

Black Rail

6 May 1982

Sycamore Slough, Iowa City, Johnson Co., IA

\*Tom Staudt

IBL 52:56, 53:36

Record Number: 82-07  
Classification: NA

DOCUMENTATION

Thomas J. Staudt

REFERENCE

Field Reports: IBL 52:56

Records Committee: IBL 53:36

VOTE: 2-III, 3-IV, 1-Abstain

Without support from a Jim Fuller sight documentation.

Staudt's record is just the other side of limbo.

Observer very careful to eliminate confounding influences.

Could use a documentation by Fuller

Do not know enough about the calls of this and other species  
to evaluate the record.

REVOTE (at meeting, 6 May 1982): 3-III, 4-IV

Summary of Review of an Ornithologic Observation  
 by the Records Committee  
 of the Iowa Ornithologists' Union

SPECIES: Black Rail

DATE SEEN: 6 May 1982

SITE OF OBSERVATION: Sycamore St. Marsh, Iowa City, Johnson Co., Iowa

OBSERVERS: T. Staudt

DATE OF REVIEW: November 1982

METHOD OF REVIEW: Discussion followed by secret ballot

CLASSIFICATION OF RECORD: IV

COMMENTS: The committee regretfully classed this record as a IV, based mostly of the difficulty of rendering bird voices sufficiently unambiguously, and on the lack of previous experience of both observer and committee with the vocalizations of this little-known species.

The opinions expressed here are based on the information available to the Committee and should not necessarily preclude an alternate interpretation by those who observed the bird firsthand.

Any action may be re-reviewed upon submission of additional evidence.

Explanation of Classification:

- I = labeled, diagnostic specimen, photograph, or recording available for review by the Committee
- II = acceptable sight record documented independently by 3 or more observers
- III = acceptable sight record documented by 1 or 2 observers
- IV = probably correct record, but not beyond doubt
- V = record with insufficient evidence to judge
- VI = probably incorrect identification, escapee, or otherwise unacceptable record

Classification is based on the highest category agreed upon by six of seven committee members.

Black Rail

Sycamore Slough May 6 1982

82-07

Thursday May 6 about 6:30 - 7:00 am I was observing Sora and Virginia rails <sup>at Sycamore Slough</sup> when I decided to try a Black Rail tape. I repeated the taped call a number of times at varied lengths, shut off the tape, rewind, and start again. At one point I shut off the tape and twice heard the end call of the Black Rail call - the down slurred "doo". Not really expecting a Black Rail my first reaction was to check and see if the tape was still playing. It was not. I looked for sometime but had no luck in locating the bird. There was no further response to the tapes.

I mentioned this incident to James Huntington later in the day and said I might be interested in attempting to get a response to the tapes that night. Around 10pm James called back and said a Black Rail had been seen sometime earlier at Sycamore Slough by Jim Fuller. Within 20 minutes James, John Cordell and I were at the slough.

Using the same technique as earlier in the day (two or three calls and then a pause) we started our quest. During the 50 minutes we were there we heard Sora, Virginia Rails, Lesser Yellowlegs, Blue-winged teal and much to our satisfaction two separate calls from a Black Rail. They were heard approximately 15 minutes apart from different locations. The call, kiki doo, though not loud was quite distinct and simultaneously recognized. There were other responses to the tape but they were heard by only one of us or they were attributed to whatever else was around. I would say the bird responded but never approached our location.

While playing the tapes I thought an echo may bounce back and misled us but I made some check and eliminated that possibility.

As far as I know Jim Fuller was not aware of my morning trip to Sycamore Slough. I am submitting this in support of his sighting. This was written May 7 1982

Thomas J. STAidt