

BIRDS: VERIFYING DOCUMENTATION OF
AN EXTRAORDINARY SIGHT RECORD

1. Species Yellow rail 2. Number 2 or 3
3. Location Conesville Marsh Louisa County IA
4. Date: April 30, 1978 5. Time Bird Seen: 10⁰⁰ AM to 10⁴⁵ AM (approx)
6. Description of size, shape and color-pattern (describe in great detail all parts of the plumage, and beak and feet coloration, in addition, to the diagnostic characteristics, but include only what actually was seen in the field):
 While walking through a hayfield with scattered marshy areas in it, we flushed several soras and then a bird about the same size or smaller than a sora was flushed about 10 yards ahead and flew about 40 yards. The trailing edge of the wing was clearly white. The white involved about 1/4 of the upper aspect of the wing and was on the secondaries and also appeared to extend on to the primaries. A few moments later another bird flushed from within a few feet of us, flew about 10 yards & could not be found again. It also appeared to have a white trailing edge to the wing but was less clearly seen. The third bird was flushed from a dry hay field about 20 minutes later. It was flushed 3 to 4 times and the white band on the trailing edge of the wing was
7. Description of voice, if heard: not heard clearly seen. On one occasion I saw the front side of the bird and it was buffy colored.
8. Description of behavior: flushed like a sora, but not seen after The white on the wing was as described above
9. Habitat - general: Wading; soras in same area All birds had dark (black) wings and appeared only slight smaller than soras. Several soras were flushed after seeing the first bird and were
- specific: usually seen. see above eliminated white on the wing.
10. Similarly appearing species which are eliminated by questions 6, 7 & 8. Explain:
Sora
11. Distance (how measured)? 10 to 40 yards (estimate) 12. Optical equipment: Lesty 8x40B Trinovid
13. Light (sky, light on bird, position of sun in relation to bird and you):
Light overcast, good light
14. Previous experience with this species and similarly appearing species:
like bird
soras commonly seen
15. Other observers:
Mike Newton, Rich Beloster, Tom ~~Stant~~ Staudt
16. Did the others agree with your identification? yes
17. Other observers who independently identified this bird:
N.S. Halmi, T.K. Shires, C. Newton (1 at 1:30 PM)
18. Books, illustrations and advice consulted, and how did these influence this description:
Robbins + Peterson
description written before looking at birds
19. How long after observing this bird did you first write this description? 10-15 min
- Signature: Thomas Hillert Address: 211 Richards St
- Date: 4-30-78 City, State: Lova City, Iowa