

DOCUMENTATION FORM for extraordinary bird sightings in Iowa

*What species?* King Rail *How Many?* five

*Location:* Casey Barrow, N. of Burlington

*Type of habitat?:* Edge of sand bar with tall growth.

*When? Date(s):* Sun, Aug 16, 1992 *time:* 5:00 pm to 7:30 pm

*Who? your name and address:*

James Scheib, 10 Longview Knoll NE, Iowa City, IA 52240-9148

*Others with you:* Randy Pinkston, Chuck Fuller

*Others before or after you:* Jim Fuller & I saw one at 7:00 pm., Sat, Aug 22

*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.*

A large rail coming in and out of the vegetation, then two, three, and eventually five were seen at one time. The young (3) were seen first and showed light under parts including the front of the neck. The lightness of the underparts on the adults was less noticeable. Even the young, who were about adult sized, dwarfed adult Killdeer, which were able to be compared side by side.

*Similar species and how eliminated:* Size ruled out Virginia and Sora. Other large rails have dark underparts on young birds.

*Did any one disagree or have reservations about identification?*

All above named birders agreed on the identification.

*If yes, explain:*

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

Light was behind us. View was unobstructed from about 60-75 yards with Kowa TSN-4 20x-60x spotting scope.

*Previous experience with species and similar ones:*

I had seen King Rail at Green Island this year, and Clapper Rails in California last year. Randy knew King Rails as common breeders in Texas. Jim and Chuck Fuller have both seen many species of rails.

*References and persons consulted before writing description:*

National Geographic, Peterson's, and Audubon field guides were used on the spot to rule out descriptions of the young of any other large rails.

*How long before field notes made?* Notes made at the time.

*How long before this form completed?* Two weeks.

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