

Black Rail  
24 Apr 1982  
Hendrickson Marsh, Story Co., IA  
\*\*P. Martsching  
also 05/01; IBL 52:56; 53:35

Record Number: 82-06  
Classification: A-D

DOCUMENTATIONS

Paul Martsching, 24 Apr  
Paul Martsching, 1 May

REFERENCES

Field Reports: IBL 52:56  
Records Committee: IBL 53:35

VOTE: 7-III

III, Good description.  
III, Excellent description(s).  
III, Good writeup.  
III, Everything fits. Highly likely to be correct  
identification.

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

SPECIES: Black rail

DATE SEEN: 24 April, 1 May 1982

SITE OF OBSERVATION: Hendrickson Marsh, Story Co., Iowa

OBSERVERS: Paul Martsching

DATE OF REVIEW: 22 August 1982

METHOD OF REVIEW: mail vote

CLASSIFICATION OF RECORD: III

COMMENTS: The records committee felt that the documentation of this sighting was excellent.

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.

BIRDS: VERIFYING DOCUMENTATION OF AN EXTRAORDINARY SIGHT RECORD.

1. Species Black Rail 2. Number: one

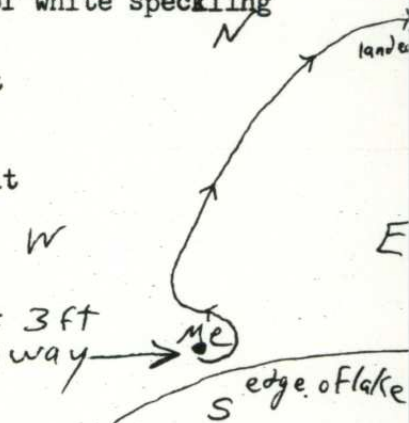
3. Location Hendrickson's Marsh, Story County, Iowa

4. Date: 24 April 1982 5. Time Bird seen: abt 3:30 pm to \_\_\_\_\_

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): beak short-like Sora.

Like a very small black sora rail with black beak. Got a glimpse of white speckling on back. Flew with feet dangling. Abt length of a small sparrow.

Was flushing sparrows when I noticed this bird already airborne abt three feet in front of me. It flew abt 75 ft as in diagram - abt 3 to 4 feet off the ground. It is very hard to say how long I saw it - maybe 8 to 10 seconds. I had to turn half way around to see it as it flew from south of me to north.



7. Description of voice, if heard:  
not heard

8. Description of behavior:  
was flying all the time seen. was unable to flush again.

First saw abt 3ft away

9. Habitat - general: marsh along shore of large shallow lake  
specific: area with much old grass more or less bent down with new growth less than six inches. Was a little water under the grass where it flew up

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

- Sora - bigger, lighter, yellow beak
- Virginia - bigger, lighter, long thin beak
- Rail chick - too early in year - and was flying

11. Distance (how measured)?  
3 to 75 feet -stepped off

12. Optical equipment:  
none

13. Light (sky, light on bird, position of sun in relation to bird and you):  
clear; bird at first south of me then east - north then northeast.

14. Previous experience with this species and similarly appearing species:  
never seen Black Rail before. Have seen Sora, Virginia, and Virginia chicks.

15. Other observers: none

16. Did the others agree with your identification?

17. Other observers who independently identified this bird:

18. Books, illustrations and advice consulted, and how did these influence this description:  
A Field Guide to the Birds R T Peterson  
Birds of North America Golden Press  
I did not see the chestnut nape shown in the books, but then it was flying the whole time I saw it.

19. How long after observing this bird did you first write this description?  
twenty minutes

Signature

Address: 1120 Marston

Date: 24 April 1982

City, State: Ames, Iowa 50010

BIRDS: VERIFYING DOCUMENTATION OF AN EXTRAORDINARY SIGHT RECORD.

1. Species Black Rail 2. Number: one

3. Location Hendrickson's Marsh, Story County, Iowa

4. Date: 1 May 1982 5. Time Bird seen: abt 4 pm ~~10~~ 6 or 7 sec (?)

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):

small black rail - smaller than Sora; short dark beak; saw plainly white crescent shaped spots on back and white lines of "flanks"; also chestnut patch on upper back. was just taking off when first seen. Ran several feet after landing. (I scared up 11 Soras and 2 Virginias in the same general area within 20 minutes)



7. Description of voice, if heard:  
not heard

8. Description of behavior: flew about 25 feet 1 to 1½ feet off ground. After landing ran several feet into a thick clump of willow sprouts.

9. Habitat - general: marsh by large shallow lake  
specific: short new grass at waters edge with some willow sprouts 2-4 ft tall. willow not leafed out yet.

Similarly appearing species which are eliminated by questions 6, 7 & 8, Explain:  
Sora - lighter, bigger, yellow beak, white under tail  
Virginia - some lighter, bigger, long beak  
rail chick - too early & flying  
coot - much larger with white bill & no speckles on back.

11. Distance (how measured)? stepped off  
5 to 30 feet

12. Optical equipment:  
none

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

14. Previous experience with this species and similarly appearing species:  
saw very near same place 24 April this year.

15. Other observers: none

16. Did the others agree with your identification?

17. Other observers who independently identified this bird:

18. Books, illustrations and advice consulted, and how did these influence this description:  
Field Guide To Birds Peterson  
Birds Of North America Golden Press

19. How long after observing this bird did you first write this description? half hour

Ran Martschney Address: 1120 Marston  
Signature

Date: 1 May 1982 City, State: Ames, Iowa 50010