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OKLAHOMA RECORDS FOR THE BLACK RAIL

BY RONALD S. SULLIVAN

So very secretive is the Black Rail (*Laterallus jamaicensis*) that it is not often seen even in areas where it is fairly common. It has long been considered a rare bird in Oklahoma. Nice (1931, *Birds of Oklahoma*, p. 85), who called it a "rare transient," mentioned two records — one of a bird "caught alive . . . after a heavy rain in the early fall of 1915" near Gate, Beaver County, at the eastern end of the Panhandle, by W. E. Lewis (1930, *Wilson Bull.*, 42: 42), the other of a male (UOMZ old no. 1430) collected by C. E. Fleming at a pond called Mussel Shoals just north of Norman, Cleveland County, central Oklahoma on 15 May 1924. The label for this specimen, which was preserved as a skin, does



BLACK RAIL

A young bird captured and photographed by Philip Clover at Puterbaugh Pond on the Salt Plains National Wildlife Refuge in Alfalfa County, Oklahoma on 19 August 1971. Note the diagnostic white barring on the back feathers and the largely sheathed major wing quills.

not make clear whether the bird was shot, found dead, or captured alive.

Sutton (1967, Oklahoma birds, p. 164), who expressed belief that the Black Rail might breed in Oklahoma, mentioned two sightings by E. W. Craven, each of a single bird at the Tishomingo National Wildlife Refuge in Johnston County, southeastern Oklahoma — one on 11 October 1951, the other on 16 September 1957.

Records mentioned recently by Sutton (1974, A check-list of Oklahoma birds, p. 13) need clarification. On 4 May 1971, Mildred Hatch of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, observed an adult Black Rail for about five minutes along the Eagle Roost Nature Trail at Puterbaugh Pond on the Salt Plains National Wildlife Refuge in Alfalfa County, north-central Oklahoma. On 19 August 1971, Philip Clover, a refuge employee, captured a young Black Rail while disking the cattails after Puterbaugh Pond had been drained. This bird was photographed and released. On 29 August 1973, I saw what appeared to me to be an adult Black Rail on the dike between Puterbaugh Pond and Mink Run Pond on the refuge.

The photograph taken on 19 August 1971 was sent to the U.S. National Museum where such authorities as Storrs S. Olson, Richard C. Banks, and John S. Weske agreed that the bird in the picture could not have been anything but a Black Rail. *Laterallus jamaicensis* may now be considered a breeding bird of Oklahoma. It is to be looked for in marshy areas.

On 22 September 1973, William Bartush (1975, Bull. Oklahoma Orn. Soc., 8: 28), saw a Black Rail along the shore of Lake McMurry in southeastern Noble County, north-central Oklahoma. Sutton (1974, *loc. cit.*) erred in citing this as a Payne County record.

SALT PLAINS NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE, JET, OKLAHOMA 73749, 4 AUGUST 1975.

A CHIMNEY SWIFT NEST IN A GARAGE

BY GARY R. ZAHM

Nowadays most Chimney Swifts (*Chaetura pelagica*) that nest in Oklahoma probably do so in chimneys. Some, however, nest regularly in "old wells" in Marshall County, south-central Oklahoma, and in 1964 one pair nested in a hollow maple along a busy street in Norman, Cleveland County, central Oklahoma (Sutton, 1967, Oklahoma birds, Univ. of Oklahoma Press, Norman, p. 279). In 1971 a pair nested about 8 feet from the floor on the wall of an unused part of my two-car garage on the Tishomingo National Wildlife Refuge in Johnston County, southeastern Oklahoma. I observed these birds daily from early May until late summer, at which time they and their brood left, presumably for some large chimney or other roosting place at which a premigratory flock was gathering.

I do not know just when the two swifts started to roost in the garage, but I