

DOCUMENTATION FORM for extraordinary bird sightings in Iowa

What species? King Rail How many? oneLocation? Hendrickson Marsh, Story CountyType of habitat? flooded area of grass and weedsWhen? date(s): 2 June 1982 time: ca 9:30 am to Who? your name and address: Steve Dinsmore, 4024 Arkansas Drive, Ames *Steve Dinsmore*others with you: Kraig Downs, Toronto Street, Amesothers 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.

size--slightly smaller than Green Heron, guessed at 17-18 inches long in flight, legs and tail sagging behind body, heavy wingbeats, didn't fly far color--rusty wing patches showed, rest of wings mostly brown, little gray on back and gray cheek

bill-light colored, long and straight

tail grayish brown

legs fairly long and dangled underneath bird as it flew

bird was flushed three times, each time from less than 5 feet from us, first two times it flew only 15-20 feet, third time it flew about 100 feet across a point and disappeared, could not locate it again did not get a real look at the underparts

Similar species and how eliminated:

Least Bittern--wing color and back pattern wrong

Green Heron--wing patches

Virginia Rail-- wing patches separate this species

Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification? No

If yes, explain:

Viewing conditions: give lighting, distance (how measured), and optical equipment:
lighting was good and bird was close, didn't have time to use binoculars

Previous experience with species and similar ones: none with King Rail but have seen Virginia Rail, Least Bittern, and Green Heron

References and persons consulted before writing description:

used both Peterson eastern guide and Robbins et al. guide

How long before field notes made? 4 days this form completed? 6 weeks

form typed by JJDinsmore from notes taken by Steve Dinsmore

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