



# U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

## Arizona Ecological Services Office

### Species Fact Sheet

### Family Rallidae

## Yuma Ridgways (clapper) Rail

(*Rallus obsoletus [=longirostris] yumanensis*)

**STATUS:** Endangered without critical habitat (32 FR 4001; March 11, 1967).

**SPECIES DESCRIPTION:** The Yuma Ridgways rail is one of the smaller subspecies of the Ridgways rail. Adults stand at about 8 inches (in) (20-23 centimeters (cm)) tall. Coloring is light gray to dark brown on the upper body with a tawny-orange breast, and orange legs. The beak is long, and curves slightly downwards.

**HABITAT AND RANGE:** Consistently found in freshwater marshes that are composed of cattail and bulrush. This emergent vegetation averages greater than 6 feet (ft). Water depth tends to be around 6 in. deep. Rail numbers are directly related to habitat quality. This rail has a range that extends from Nevada, California, and Arizona to Baja California and Sonora Mexico.

**LAND MANAGEMENT/OWNERSHIP:** Habitat for the rail occurs on State, Federal, and private lands with a majority being on federal and state owned lands.



**LIFE HISTORY:** The Yuma Ridgways rail diet consists of crayfish, small fish, tadpoles, clams and other aquatic invertebrates. It breeds at age one with nesting occurring from March to July. Clutch size is from 5 to 10 eggs. More information on life history traits is needed.

**REASONS FOR DECLINE/VULNERABILITY:** Historical habitat loss is attributable to anthropogenic factors that affect the habitat availability and quality that are necessary for the rail. Remaining habitats are primarily either human-made, as are the managed ponds at Salton Sea, or the effluent-supported marshes at the Cienega de Santa Clara and Rio Hardy. Consistent management of these areas is needed to maintain habitat quality.

**RECOVERY PLAN:** The Service published a recovery plan for the species in 1983. A draft recovery plan was made available in 2010 but was not finalized. More information was made available, including an amendment to the range (to include Mexico), in 2016. A second revision of the recovery plan is currently being worked on.

**NOTES:** Some authors recognize the Sonora (*R. o. rhizophorae*) and San Blas (*R. o. nayaritensis*) Ridgways rails as part of the Yuma subspecies. However habitat use substantially differentiates the Sonora and San Blas rails and the coming recovery plan supports maintaining a separation of the subspecies.

**DOCUMENTS:** The first draft revision of the recovery plan and other documents can be found at:

[https://www.fws.gov/southwest/es/arizona/Yuma\\_Rail.htm](https://www.fws.gov/southwest/es/arizona/Yuma_Rail.htm). Additional information can be found on the Environmental Conservation Online System at:

<http://ecos.fws.gov/ecp0/profile/speciesProfile?spscode=B00P>.

