

Black Rail
29 Aug 1981
Cone Marsh, Louisa Co., IA
*T. H. Kent
IBL 51:115,117, 52:42

Record Number: 81-13
Classification: A-D

DOCUMENTATION

Thomas H. Kent

REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 51:115, 117

Records Committee: IBL 52:42

VOTE: 5 III, 1 IV, 1 abstain

IV, ??bill not distinct from head?? is date really wrong for downy young of other species -- how eliminated?

III, A brief view, but other species eliminated by points of id. observed.

III, Shape description eliminates all species except rails. Size and color eliminates all commoner rails.

III, Observer aware of possibility of downy young of other species. Reasonably close view.

REVOTE (at meeting, 8 May 1982): no change in votes

BIRDS: VERIFYING DOCUMENTATION OF
AN EXTRAORDINARY SIGHT RECORD

81-13 #16

1. Species Black Rail 2. Number 1

3. Location Cone Marsh, Louisa Co., Iowa

4. Date: 29 August 1981 5. Time Bird Seen: 9:10 Am to 9:10 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):

A small jet black bird walked across an algae covered area of water and into the marsh grass. I judged the bird to be slightly larger than a House Sparrow, although there were no birds in sight for comparison. The body was chunky. The shape and manner of walking was that of a rail. I could see nothing but black. The bill was not distinct from the head and was short and pointed. The bird appeared to walk on the surface of the algae but may have been grasping on the few weeds in the water. It appeared to be feeding but continued walking and disappeared into the weed in about 10 seconds. The dull light and short time prevented me from evaluating the back color adequately - I didn't see any rusty feathers.

7. Description of voice, if heard:

Not heard

8. Description of behavior:

As above

9. Habitat - general: Marsh

specific: 50 paces from the W. end of the dike and the same distance S. along a small water area

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

By shape and behavior the bird was a rail. The date is wrong for downy young of other species and the bird did not appear downy.

11. Distance (how measured)?

50 yards - paced similar distance

12. Optical equipment:

8x40 Leitz Triovide

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

Dull overcast

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

Seen once about 1/4 mile from this location in the spring

15. Other observers:

none

16. Did the others agree with your identification? N/A

17. Other observers who independently identified this bird: None

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

none

19. How long after observing this bird did you first write this description? 30 min.

Signature: Thomas H Kent Address: 211 Richards St
copied 2 hrs later

Date: 29 Aug 1981 City, State: Louisa City IA 52240