

then stopped the tape and listened "Kickie-doo"! After two more calls I was able to locate the general area from which the call was emanating.

This area was between the restored prairie and wetland, the area consisted of grasses (blue-joint grass and bluestem) and forbs mixed with the occasional sedges and rushes. The vegetation in this "sedge meadow" was very dense and 0.5 – 1 m in height. I approached the area with the tape recorder already rewound and played two minutes of Black Rail calls eliciting no response. I continued to census the area locating a female Northern Shoveler (*Anas clypeata*) apparently paired up with a drake Mallard (*A. platyrhynchos*), but no sign of the rail.

I returned to the Richardson Wildlife Foundation on 9 July 1997, at 6:30 in the morning and walked to the general area where I had previously heard the bird. I again played the "Kickie-doo" call (3 more times) then stopped, there were no replies. Had I actually heard the rail on the 27<sup>th</sup> or was it a case of my imagination running wild? I hit the play button again and heard the sweet, eerie call, of "Kickie-doo"! The bird was now closer to the wetland in taller (1– 1.5 m), very dense vegetation. It responded to the tape recording 5 to 7 times, counter singing with the tape after each call. I searched for the bird but the dense cattails, sedges, and grasses prevented any real chance of seeing this small rail. I moved closer and heard what turned out to be the last vocalization I heard, a harsh scold note. I continued to walk around in

the general area, until I realized that I would hate to find the first Black Rail nest in Illinois since the 1930s (Bohlen 1989) trampled under foot. I left and returned on two occasions but heard no further responses.

The habitat in Lee County appears similar to Mantanzas Prairie (Mason County), an area where Kevin Richmond located a Black Rail during the 1996 breeding season (Kleen 1996). The presence of these rails during the breeding season suggests that this species may be nesting in small numbers across the state, although I have no evidence that there was more than one bird present at the Lee County site. Very few Black Rails have been recorded during the breeding season. Monitoring and restoration of Black Rail's preferred habitat (sedge meadows) should result in more sightings and/or vocal responses, and the confirmation of Illinois' second rarest rail nest (last confirmed Yellow Rail nest was in the 19th century) in 65 years.

### Literature Cited

Bohlen, H. D. 1989 The Birds of Illinois. Indiana University Press, Bloomington, IN.

Kleen, V. M. 1997 The 1996 breeding season. Meadowlark 6: 26–38.

—Michael Ward  
Illinois Natural History Survey  
607 East Peabody Drive  
Champaign, IL 61820

---

## Pine Warbler and Red-breasted Nuthatch at Sand Ridge State Forest

On 4 July 1997, I was looking for summer residents at Sand Ridge Forest in Mason County and found two species I do not usually see in summer. In one of the pine plantations I heard a Pine Warbler (*Dendroica pinus*) singing and obtained good views of the bird. While I was watching this bird a Red-breasted Nuthatch (*Sitta canadensis*) began calling and flew into the same dead pine tree. Both are very rare summer residents and R. G. Bjorklund, (Annotated Field Checklist for Birds Observed While in the Sand Ridge Forest) considers the Pine Warbler a migrant and the Red-breasted Nuthatch as "occasional nest" and indicates that it has been seen at all times of the year. Even though I watched both birds

sporadically for 15 – 20 minutes neither showed an inclination to go to a nest site nor did I see any females or young. I intended to go back to the area to see if young were present but never got the chance. Both could potentially nest at Sand Ridge and birders visiting in summer should try to confirm this.

—H. David Bohlen  
Assistant Curator of Zoology  
Illinois State Museum Research  
and Collections Center  
1011 East Ash Street,  
Springfield, IL 62703