

Yellow Rail
26 Apr 1980
Coralville Res., Johnson Co., IA
*T. Staudt, *M. Glasson
IBL 50:47, 52:41

Record Number: 80-08
Classification: A-D

DOCUMENTATIONS

Thomas J. Staudt
Marlyn Smith Glasson

REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 50:47
Records Committee: IBL 52:41

VOTE: 7-Yes

Yes, Good description of key field mark.
Yes, Description convincing--my experience with size of white wing-patch agrees with theirs.
Yes, Well seen bu knowledgable observers. Staudt documentation well written.

BIRDS: VERIFYING DOCUMENTATION OF
AN EXTRAORDINARY SIGHT RECORD

Accepted
9/20/80
7/0

80-8 a

1. Species Yellow Rail 2. Number 1
3. Location _____
4. Date: April 28 5. Time Bird Seen: 6:45 am to 7:15 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):

The bird (small rail shaped) was seen twice in flight only, during the above time period. At the first sighting the bird landed about 25' to 30' in front of me. Just before the bird landed it flattered its wings hesitating momentarily and its white wing patches were seen clearly seen by me only before it set down. A sora was seen flying a few seconds later. The sora was a darker bird with no wing patches whatsoever and it showed white rear tail feathers. At the second sighting the bird flew up from about 5'-8' to the west of me. This time the bird flew about 20' hesitated as before and then dropped down. The white wing patches were seen by both observers. We both commented on the length of the patches, they appeared to extend beyond the secondaries and well into the primaries. Dark and light brown (yellow) stripes were clearly visible on the back of the bird. No beak or leg coloration was noticed.

7. Description of voice, if heard: NOT HEARD

8. Description of behavior: The bird was only seen in the air. The bird must have run as soon as it landed because we were never able to locate it in the landing area. The rail was never within 6 feet of the water edge and never flew towards the water.

9. Habitat - general: A small wetland area with a few cattails and marsh grasses.
specific: off the water edge in an area that was still spongy but had dry spots in it. when the bird flew it came up from the spongy areas and flew to the dry spots.

10. Similarly appearing species which are eliminated by questions 6, 7 & 8. Explain:

NOT large enough for a Virginia, longer legs weren't noticed in flight. we were seeing soras, they were ~~much darker~~ darker, the white under tail feathers of the sora weren't visible on the bird.

11. Distance (how measured)?

Estimated and agreed on by both observers
1st sighting 25'-30' 2nd, 20'

12. Optical equipment:

Bushnell custom Insta-focus 7x35

13. Light (sky, light on bird, position of sun in relation to bird and you):

The sky was fairly clear when we saw the bird. This bird was seen about an hour after sunrise so we had good light, not bright light. The bird flew north when we were facing it and S. when we were facing S.

14. Previous experience with this species and similarly appearing species:

A good deal of experience with soras. One previous sighting of a yellow rail, April 30 1978, written up in IBK summer 1978. The wing patches were the identifying marks for both sightings. Behavior was consistent with previous sighting.

15. Other observers:

Marilyn Glasser

16. Did the others agree with your identification? YES

17. Other observers who independently identified this bird:

NONE

18. Books, illustrations and advice consulted, and how did these influence this description:

Birds of North America from Golden Press was used in the field after the first sighting for bird identification. The description above was written independent of any description in the guide books. However, the wing patch illustrated in birds of North America is smaller than what we saw on this bird.

19. How long after observing this bird did you first write this description? answer 6 three days the rest one week

Signature: THOMAS J. SPURD

Address: 931 N. Summit

Date: MAY 5 1980

City, State: JOURN CITY Ia. 52240

accepted
9/20/80
7/10

BIRDS: VERIFYING DOCUMENTATION OF
AN EXTRAORDINARY SIGHT RECORD

Colasson MGB
80-86

1. Species Yellow Rail Coturnicops noveboracensis 2. Number 1
3. Location marshy area about 1/2 mi. NE Swan Lake. Not Swan Lake Road. S of Pine Stand
not sure of exact time
4. Date: 28 April 1980 5. Time Bird Seen: 16:30 to 08:00
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):

The Rail was seen in flight heading away from us, which only gave us a view of its back and wings. The shape and flight was that of rail, we had already flushed a Sora that day. The bird's secondaries were white, with white also trailing into the primaries so that much of the wings trailing edge was white.

The back of the bird was a dark color, but had very visible pale yellow stripes running vertically.

The size seemed similar to a Sora. Definitely not larger, but would have a hard time saying how much smaller I thought it was.

7. Description of voice, if heard: not heard
8. Description of behavior: it was flushed from our right and flew left, Dipping into the grass straight ahead of us.
9. Habitat - general: marsh
specific: noted no ~~any~~ plant species
10. Similarly appearing species which are eliminated by questions 6, 7 & 8. Explain: First flushed from drier grassy area (I didn't see) water edge to dry grass area
2nd time flushed from
the Sora is the only other bird that is similar. It has no white on its wings. I've never noticed back striping to be so evident
11. Distance (how measured)? flushed approximately 5 feet from Tom's right, 10 feet from my right
flew to 20 to 25 feet ahead of us (visual estimates)
12. Optical equipment: 8x35 Bushnell binoculars
13. Light (sky, light on bird, position of sun in relation to bird and you): good light, sunny at time. sun was in East. On our and the bird's left.
14. Previous experience with this species and similarly appearing species: On 9/27/74 I reported a Yellow Rail at Connelly Marsh. I was a beginning birder. It was probably an immature Sora - I saw no wing patches. (I didn't flush) Have become familiar with the Sora since then
15. Other observers: Tom Staudt

16. Did the others agree with your identification? yes
17. Other observers who independently identified this bird: none

18. Books, illustrations and advice consulted, and how did these influence this description: Birds of N. America. Influenced me to describe the white continuing into the primaries. This book shows it limited to the secondaries

19. How long after observing this bird did you first write this description? This exact description written only today. Taken from notes written 2 days after sighting
- Signature: Maryann Smith Colasson Address: 658 Hawkeye Ct.

Date: 18 May 1980 City, State: Jow City IA