Yellow Rail *(Coturnicops noveboracensis)*

(2 subspecies; both within plan area)

Conservation Concern Category:
High Concern

Population Trend (PT)

C. noveboracensis noveboracensis—stable (Delany and Scott 2002: WCA 2001 (Denver workshop))
C. noveboracensis goldmani—unknown (Delany and Scott 2002)

"southern boundary of breeding area has moved northward in twentieth century…" (Bookhout 1995)

"breeding range has decreased during the 20th century: it formerly bred in California, and possibly also in ne USA, s to about 40° N, and in the 19th century it was described as resident in Florida and s Louisiana…the race *golmani* is known only from Mexico where it was formerly a local resident in upper Rio Lerma Valley; it has not been seen since 1964…" (Taylor 1998)

"recent California records indicate species may still breed in far N and NE…intensive surveys in Oregon have established that this species is a fairly widespread breeding species in south central portion of state where found at 27 sites in Wood River Valley and Klamath Marsh NWR…" (R. Russell, pers.comm.)

There is no reason to believe that the species is increasing anywhere in the global range. There is ample evidence showing that the species' habitat has declined and is still declining throughout the southern range. In the remaining portion of its range, the Hudson/James Bay region, it may also be declining in certain areas (Alvo and Robert 1999).

The species is no longer present in certain areas along the Hudson Bay coastline (La Pérouse Bay area) where it was regularly observed 30 years ago (K. Abraham-OMNR, pers. comm.), presumably because of habitat degradation due to Snow Goose overgrazing.

BBS trend not reliable for this species (R. Bazin, pers.comm.)

PT FACTOR SCORE=4

Population Size (PS)

C. noveboracensis noveboracensis—10,000-25,000 total individuals (Delany and Scott 2002: WCA 2001 (Denver workshop))
C. noveboracensis goldmani—unknown (Delany and Scott 2002; last record 1964)

"densities: 65 calling rails in 1620 ha habitat (Oregon); 1 calling rail per 25-86 ha (Michigan)…" (Bookhout 1995)

"*noveboracensis* is widespread but locally distributed within its breeding range…it may be more abundant than existing records indicate…" (Taylor 1998)

Range of estimated breeding pairs in North America is estimated between 5,160 to 13,450 with a median of 9,255 (Mattsson 2001, unpublished).

Alvo and Robert (1999) estimated the global north American population to be around 5,000-6,000 pairs: a few thousand pairs in the Hudson/James bay coastal regions, 2,000 pairs in continental Canada and 600-750 pairs in the U.S. The total North American population would be around 10,000-12,000 individuals.

PS FACTOR SCORE=3

Threats to Breeding Populations (TB)

"loss of wetlands to human activity is probably the most serious factor affecting populations… water levels appear to influence numbers present…encroachment of woody vegetation decreases quality of breeding habitat…" (Bookhout 1995)

"ditching and draining for agricultural development…grazing by cattle affects marsh-edge…mowing may help perpetuate breeding habitat by preventing the usual vegetative succession…periodic burning removes invading wood vegetation…" (Taylor 1998)

Wetland loss by agriculture and human development. Habitat degradation in coastal Hudson/James bay region because of overgrazing by the enormous Snow Goose population (D. Hussell and K. Ross, pers. comm. in Alvo and Robert 1999).

Overgrazing in Hudson/James bay coastal marshes occurs mainly during spring migration where geese feed annually on emergent vegetation causing important habitat changes (K. Abraham, pers. comm..; Abraham et al. 2005; Jefferies et al. 2006).

Oil and gas development in Alberta. Human disturbance caused by birders (Alvo and Robert 1999)

TB FACTOR SCORE=4

Threats to Non-breeding Populations (TN)

“some rails lost to machinery during hay cutting and baling on wintering grounds…some strike TV towers or other structures during nocturnal migration…” (Bookhout 1995)

“mowing seems beneficial for staging and moulting areas…manipulation of water levels to benefit migratory waterfowl could adversely affect YERA…” (Taylor 1998)

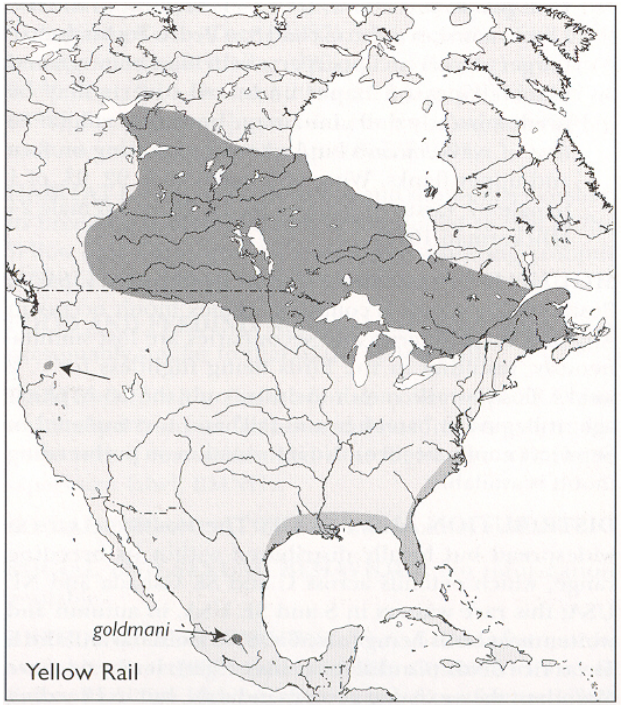
Habitat loss for wintering Yellow Rails has been so extensive in the U.S. that the wintering range may no longer be contiguous (T. Bookout, pers. comm. in Alvo and Robert 1999).

Rice harvesting may cause Yellow Rail casualties (Cardiff and Smalley 1989 in Alvo and Robert 1999)

Concentration of YERA during non-breeding results in significant threat (Marshbird Workshop 2005)

TN FACTOR SCORE=5

Global Range (Taylor 1998; entire range within plan



area)

Breeding Distribution (BD)

C. noveboracensis noveboracensis—SC & SE Canada to NE USA, NW USA (Delany and Scott 2002)

C. noveboracensis goldmani—Marshes of R Lema, C Mexico (Delany and Scott 2002)

1,641,000 km^2 (plan area distribution; estimated from range maps)

Range extension in the northwest portion of its range: Yellow Rails have been recently recorded in the Northwest territories in the Nahanni National Park Reserve of Canada near the Yukon border (Craig Machtans, CWS-PN; pers. comm.)

BD FACTOR SCORE=3

Non-breeding Distribution (ND)

C. noveboracensis noveboracensis—SE & S USA (Delany and Scott 2002)

C. noveboracensis goldmani—Marshes of R Lema, C Mexico (Delany and Scott 2002)

1,968,800 km^2 (plan area distribution; estimated from range maps)

ND FACTOR SCORE=4

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