

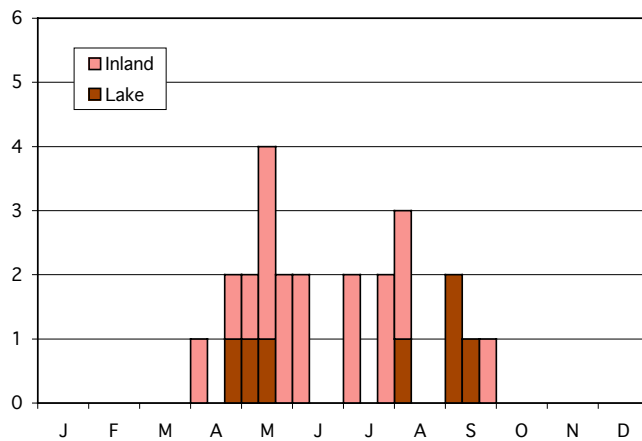
## Black Rail

## *Laterallus jamaicensis*

### Historical Information

First Published record: Indiana's first Black Rail record came from English Lake, Starke County, where Ruthven Deane identified one 22 April 1888 (Butler 1898).

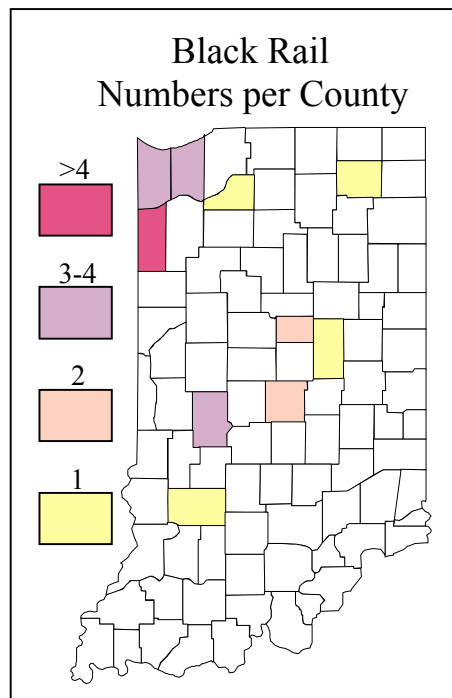
Noting only two Indiana records, Butler (1898) termed this tiny rail "...one of the rarer American birds, by far the rarest of its family." Keller et al. (1979) deemed it a casual migrant and possible summer resident. Mumford and Keller (1984) considered the Black Rail a rare spring and casual fall migrant.



### Status

Physical Evidence: At least seven skins are preserved in museums (S.F. Jackson unpublished list and Simon 1977).

STATUS TABLE				
Specimens				
Museum				No.
National Museum of Natural History				5
Univ. of Michigan Museum				1
Moore Museum, Earlham College				1
20-Year Abundance Table				
	Win	Spr	Sum	Fall
Northern Tier	n	10	n	10
Central Tier	n	n	n	n
Southern Tier	n	n	n	n
Entire State	n	9	n	10



### Current Status

Today the Black Rail is an Occasional (9) migrant in Indiana.

### Occurrence

Although this stealthy rail has been recorded in ten Indiana counties (see distribution map), only three birds have been reported over the past two decades. These included one accidentally captured by David Beamer in a herpetology trap at Oak Ridge Prairie County Park, Lake County 5 August 1996 (Dancey 1998) and two calling birds discovered by J.J. McCoy and B.J. Grube at a TNC Kankakee Sands wetland 25 May 2002 (Brock 2002). A photograph of one of the latter, which lingered for several days, is shown below.

### Breeding

According to Castrale et al. (1998) Indiana's only recorded "nesting" of the black rail occurred in Tipton County in June 1936, although no nest was found. Two rails (presumably a pair) were captured, and one laid an egg while captive. Cox (1937) described the details of this occurrence. Also most intriguing were two birds flushed by

R.E. Mumford and H.P. Weeks from a damp sparsely vegetated field at Willow Slough FWA 6 July 1976 (Mumford and Weeks, 1977). The Indiana Department of Natural Resources has included the Black Rail on the state's endangered species list.



Black Rail, The Nature Conservancy Kankakee Sands 25 May 2002. Photo by J.J. McCoy.

#### Black Rail Data

Maximum Single Party Counts				
Entire State				
Number	Date	Location	Observer	Ref.
3*	07-Jun-1936	Tipton Co	A.R. Cox	REM
2	01-Aug-1894	Putnam Co	A. Black	REM
2	31-Jul-1898	Putnam Co	A. Black	BU2
2	06-Jul-1976	Willow Slough	R.E. Mumford	REM
2	25-May-2002	Kankakee Sands	J.J. McCoy	REM
*Includes a pair plus one egg.				

Migration Envelopes						
Entire State						
	Earliest	Arrive	Peak	Depart	Latest	Records
Spring	08-Apr-1894	---	11-May	---	7-Jun-1936	11
Fall	31-Jul-1898	---	---	---	29-Sep-1979	7

#### References Cited

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