

## Virginia Rail - *Rallus limicola*

Abundance: Unknown

Status: NSS3 (Bb)

NatureServe: G5 S3B

Population Status: population size and distribution are restricted but extirpation is not imminent.

Limiting Factor: Habitat: limiting factor is severe. Wetland habitat loss as a result of human activity and climate change is the greatest threat,

Comment:

### Introduction

The Virginia Rail breeds from southern British Columbia to Newfoundland, south to North Carolina, central Mexico, and South America. The northern population winters from southern British Columbia, down the Pacific coast, across Mexico, and south to Guatemala. In Wyoming, the species occurs across most of the state, but its abundance is unknown. The Wyoming Game and Fish Department classifies it as a Species of Special Concern with a Native Species Status of 3 (NSS3) because populations are restricted in numbers and distribution, and habitat is restricted and vulnerable, although there is no ongoing significant loss of habitat.

### Habitat

The Virginia rail prefers warm, freshwater marshes with dense emergent vegetation interspersed with open water or mudflats. The species is most common in natural wetlands with irregular bottom contours, 0-15 cm water depths, and high abundance of invertebrates.

### Problems

- h There are no ongoing efforts to delineate important habitats in Wyoming.
- h Heavy livestock grazing can be detrimental to nests, young, and the availability of prey.
- h Human encroachment of wetlands is impacting this species.
- h Population status and trends are not well-known in Wyoming.
- h Species is susceptible to impacts from energy development and other large-scale projects that destroy or impair suitable habitats.

### Conservation Actions

- h Identify and delineate important habitats.
- h Integrate habitat management for this species and other wetland obligates to the extent possible.
- h Monitor population status and trends.
- h Protect important wetland areas on private lands through conservation easements.
- h Restore and create wetland habitats through available funding and mitigation programs.
- h Work cooperatively with land management agencies and others to protect and manage key habitats.

### Monitoring/Research

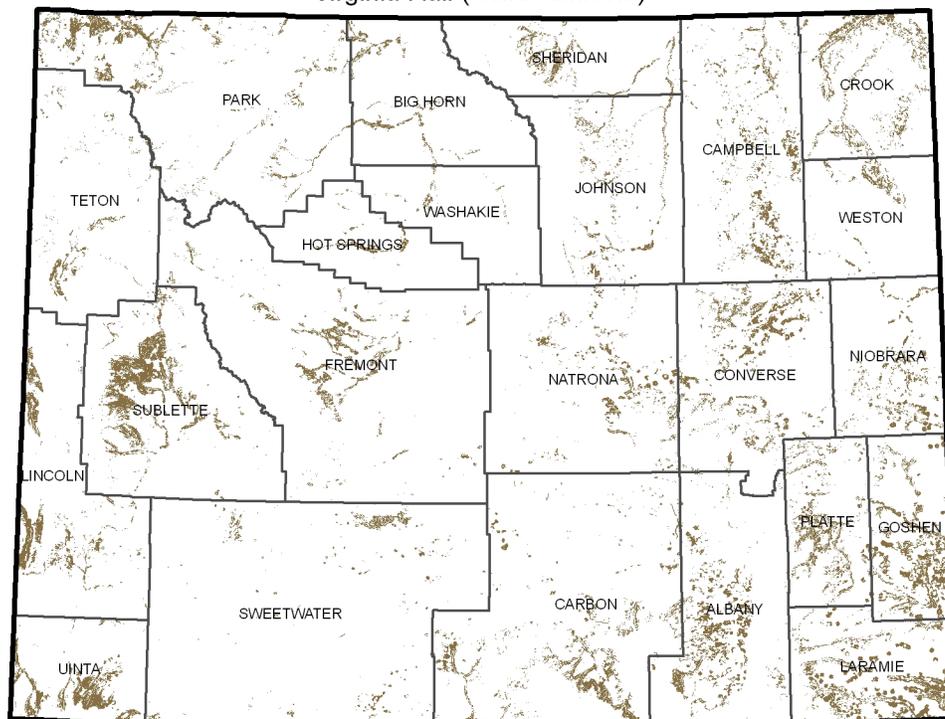
There is no ongoing monitoring or research in Wyoming.

### Recent Developments

None.

## References

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- Nicholoff SH, compiler. 2003. Wyoming bird conservation plan Version 2.0. Wyoming Partners In Flight. Lander: Wyoming Game and Fish Department. 668 p. Online: [www.blm.gov/wildlife/plan/WY/menu.htm](http://www.blm.gov/wildlife/plan/WY/menu.htm).

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SOURCE: Digital maps of ranges and predicted distributions for Wyoming Species of Greatest Conservation Need: April 2010. Wyoming Natural Diversity Database. University of Wyoming, Laramie, Wyoming. Note that brown indicates the predicted distribution of the species; heavy black lines indicate outermost boundaries of possible occurrence.