

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 | Laterallus jamaicensis
 (Vernacular Name) (Scientific Name)

1991

Date(s): May 7 5PM heard bird call twice 9:30 PM called 40-50 times
 May 8 9PM - Tried to surround bird - (heard 2 but failed) May 11 9:30 PM played tape - ~~concrete~~ ~~sec. bird~~
 Number of birds seen: 1 Sex: UnKnown Plumage: Adult

Locality: Rent's Old Fort marsh Elevation: 4000'

Nearest town: La Junta County: Otero
 May 18 using continuous tape hide in reeds at 9:30 AM 5 AM 1 bird

Time(s) observed: May 22 2:30 PM; May 27 10 AM 2 calling

Duration of observation (e.g. 1 sec., 5 min., etc.): Bird raced across 3' opening 4-5 times
in 3-4 minutes.

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

18 Rob Dickson 719-542-5847, Van Tran 543-4744, Brandon Peterson
all of Pueblo

Other observers who saw the bird independently (give names, addresses, telephone numbers):
May 22 Hugh Kingery (Dick Pratt) May 27 Duane Nelson Dick Schaefer, Warren Find, Peter Gent Mark Janes

May 27 Vic Zorn, Jack Merchant, Sylvia Wheadock, Joe Hennel, Karl & Marc Overman (Detroit)

Light conditions (position of bird to light and shade, direction and strength of light):
Good day light with no problem from the sun

Optical equipment used (e.g. power, types): Each of us had binoculars

Distance, and how measured: 25 feet est.

If photographed, type of equipment and film: Telescopic lens - May 27 - Bridges

Who else photographed the bird? Duane Nelson - May 27

Describe the bird's behavior (e.g. flying, feeding, or habits used in identifying):

The rail was running on the ground in response to the aggressive (territorial)
part of Peterson's Eastern tape recording.

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:

The bird was larger than we expected. A rather robust chunky little rail with no tail. The dark gray color and short dark bill were easiest to see. Eventually I could see the white spots on the back, and the rufous area on the back of the neck; Van Tran saw the barring on the lower belly and Dickson saw the black bill and red eye. The bird moved so fast it took all of us to see all the field marks.

escription (continued):

Probably 1 nesting pair - but Jackson & Van Turen think there
(May 8 might have heard 3 birds)

If this is correct, then,

prior to nesting both the male
and female respond with (May 18 heard 2 birds)

the aggressive (territorial) call

May 22 & 27 heard only 1 bird;
female may already be nesting.

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

The birds usually gave their 3-note kick-a-doo call, but when
the aggressive (territorial) part of the tape was added; they responded in kind,
with considerable anger.

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

The Bent's Old Fort marsh is primarily a cattail marsh. The Black Rail are
in a small area at the edge of the cattails as they grade into coarse marsh
grass and sedge grass with no water.

ow did you eliminate similarly appearing species?

The only other black rail is a Sora. Soras have yellow bills. This bird had
a black bill. Soras have streaked backs. This bird had a spotted back.
Soras have gray napes. This bird had a red nape. Soras call are
like a whinny. No other rail but a Black Rail has a 3-note kick-a-doo
call.

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

I have seen 1 Black Rail near Galveston, but many Soras in Colorado

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

) at time of observation:

i) after observation: National Geographic and Golden Guide
Birds of North America

This report was written from reports made during _____, after observation _____ from memory
late and time report was written: May 21, 1991 and May 30, 1991

Reporting observer: L. W. Dan Bridges Signature: L. W. Dan Bridges

Address: 1925 S. Vaughn Way #207 Aurora, CO, 80014

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

17-91-2

A

DOCUMENTATION OF RARE BIRD SIGHTING

Species: Black Rail

Date(s): May 22, 1991

Time seen: 3 p.m.

Locality: Old Bent's Fort Marsh, Otero County CO

Latilong: 20

Atlas Block # & Name: 38103A4—Hadley

Optical equipment: 8x42 binoculars

Number of birds seen: One **Sex:** Unknown **Plumage:** Adult

Light conditions: Excellent: bright sunlight over our backs onto bird which came out into the open in the sunlight on a bright, sunny, warm day.

Distance from bird, how measured: Estimated 25 feet

Habitat: Phragmites at the edge of a large cattail marsh.

Behavior of bird: Bob Dickson placed a tape recorder on the ground at the edge of the phragmites and dry ground. It played two "Kick-y-doo" calls and a rasping territorial call. The bird, which had been calling from 25-50 feet away, came to the recorder, or past it, three times. It darted into hiding after checking out the source of the sound.

Detailed description of bird: Small, plump, blackish bird without a noticeable tail, giving the impression of the size of a robin. Shaped like a Sora, but much smaller.

General color a charcoal gray (not ebony black).

Red eye; rusty patch on the nape. The back had numerous white spots. Undertail coverts with vertical barring, I suppose black and whitish.

Short bill, though my notes don't recall it precisely.

Field marks not seen: No good description of bill. Did not notice leg color.

Bird's calls or song: While in hiding, both before and after its appearance and the interference of the tape recorder, it gave the "Kick-y-doo" call. After the tape had attracted it, it also gave some rasping calls somewhat like the territorial calls on the tape recorder (obtained, I believe, from the Eastern Peterson Field Guide tapes).

Similar species: Baby rails: they are black fluff balls without the distinctive marks observed on this bird.

Soras are generally grayish, and larger.

Virginia Rails are rusty and gray, has a long reddish bill which this bird lacked.

Yellow Rails have a different color combination.

No other bird has this combination of plumage, nor its remarkably distinctive calls, especially the "Kick-y-doo" call.

Prior experience: Black & Yellow Rail—None; quite a bit with Sora and Virginia Rail.

Description from notes made immediately after observation and memory/

Dan Bridges found and reported this bird, and several Pueblo observers saw it several days before we saw it. Present during this observation were Bob Dickson and Dick Pratt.

Hugh E. Kingery
Hugh E. Kingery 869 Milwaukee Street, Denver CO 80206

APPENDIX II

17-91-26
A
DOCUMENTATION OF RARE BIRD SIGHTINGS
FOR
THE COLORADO FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS' RECORDS

Species: Black Rail ; Laterallus
(Vernacular name) (Scientific name)

If you watch birds solely for your own enjoyment, a written description of your observations is unnecessary. But, if you have seen something unusual, and would like to share this with others, a written description is essential. Compilers of regional bird lists must insist that their records be scientifically sound; future bird students -- those studying occurrences 50 years from now -- must have a written record on which to depend. By providing the verifying written description, you are employing a basic rule of the scientific method.

We recognize that experienced field observers can provide important and reliable records, if supported by an adequate verifying description. Thus this request is an effort to perpetuate your record by obtaining concrete evidence which may be permanently preserved for examination by others in the future. This procedure is required for every extraordinary observation, irrespective of the observer.

Dates (s): 27 May 1991 Time Bird Seen: approx 10:15 am to 10:30 am

Locality: Ft Lyons / Bent's Old Fort
Las Animas & La Junta, Colo.
Nearest town, county and state:

Optical equipment: Nikon 9x30 binocs

If photographed, please enclose copy. Equipment used:

Number of birds seen: one Sex: - Plumage: adult

Light conditions: dull overcast

Distance from bird, and how measured: approx 25 feet, estimated

Describe the bird's overall behavior: Running through open gap in marsh in response to tape of call. Ran through open area about ten times; coming out slowly, then dashing across gap.

Describe the habitat in which you observed the bird:

Marsh. Cattails, reeds, weedy edge of marsh with moist, muddy open patch.

Other observers who independently identified this bird (Please list name and address):

Peter Bent, Dan Bridges, Duane Nelson, Dick Sluttler,
Warren Finch, Sylvia Wheelock, others

APPENDIX II Continued

Describe in great detail the bird which you saw. Emphasize particularly the field marks used to identify the bird, but include a complete description of the bird. Include size, overall shape, plumage and color pattern; details on shape or size of bill, wings, and tail. (Reference to its resemblance to field guide descriptions is not enough). Describe what you actually saw in the field. Small size, about 6" long. Stubby tail, short-legged and stubby-billed. Legs dark grey, bill gray and iris red. Overall ground color slaty-black, lighter ~~black~~ toned below. Wings (coverts and primaries) heavily speckled with white dots. Upper back with chestnut brown patch. Lower belly and flanks narrowly barred with white.

Describe the bird's calls or sounds, if heard; including method of delivery-- i.e., from perch, in flight, etc.:

List similar species and how you eliminated them:

No other rail is so small, with chestnut patch on upper back.

Prior experience with this and similar species:

I saw one Black Rail in Texas in 1984.

This report was written from notes made during _____ after observation; from memory _____.

Name (print) : MARK JANOS

Mailing address: 10 SEDUM CT. PUEBLO, CO 81001

Signature: Mark Janos

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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 | LATERALLUS JAMAICENSIS
(Vernacular Name) (Scientific Name)Date(s): MAY 27 1991Number of birds seen: 1 Sex: UNKNOWN Plumage: BREEDINGLocality: BENT'S OLD FORT MARSH Elevation: 4000' ?Nearest town: LA JUNTA County: OTEROTime(s) observed: 10:10 am → 10:15 amDuration of observation (e.g. 1 sec., 5 min., etc.): 5 TIMES FOR A FEW SECONDS EACH TIME

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

DAN BRIDGES, DUANE NELSON, MARK JAMES, RICK SCHOTTNER, VIC ZERBBI, JACK MERCHANT ET AL.

Other observers who saw the bird independently (give names, addresses, telephone numbers)

BRIAN SULLIVAN

Light conditions (position of bird to light and shade, direction and strength of light):

BRIGHT SUNLIGHT ON OPEN PATCH IN REEDBEDOptical equipment used (e.g. power, types): BINOCULARS 10XDistance, and how measured: 10 YDS - ESTIMATED

If 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):

CAME TO INVESTIGATE TAPE PLAYER GIVING BLACK RAIL CALL.WOULD TAKE 2-3 STEPS TOWARDS RECORDER AND THEN RUN AWAY INTO MARSH.

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:

VERY SMALL RAIL WITH DARK BILL, BRIGHT RED EYES. PLATE AND WAPERBREAST WERE DARK BLUE. BRIGHT CHESTNUT COLLAR SEPARATING DARK CROWNFROM VERY DARK BACK. BACK WAS QUITE HEAVILY SPOTTED WITH SMALL WHITE SPOTS.

Description (continued):

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

BIRD REPLIED TO TAPE WITH BOTH KIK-KEE-DO CALL AND AN
AGGRESSION CALL - SOUNDED JUST LIKE THE TAPE!!

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

MARSH EDGE - WITH GOOD GROWTH OF CATTAILS.

How did you eliminate similarly appearing species?

TOO SMALL FOR MOTT RAILS - JUVENILE YELLOW RAIL SHOULD NOT BE
AROUND AT THIS TIME OF YEAR BUT DO NOT HAVE CHESTNUT COLOR OR BLUE FACE.

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

SEEN BLACK & YELLOW RAILS ONCE AT ANAHUAC NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE.

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

a) at time of observation:

b) after observation: NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC FIELD GUIDE

This report was written from reports made during _____, after observation from memory _____
Date and time report was written: 27 MAY 1991 9:30 pm

Reporting observer: PETER R. GENT Signature: Peter R. Gent

Address: 55 S 35th St BOULDER CO 80303

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