

BIRDS: VERIFYING DOCUMENTATION OF
AN EXTRAORDINARY SIGHT RECORD

1. Species King Rail 2. Number 1
 3. Location ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ Private gravel pit in n.w. Marshall County
 4. Date: May 14, 1981 5. Time Bird Seen: 10 AM to 10:15 AM
 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):

a chicken-like, small-chicken-sized rail, like a Virginia rail but twice as large, & rusty-colored, unlike a Clapper, which of course wouldn't be in an Iowa marsh. The long bill, checked back, rusty neck & wings & barred flanks could have it be nothing else. Legs were light, as was bill with dark tip. It was observed easily, not being secretive as rails usually are.
 7. Description of voice, if heard: not heard
 8. Description of behavior: feeding in shallow pond, close to ^{interior} road, gradually moving back to end of pond, continuing to feed
 9. Habitat - general: marshy area of a gravel pit - this spot not worked for a long time
 - specific: shallow water of small pond, surrounded by trees & brush
 10. Similarly appearing species which are eliminated by questions 6, 7 & 8. Explain:
Clapper Rail
Virginia Rail
 11. Distance (how measured)? 30-40 feet (estimated) 12. Optical equipment: Binoculars
 13. Light (sky, light on bird, position of sun in relation to bird and you):
Clear sky - full sun on bird, coming from the right & slightly behind us
 14. Previous experience with this species and similarly appearing species:
no sightings of King Rail before, but I have observed Virginia Rails, and also Clapper Rails in Florida
 15. Other observers: Phyllis Harris, Garnita Seward, Ramona Sommerlot
 16. Did the others agree with your identification? yes
 17. Other observers who independently identified this bird: none that I am aware of
 18. Books, illustrations and advice consulted, and how did these influence this description:
Peterson's Field Guide to the Birds, 2nd Revised, & his new 4th edition
Robbins, et al - Birds of North America - they helped us verify our
 19. How long after observing this bird did you first write this description? immediately
opinions
our notes
- Signature: Beth Proescholdt Address: _____
- Date: May 24, 1981 City, State: Liscomb, Iowa, 50148