

<b>Submission Date</b>	2012-10-05 22:43:41
<b>Observer's Name</b>	Geoff Malosh
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<b>Observer's Address</b>	Street Address: 450 Amherst Avenue City: Moon Township State / Province: PA Postal / Zip Code: 15108 Country: United States
<b>Names of additional observers</b>	Dave Wilton, Shannon Thompson
<b>Species (Common Name)</b>	Yellow Rail
<b>Species (Scientific Name)</b>	Coturnicops noveboracensis
<b>Number of individuals</b>	1
<b>Have you submitted this to eBird?</b>	Yes
<b>Age(s) and Plumage(s) and Sex (if known)</b>	Adult
<b>Observation Date and Time</b>	10-05-2012 6:30 PM
<b>County</b>	Washington
<b>Location (City, Borough, Township)</b>	Greencove Wetlands
<b>Exact Site (E.g. Name of park, lake, road)</b>	Greencove Wetlands
<b>GPS coordinates of sighting</b>	40.17849, -80.40122
<b>Habitat</b>	Mostly dry marshland thick with several species of grass, reeds, etc. There were a few wet areas here and there.
<b>Distance to bird</b>	15 feet at closest approach to 150 feet (flyby)
<b>Viewing conditions</b>	mostly cloudy about 1 hour before sunset; good light and clear air with no adverse conditions
<b>Optical equipment used</b>	Leica 10x42 Ultravid binoculars
<b>Description</b>	Bird seen in flight only. See under Discussion for circumstance of encounter. At closest approach the bird passed my position no more than 15 feet away flying directly across my field of view, in other words I enjoyed a perfect side view of the bird as it passed.

At this time I could see the following details with the naked eye: it was a small buffy rail with very obvious, large white patches on the secondaries. It seemed to be a rather even buffy color on the neck and breast, and had a yellow face with a large and obvious dark area around the eye, forming what looked like a kind of dark "eye patch" framed in buffy/yellow that vaguely recalled, in a relative way and in different colors, the dark eye patch of Red and Red-necked Phalaropes in winter. The crown appeared also to be darker than the buffy areas of the face. While it was flying across my line of sight it was around eye level and so I could not make out very much detail on the bird's back, especially with the naked eye. As the bird continued past my position it got a little higher as it flew away, and I eventually got it in my binoculars shortly before it landed out of sight perhaps 150 feet from my position. At this time it was going directly away from me and I could make out an obviously black-and-buff striped back.

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

The bird was spotted by Shannon Thompson as it scurried/flew into a small area dry grasses. We surrounded the bird and it flushed again, flying past all of us and away at least 150 feet before it landed. It exhibited a classic rail flight style, appearing rather weak in the air with rapid, fluttering wing beats. The entire time, the extensive white on the secondaries was painfully obvious. I never witnessed the bird on the ground.

**Separation from similar species (How you eliminated others)**

Black Rail has no white in the wings in flight, and is darker overall. Adult Virginia Rail is red/orange below rather than buffy, and is larger than this bird was. Juvenile Virginia is not buffy at all. The bird was too small for any larger rail species. Adult Sora was eliminated by the buffy (rather than gray) chest, incorrect face/throat pattern, and the boldly striped back pattern. Juvenile Sora was eliminated also by the back pattern, and while juv. Sora is buffy overall and can show a limited amount of trailing white on the secondaries, this bird had very extensive white on the secondaries and a very obvious black patch in the area of the eye. The bird was a Yellow Rail, and I believe also an adult by the very even buffy color of the neck and breast, and the very well defined eye patch, both of which are "messier" in juveniles.

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

Dave Wilton and Shannon Thompson had found and flushed a rail they believed to be a Yellow Rail in the late afternoon at Greencove. I joined them perhaps an hour later and we searched the area again. When we had the bird surrounded as described above, the bird flew away from Dave and between Shannon and me, allowing a solid eye-level profile view of the bird as it passed no more than 15 feet away from me. I had my camera in hand instead of my binoculars at this time, as after it had passed my position I briefly but futilely attempted a picture; when that proved pointless (autofocus was failing considering the lowering light and the complex background presented by the grasses in the marsh), I instead raised my binoculars just in time to see the bird in flight moving directly

away from me, long enough to see that it had a boldly striped back as described. I did not see the bird again before leaving the area.

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

Yes

**During**

none

**After**

none

**Click to edit**

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