

August 26, 2005

John Fedak

Thank you for submitting the description of the Yellow Rail you found at Bullis Mills Swamp on October 5, 2003. After 2 rounds the report was voted 3-4 as **Class IV-A**: A record for which there exists a majority of evidence in support of the observer's identification; the record is probably correct, but not beyond reasonable doubt.

The main problem with this report for the committee members who voted IV-A was the fact that it was a short, naked eye view. As 1 of those voters I also had a problem with a description written the day after the sighting, though honestly I regret that in this case though I would still prefer notes made at the time of the observation. Human observations are full of subjective interpretations and without notes made during or very soon after an observation not even a pretense of objectivity is believable. In this case, even if I could change my vote it would not change the outcome.

Thanks again for sending in the description, and please include field-notes when possible.

Sincerely

Matt Sharp
Chair: Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee.

PENNSYLVANIA RARE BIRD REPORT FORM

This form is presented as a convenience and guide. It can be used if desired, but is not necessary for submitting a report. Species requiring documentation are those on the Review List or not on the Official List of Birds of Pennsylvania. Send documentation to:

Nick Pulcinella, Secretary
Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee
613 Howard Ave.
West Chester, PA 19380
nickpul@bellatlantic.net

231-01-2003

SPECIES (common and scientific name) Yellow Rail Coturnicops noveboracensis
Subspecies (if known) _____

NUMBER OF INDIVIDUALS 1 SEX(ES) N/A

AGE(S) AND PLUMAGE(S) (e.g. immature; adult in breeding plumage; year for gulls; basic or alternate if you prefer those terms; state of molt if applicable): assumed Adult but unsure

DATE OF OBSERVATION 10-5-03 TIME late afternoon ≈ 5 pm to 6 pm

LOCATION (city, borough, township) Eldred Township, Bullis Mills, Mckean Co.

EXACT SITE (e.g. name of park, lake, road) Bullis Mills Swamp

OBSERVER REPORTING:

Name John Fedak
Address 26 Race St
City Bradford State PA ZIP 16701
e-mail (optional) jfedak@chickadee.net phone (optional) 814 3621052

OTHER OBSERVERS (only those who saw and identified the bird with you):

- N/A

HABITAT (e.g. mowed field, woodland edge, any other details) Grassy Swamp

DISTANCE TO BIRD About 10 feet away to About 20 ft away

VIEWING CONDITIONS (sky, weather, position of sun relative to you)

Good

OPTICAL EQUIPMENT USED Naked eye, Leica Binos (very quick foveal eyes)

DESCRIPTION (Include as much detail as you observed – size relative to other species present; "jizz"= e.g. posture, body shape, and proportions; colors and patterns of plumage; bill, eye, and leg characteristics; other features relevant to this individual): See attached sheet.

BEHAVIOR (be as detailed as possible about what the bird was doing) _____
See attached sheet

VOCALIZATIONS
NONE

SUPPORTING EVIDENCE IF ANY:
Photograph _____ Video recording _____ Audio recording _____ Drawing _____
Photographer/recorder/illustrator:
Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ ZIP _____
e-mail (optional) _____ phone (optional) _____

Please include a copy of the photograph or recording with your report, and accompany it with a complete written documentation if the identification is obvious to you. If you made a drawing, please include it.

IF THIS IS A DEAD BIRD:
General condition _____
If collected (by permit), location and number of specimen if known _____

SEPARATION FROM SIMILAR SPECIES (how you eliminated others) _____
See attached sheet

DISCUSSION – Anything else relevant to the observation that will aid the committee in evaluating it
VERY quick look - mostly naked eye
I got my binoculars on it as it was going down again

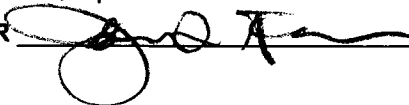
(Please use an additional page if necessary)

PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE WITH THIS AND/OR SIMILAR SPECIES
See attached sheet

ARE YOU POSITIVE OF YOUR IDENTIFICATION ? (why or why not) YES

REFERENCES CONSULTED:
During observation _____
After observation National Geo, Sibley

DATE OF THIS REPORT: 10/6/03

SIGNATURE OF OBSERVER 

John and Lisa Fedak

From: "John and Lisa Fedak" <jlfedak@CHARTER.NET>
To: <PABIRDS@LIST.AUDUBON.ORG>
Sent: Monday, October 06, 2003 7:12 AM
Subject: [PABIRDS] Yellow Rail Sighting - McKean County

This post is in regards to the Yellow Rail Sighting last night in McKean County. First, let me say that the sighting was very brief and the bird was only observed by me, Peter Robinson was less than 10 yards away and didn't see the bird. The bird flushed about 10 feet in front of me and flew for 5 to ten feet before it dropped. It never really got far above the sedges it flushed from and a concentrated effort to reflush the bird proved exhausting and futile. Previous to the Yellow Rail, I flushed a Sora and a Virginia Rail, Peter got to see the Virginia Rail as it flushed ahead and between us from a distance of a few feet. The Yellow Rail was smaller looking than both birds, Lighter brown in color with light streaking observed down the back to a darkish tail. The white secondaries were very apparant and there was no long bill. I have previously seen Virginia Rail with a lot of white in the wing. The white patches were large enough to be the entire secondary area, not just the trailing edge as in im. Sora. The legs were pale, but not bright yellow, from what little I could see of them. It was a short view of only seconds, but I saw enough to convince myself. I have seen flushed Yellow Rails in Texas on the Christmas Bird Count at Anuhauc (spelling?) - we saw five of them flushed from a few feet away with the swamp buggy and the bird I saw at Bullis Mills brought back those memories even if the length of sighting was shorter.

The area the bird was seen on is PRIVATE, but permission can be obtained - email me about it. It would be remiss of me not to post that this is the same area a Yellow Rail was found on Oct 6 of last year - only a few hundred yards away. Water is higher and hip boots are really a must to get to the sections that will hold rails.

Good Birding!
John Fedak
McKean County

Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Voting Tabulation – Round One

Species: Yellow Rail (*Coturnicops noveboracensis*)

Date of Sighting: 5 October 2003 to 5 October 2003

Location: BULLIS MILLS SWAMP

County: MCKEAN

Observer(s): John Fedak

Date of Submission: 2003

Submitted by: John Fedak

Written Description: Yes

Photo: No

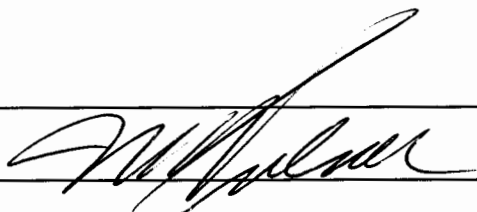
Specimen: No

Recording: No

Member	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV-A	Class IV-B	Class IV-C	Class V	Abstain
R. Wiltraut			X					
D. Heathcote				X				
P. Guris			X					
J. Stanley			X					
E. Witmer			X					
R. Leberman				X				
M. Sharp				X				
TOTALS			4	3				
DECISION								

Comments: 4/3 - GO TO 2ND ROUND

Signature (Secretary)



Date:

9/16/04

Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Voting Tabulation – Round Two

Species: Yellow Rail (*Coturnicops noveboracensis*)

Date of Sighting: 5 October 2003 to 5 October 2003

Location: BULLIS MILLS SWAMP

County: MCKEAN

Observer(s): John Fedak

Date of Submission: 2003

Submitted by: John Fedak

Written Description: Yes

Photo: No

Specimen: No

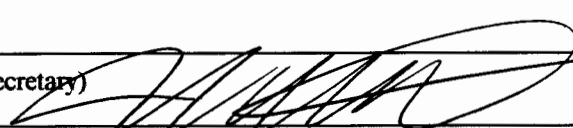
Recording: No

Member	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV-A	Class IV-B	Class IV-C	Class V	Abstain
R. Wiltraut			X					
D. Heathcote				X				
P. Guris			X					
J. Stanley			X					
E. Witmer			X					
R. Leberman				X				
M. Sharp				X				
TOTALS			4	3				
DECISION				X				

Comments:

4/3

Signature (Secretary)



Date:

3/7/05