

Black Rail
11 Oct 1885
Johnson Co., IA
unknown
Cooke 1888, Widmann 1907

Record Number: 81-FG
Classification: NA

REFERENCES

Cooke, W.W. 1888. Bird Migration in the Mississippi Valley
1884-5. U.S. Dept. Agriculture. Division of Economic Ornithology.
Bull 2. p 88.

Widmann 1907 [quoted in DuMont 1933]

Bent 1926

DuMont 1933

VOTE (1981): 1-IV, 6-V

V, no data.

V, From Cooke it looks like obs. was H. N. Berry, E. F.

Vincent or J. M. Preston.

IV, no data.

V, Is this Widman reference available -- 'Prelim. Catalogue of
the Birds of Mo' 1907? Pending further details must be V.

Cooke, W. W. 1888. Bird Migration in the Mississippi Valley 1884-5.
US Dept Agriculture. Division of Economic Ornithology. Bull 2. p88

216. *Porzana jamaicensis* (Gmelin). [576.] *Black Rail*.

Range much the same as that of the preceding, though it does not occur so far north; has been taken in Kansas, southeastern Nebraska, Iowa, and Illinois. In 1884 it was reported as breeding at San Angelo, Tex., from March 9 to June 26.

In 1885 the northward migration of the Black Rail was unnoticed by the observers, but on its return the first was seen at Emporia, Kans.; September 26, and at Iowa City, Iowa, the last, October 11.

Creciscus jamaicensis stoddardi Coale. *Black Rail*

Very rare. Anderson (1907) recorded several occurrences of this species in Iowa as follows: "County records: Blackhawk—'rare migrant; one specimen mounted' (Walters). Des Moines—'Burlington, Iowa, 1892—specimen in flesh examined by me' (Nutting, Proc. Iowa Acad. Sci., 1892, 41). Lee—'very rare—Keokuk district' (Praeger). Linn—'a set of eggs was found by myself in 1899, too far incubated to save' (Berry). Van Buren—'some 17 or 18 years ago a farmer caught one with his hands while plowing in a swamp and brought it to me. This is the only time I have known it to occur here—Hillsboro' (W. G. Savage). Webster—'rare; July 11, 1899, killed a small rail of some sort new to me, along the edge of the slough in Black's field just east of the rendering works (Fort Dodge). It is 5½ inches in length; dark slate on head and breast, back dark brown tinging to a reddish at back of neck' (Somes)." The specimen mounted by Walters has been examined by the writer and found to be an adult Yellow Rail. There is no evidence that the specimen examined by Nutting was preserved. Widmann (1907) recorded that one was seen at Iowa City, Johnson County, October 11, 1885.

There are but two recent observations, both by E. D. Nauman of Sigourney. He records (Wilson Bull., XXXIV, pp. 217-19) one seen May 5, 1914 as it flew from the marsh grass within four or five feet of him. Nauman said in a letter that this bird was distinctly a rail, black, and too small for any other species. At that time of year it could hardly have been the young of any other species of rail. Another was seen by him at Sigourney, October 1, 1925. The writer has been unable to find an Iowa specimen.

The only basis for considering the Black Rail as a breeding bird in Iowa is the statement by George H. Berry that he took a set of eggs in Linn County in 1899. Some question has arisen recently in regard to the veracity of several of Berry's records. Therefore it seems advisable, as the eggs were neither preserved nor examined by a trained ornithologist, to remove this species from the list of Iowa breeding birds.

DuMont 1933
p 63

Black Rail

Bent, A. C. 1926. North American Marsh Birds. Bull 135 US Nat Museum, Washington, 1926. pp 331-332

Range.—Eastern United States to Central America.

Breeding range.—North to Kansas (Garden City, Finney County, probably Beloit and Manhattan); Iowa (Linn County); Minnesota (Hennepin County); Illinois (Chicago); probably southern Ontario (Dundas); Connecticut (Saybrook); and Massachusetts (Chatham). East to Massachusetts (Chatham); Connecticut (Saybrook); New Jersey (Mount Holly, Camden, Brigantine, and Beasley's Point); probably Virginia (Wallops Island); North Carolina (Raleigh); South Carolina (Mount Pleasant); and Florida (Alachua County and Merritt's Island). South to Florida (Alachua County, Merritt's Island and Wakulla County); western North Carolina (Statesville and Weaverville); Illinois (Philo); and Kansas (Princeton). West to Kansas (Garden City).

The black rail also has been reported as occurring in summer from Wisconsin (Lake Koshkonong); and Ohio (Grand Reservoir). A specimen believed to be this species was reported as seen near Tucson, Arizona, on April 23, 1881. (Brewster).

Winter range.—The black rail is known to winter in Jamaica and Guatemala (Ducnas); and it appears to occur rarely at this season north to Louisiana (New Orleans) and Florida (the Tortugas Islands, Key West, St. Marks, and Daytona). It has been reported in winter from Tybee Island, Georgia (Hoxie), but this case lacks subsequent confirmation.

Spring migration.—Early dates of arrival are: District of Columbia, Woodridge, May 14, 1923, and Washington, May 29, 1891; Massachusetts, Boston, May 5, 1913, and Milton, May 16, 1904; Illinois, Canton, April 15, 1895, and Rantoul, May 11, 1914; Ohio, Medina, April 14, 1921, and near Carthage, May 17, 1890; Texas, Houston, April 21; and Kansas, Neosho Falls, March 18, 1886.

Fall migration.—Late dates of fall departure are: Kansas, Lawrence, September 26, 1885; Illinois, Chicago, October 15, 1903; and Canton, October 27, 1894; Iowa, Iowa City, October 11, 1885; Maine, Scarboro, October 4, 1881; New Jersey, near Camden, September 22, 1887; Maryland, Piscataway, September 25, 1877, and Mount Calvert, October 19, 1906; District of Columbia, near Washington, September 25, 1877; and South Carolina, Mount Pleasant, November 9, 1906.

The typical form of this rail (*Creciscus jamaicensis jamaicensis*) is now said to occupy Jamaica, Cuba, and Porto Rico; and the bird found in the eastern United States has recently been named *Creciscus jamaicensis stoddardi* Coale, as a distinct subspecies.

Egg dates.—New Jersey: 26 records, May 30 to August 12; 13 records, June 12 to 23.