

DOCUMENTATION FORM for extraordinary bird sightings in Iowa

What species? King Rail How many? 1Location? Sweet MarshType of habitat? marsh - cattailsWhen? date(s): May 6, 1983 time: 9:30 AM to 9:31 AM.Who? your name and address: Robert K. Myers 1236 Sylvia Ave Waterloo, Iowa

others with you: _____

others before or after you: _____

Describe the bird(s) including only what you observed. Include size, shape, details of all parts (bill, eye, head, neck, back, wing, tail, throat, breast, belly, under tail, legs, feet). Also mention voice and behavior.

I was wading the marsh for rails and flushing soras and just as I reached the dike & I noticed a large bird drop into cattails about 25 yd. in front of the dike just to my right. From the size I thought the bird was a teal but the bird didn't stay in the cattails and came out in front of me. I recognized the bird as a huge rail - fully as large as a teal. The bird was very reddish and had a very long bill - ~~at~~ about $1\frac{1}{2}$ x length of head. The bird saw me and turned and went back into cattails, which I couldn't reach because of deep water. As bird moved back into cover I could see light + dark stripes on ^{flanks} rear of bird. I thought about Virginia rail at first but because the look was so brief I didn't note the gray cheeks or lack of or any other marks. Basically on size impression I called bird a King rail. I had been flushing many Soras (about Virginia size) and this bird was at least 2X larger than the Soras. I though "teal size" seemed about right.

Similar species and how eliminated:

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? NO

If yes, explain:

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), and optical equipment:

Bright - good light - Distance was about 25 yd. - paced off later -

Viewed very briefly ~~the~~ with 7X35 binocs
 Previous experience with species and similar ones: I have seen quite a few Virginia rails but never a King.

References and persons consulted before writing description:

really didn't have Peterson, Robbins
 How long before field notes made? many notes to make this form completed? 1 day

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