

BIRDS: VERIFYING DOCUMENTATION
OF AN EXTRAORDINARY SIGHT RECORD

Species: Yellow Rail (*Coturnicops noveboracensis*) Number: 1

Location: Sweet Marsh, Tripoli, Iowa

Date: May 5 Time: 11:40 Daylight Savings Time

Description: Size was equal to that of a Sora (*Porzana carolina*). A plump body, nearly tailless, somewhat long, narrow wings also other general characteristics of a Sora. The bird was seen briefly, however, the diagnostic marks were seen. A patch of white extending one third of the wings width from inner wing to the inner primary feathers, contrasting well against the darker wings. A dull orange-yellow color was noticed in the plumage of the breast and back. Because of the sudden appearance of the bird few other marks were noted accurately or positively.

Behavior: The rail flushed rather easily, flew a short distance--about 45 feet--then dropped back into the marsh. Effort to relocate the bird proved futile.

Habitat: A grassy marsh area along edge of a pond. This area had an average water depth of four inches. The size of the grassy marsh is about half an acre and is located in an area of extensive cattail marsh and wet meadows.

Distance: At closest approach the bird was observed within 15 feet, watched in flight for 60 feet, bird was observed only in flight.

The Yellow Rail was observed only with unaided vision.

Light conditions were favorable, with sun directly overhead.

I have observed the species once before.

No other observer saw the bird and no books were consulted.

May 5, 1979

St. Lucas IA 52166

Joe Schaufenbuel
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