

DOCUMENTATION FORM
For Extraordinary Bird Sightings in Iowa

CBC

What species? Virginia Rail How many? 1
Location? Browns Lake Woodbury Co. Park
Type of Habitat? Marsh with open water
When? date(s): 12/29/90 time: 10:30 - 10:35
1:30 to 1:30
Who? your name and address: Bob Livermore, RRI, Sioux City, IA.
Others with you: I was by myself
Others 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, undertail, legs, feet). Also mention voice and behavior.

I observed this single bird at a distance of 10' in fair light without the aid of binoculars. It was in shallow water moving sideways across in front of me. The legs were entirely submerged. I first noted a long (proportionately) bill that was slightly decurved mostly toward the end. The same time I could easily see some rust color in the center of the bird (probably somewhere on the wing). The remainder on the bird appeared generally dark. ~~I re~~ I re located the bird about 10 min. later. A rear view was only seen, but the bird did hop up and over a log in the water. At this time, I was able to view the legs and the very long toes. The behavior of the bird was quite busy. It was moving steadily the entire approx. 10 min. I observed it. The head was pointed down, as if it was feeding. A few quick pecks at the water was the only activity that looked like feeding. Between the two times I was observing this bird, I checked my Robbins field guide even though I was fairly certain what species I was observing. I went back to this area and about 15' away from where I first saw it I got a glimpse of the bird again before it slipped into a clump of marsh grass. It stayed along the shore or edge the entire time. It seemed rather small. (About like a Harris sparrow with a long bill.) The bill seemed to make up a large portion of the bird.

Similar species; how eliminated:
Did any one disagree or have reservations about the identification? No
If yes, explain:

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

First time - 8', Second time 5', Light - fair, No optical equipment used or needed.

Previous experience with species and similar ones:

I have only had a couple of good views of the bird in the summer.

References and persons consulted before writing description:

Amade a few at the time of

How long before field notes made? observed this form completed? 4 hours

Send completed form to Field Reports or CBC editor (address on back cover of Iowa Bird Life).