PA Rare Bird Report

Submission Date 2018-01-30 17:00:56 **Observer's Name** Holly Merker E-mail HCybelle@gmail.com **Phone** 610-733-4392 **Observer's Address** 520 Baintree Run Downingtown PA 19335 **United States** Names of additional Rob Megraw observers **Species (Common Name)** Clapper Rail **Species (Scientific Name)** Rallus longirostris Subspecies (if known) Unsure- either Atlantic or very possibly Gulf Coast Number of individuals Age(s) and Plumage(s) and unknown Sex (if known) **Observation Date and Time** 04-10-2016 11:00 AM Did you submit this sighting Yes to eBird? Link to eBird checklist https://ebird.org/view/checklist/S28919299 County Chester Location (City, Borough, Eagle Township) Exact Site (E.g. Name of park, Marsh Creek State Park lake, road) **GPS** coordinates of sighting see eBird checklist Habitat Man-made reservoir/lake with sandy-rocky shoreline. Distance to bird 500 feet or less. **Viewing conditions** Clear day. Perfect. Optical equipment used Swarovski 8.5 x 42 binoculars, Canon 7D with 300mm lens + 1.4 extender

Description

When this bird first dropped down in front of us, and started running, we both knew it was a rail without putting binoculars on it. Chicken-like gait, etc. While Virginia Rail is the most likely rallus in Chester Co., this bird appeared too large for that species, especially in the head/bill proportions. King Rail was our first thought, since we both noted the very bright plumage details. This was a colorful rail, brighter than any Atlantic race Clapper I've ever seen (I have a decent amount of experience with that ssp in DE, where I work some in summer).

Behavior (be as detailed as possible about what the bird was doing)

This bird was running along the shoreline of the lake, only stopping occasionally to figure out what to do next, it appeared. It eventually flew from one point, to the edge of the lake, where it effectively hid until later that evening, when it was seen again in dim light.

Separation from similar species (How you eliminated others)

In this case, King Rail needs to be eliminated first. We did this effectively by looking at the plumage on the back of the bird. Flight images reveal no rufous on upper-wing.

The rail is too large for a Virginia Rail, and inconsistent with that species, plumage wise.

Discussion – anything else relevant to the observation that will aid the committee in evaluating it:

The big question is what ssp. this Clapper Rail is. It's thought that this "could" be a Gulf Coast race of this species, due to the incredibly bright plumage details, which is consistent with that ssp.

That said, I had the photos evaluated by experts, and no one said it was definitely of that race, but some did wonder. There have been isolated cases of that ssp wandering, including to CO so no reason to believe that ssp. does not wander.

Are you positive of your identification ? (Why or why not)

Yes, of the species, but not the subspecies

After

Sibley Guide to Birds; flickr images

Supporting evidence (check all that apply)

Photograph

Upload images, audio, video or drawings





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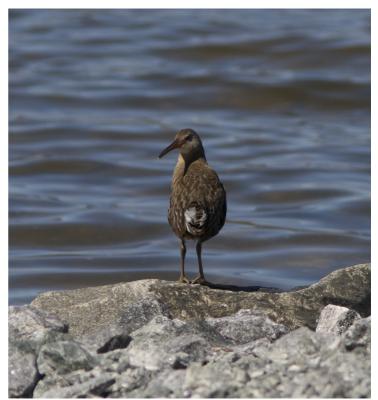
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