

LOUISIANA BIRD RECORDS COMMITTEE

REPORT FORM

This form is intended as a convenience in reporting observations of species on the Louisiana Bird Records Committee (LBRC) Review List. The LBRC recommends the use of this form or a similar format when submitting records for review to assure that all pertinent information is accounted for. Attach additional pages or files as necessary. Please print or type for hard copy. For electronic copy, be sure to save this file to your computer before entering text. Attach field notes, drawings, photographs, or tape recordings, if available. Include all photos for more obscurely marked species. When completed (if hard copy), mail to Secretary, Louisiana Bird Records Committee, c/o Museum of Natural Science, 119 Foster Hall, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA 70803-3216, or e-mail electronic copy as an attachment to Paul Edward Conover at <zoiseaux@lusfiber.net> .

1. English and Scientific names: Black Rail (*Laterallus jamaicensis*)

2. Number of individuals, sexes, ages, general plumage (e.g., 2 in alternate plumage): 1 caught and banded (no recaptures); 2 heard only detections representing 1-2 individuals (detections were 400-500 m apart, so likely 2 birds). Additional March 2018 records (submitted separately) indicate a minimum of 5 birds at this site from Nov 2017 to March 2018.

3. Parish: Cameron

Specific Locality: John Allaire property (private), west jetty area, between Calcasieu Pass and Holly Beach, and between LA-82 and the beach.

4. Date(s) when observed:

- Caught and banded all between 30 minutes after sundown and midnight: 1 Dec 2017
- Heard only: 5:05pm 29 Nov 2017; 7:14am 22 Jan 2018

5. Time(s) of day when observed: see above

6. Reporting observer and city/state address

Reporting observer: Justin Lehman
City: Baton Rouge
State: LA

7. Other observers accompanying reporter who also *identified* the bird(s): Justin present for all birds.

Tom Finnie, Dave Patton, Angela Trahan, Sarah Abshire, and Will Ohlenforst present for banding on 1 December 2017.

No other observers during point count heard only records.

8. Other observers who independently identified the bird(s):

None known. These would be different birds than anything that could be heard from LA-82 by other birders.

9. Light conditions (position of bird in relation to shade and to direction and amount of light):

Bird caught at night in dark using spotlights. Heard birds during Beaufort scale 1-3 winds.

10. Optical equipment (type, power, condition): None

11. Distance to bird(s): All heard birds <25 meters. 1 bird in hand.

12. Duration of observation: A few seconds for the heard birds. ~10 minutes in hand.

13. Habitat: High salty marsh, dominated by *Spartina spartinae*, *Baccharis*, and *Borrchia frutescens*

14. Behavior of bird / circumstances of observation (flying, feeding, resting; include and stress habits used in identification; relate events surrounding observation):

Heard birds in response to playback during Audubon Louisiana point count surveys funded by LDWF and USFWS.

15. Description (include only what was actually seen, *not what "should" have been seen*; include if possible: total length/relative size compared to other familiar species; body bulk, shape, proportions; bill, eye, leg, and plumage characteristics. Stress features that separate it from similar species, *or for species that are known to hybridize frequently, stress features that help eliminate possible hybrids*):

Heard birds:

29 Nov 2017 – JL: Heard bird fly into vegetation 10m behind me and made 2 "growls" as it landed. As BLRA playback was playing it moved closer to about 2m away and made a few "peep/ik" contact calls. Got recording of some of these calls plus it growling.

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/f3tpgry015tb362/HBA003%20BLRA.wav?dl=0>

1 Dec 2017 – JL: During a night-time drag-line survey and while banding a Yellow Rail, we heard 2 Black Rails counter singing "kikidrr" approximately 50 m North and 50 m Southeast of us. They sang for about 1 minute. We eventually caught a Black Rail to the South of that location that was probably one of the singing birds (See below).

22 Jan 2018 – JL: BLRA growled for 2-3 sec during BLRA playback. Didn't hear or see sign of bird after brief vocalization. No recording.

Captured birds using night-time drag-line and spotlight methodology:

1 Dec 2017 (JL):

https://www.dropbox.com/s/yxahep5ed5dc6ek/IMG_20171201_202802.jpg?dl=0

(Patton): https://www.dropbox.com/s/tp972f7bu961v81/DSC_8109%20FB.jpg?dl=0

(Finnie): <https://www.dropbox.com/s/731ds676wqnc4h9/BLRA%203.sm.jpeg?dl=0>

16. Voice: See above.

17. Similar species (include how they were eliminated by your observation): The variety of birds usually found in the grass layer of this kind of habitat is relatively limited, but include a variety of rails (all 5 salt-living rails), Sedge Wren, and a few sparrows (primarily Swamp, Nelson's, Seaside). The growl calls of Black Rail aren't like those of Virginia Rail or Sora, although some of the "kip"/"ik" calls can be close. Sedge Wren and Swamp Sparrow also give various growl-like calls, but of a different quality, being less gritty. Black Rail growls sound like a little engine starting up.

18. Photographs or tape recordings obtained? (by whom? attached?): Photos and videos of captured birds. See above.

19. Previous experience with this species: Minimal, a few captured and heard only birds over this same period of time. None prior to starting the Audubon project.

20. Identification aids: (list books, illustrations, other birders, etc. used in identification):

a. at time of observation: none

b. after observation: none

21. This description is written from:

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	notes made during the observation. Are notes attached?	No, but transcribed from field datasheets.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	notes made after the observation. At what date?	Data entry within days or weeks
<input type="checkbox"/>	memory	
<input type="checkbox"/>	study of images	

22. Are you positive of your identification? If not, explain: Yes.

23. Date: 12 February, 2019

Time: 13:49

24. May the LBRC have permission to display in whole or in part this report and

accompanying photos on the LOS-LBRC website and LBRC Facebook page? Yes
If yes, may we include your name with the report? Yes