field guide descriptions and illustrations is not enough. Describe only what you actually observe in the field:

Bird was smaller than a redwinged blackbird, about the size of a house sparrow. The bill was black. It had a very short tail and stubby wings. There were white spots on the back and a small rusty patch on the back

Description (continued):

Describe the bird's song and call, if given, including method of delivery, (i.e. from perch, in flight, duration):

none given

Describe the general and specific habitat in which you observed the bird:

A large marsh interspersed with several cottonwood trees, old gravel pits and small islands. Bird was seen in ~~old~~ ~~cotton~~ swamp near a long shallow slough with standing water, no fresh water

How did you eliminate similarly appearing species?

Sora has yellow bill and is larger  
Red-winged blackbird is larger has longer tail, shorter bill and don't sit in cattails in the water the way the rail did.

What is your prior experience with this and similarly appearing species?

Have never seen Black Rail although I thought I saw one in same area April 12 but did not get a good look at it. I have seen several Sora's and know their appearance and behavior. I have extensive experience with red-winged blackbirds

List books, illustrations, recordings, other birders, etc. consulted and how this influenced your identification:

a) at time of observation: GOLDEN: A GUIDE TO FIELD IDENTIFICATION: BIRDS OF NORTH AMERICA.

b) after observation: no other

This report was written from reports made during       , after observation  from memory   
Date and time report was written: 2:00 hrs 4 MAY 1982

Reporting observer: DAVID A. PALMER Signature: DAVID A. PALMER

Address: 2025 N. College #212 FORT COLLINS, COLO 80524

All reports will be maintained permanently at the address below:

Return to: CURATOR, DEPARTMENT OF ZOOLOGICAL COLLECTIONS  
DENVER MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY  
CITY PARK  
DENVER, CO 80205