

252-01-2011

Hi Nick,

Following is a report to the PORC of a **Black Rail** that I saw in **Cumberland County**.

Date of sighting: 10/16/2011

Date of report: 10/18/2011

Place: The Mountain Road Marsh of State Game Lands 169

Habitat: A mixture of open water, grasses, and cattails

Time: Approximately 12:45 p.m.

Weather: Mostly sunny, high in the sky and behind me at the time of the observation

Binoculars: Vortex Viper 8 x 42

Notes taken in field: Yes

Previous Experience with species: None, but I have seen a number of Virginia, Clapper and Sora Rails

Narrative: I was at the marsh following up on a report from Matt Sabatine earlier in the day of a Nelson's Sparrow that he had located at the marsh. I was slowly making my way down a center elevated path that splits that marsh pushing up birds in search of the sparrow. I was looking toward the south when I turned and caught sight of a very small all dark rail, approximately 15 yards from me, with a some chestnut brown from the top to middle of its back as it fluttered and then glided down into an wet grassy area approximately 50 yards from me. I do not remember seeing any white spotting. Of course, lighting, distance and length of observation might account for that. I observed the bird for no more than 5 seconds in the air through my binoculars as it moved from my left to my right (south west to north east) an away from me. The impressions that I came away with and that I jotted down were, "Very small dark rail, smaller than a Sora, chestnut brown on the back." The bird was angled, not horizontal while in flight so it afforded me a good look at its back. I spent some time trying to relocate the bird but with no luck. I called other local birders Ramsay Koury, Andrew Markel, Matt Sabatine and Chad Kauffman, to discuss with them what I saw and to determined if there was another reasonable possibility of this bird being anything but a Black Rail. In my discussions with them I could not, and since then having looked at field guides and searching the internet cannot come up with any other reasonable explanation.

Thank you for your consideration of this report,
Vern Gauthier
Newville
Cumberland County

Pennsylvania Ornithological Records Committee

Voting Tabulation – Round One

Species: Black Rail *Laterallus jamaicensis*

Date of Sighting: 16 October 2011 to 16 October 2011

County : CUMBERLAND

Location : STATE GAME LANDS 169

Observer(s): Vernon Gauthier

Date of Submission: 2011

Submitted by: Vernon Gauthier

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	
D. DeReamus			X					
A. Guarente			X					
T. Johnson			X					
B. Coulter			X					
R. Koury			X					
D. Weber			X					
G. Malosh			X					
TOTALS			7					
DECISION			X					

Comments: 7/0

Signature (Secretary) Nick Pulcinella

Date: 7/11/12