

# USACE Natural Resource Management

## Non-migratory Birds



### Yuma Ridgway's Rail

### FAST FACTS

**REASONS FOR CURRENT STATUS:** The Yuma Ridgway's Rail is one of several subspecies of the Clapper Rail. This subspecies occurs primarily along the Colorado River and was listed endangered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in 1967.

According to USFWS, threats to the subspecies include habitat loss and degradation due to changes in historical hydrographs, channelization, and diversion of river flows for human purposes. Survey detections for this bird have ranged from 467 to 809 individuals over the last 10 years.

**MANAGEMENT AND PROTECTION:** A recovery team for this subspecies was formed in 1972. The team initiated biological research in Mexico and established survey protocols for the U.S. In 1983, the USFWS developed the Yuma Ridgway's Rail Recovery Plan based upon the biological and survey information gathered between 1969 and 1981.

In 2006 the USFWS completed a 5-year review in which it was determined that the recovery plan would need a complete revision. A revision was drafted in 2010, but is not yet finalized.

**HABITAT NEEDS:** The Yuma Ridgway's Rail is a marsh bird. It inhabits dense marshes dominated by cattail or cattail-bulrush along the Colorado River. According to USFWS, important features of suitable habitat include:

- Relatively shallow water, typically around 3.5 inches deep with emergent vegetation greater than 6 feet.
- A surface mat of dead, fallen vegetation, which is associated with high populations of prey such as crayfish, beetles, and snails.
  - Appears to select denser vegetation in the winter.

**Size:** This is one of the smaller subspecies of Clapper Rail with adults standing about 8 inches tall. (USFWS)

**Color:** This subspecies is gray-brown from above with a cinnamon color below. Its rump can be a mottled gray or brown while the flanks are barred with black and white. Its cheeks are brown gray and it has a long, thin, slightly down-curved orange bill. (USFWS)

*Photo credit:*

*Left & Center: USFWS  
Right: BLM*

*Natural Resource  
Management (NRM)*

*This fact sheet has been prepared as an unofficial publication of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). This online publication is produced to provide its readers information about best management practices related to special status species. Editorial views and opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the Department of the Army. Mention of specific vendors does not constitute endorsement by the Department of the Army or any element thereof.*



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**USACE ROLE:** According to the Engineering Research and Development Center's Threatened and Endangered Species Team Cost Estimates, the USACE has expended over \$74,000 on efforts related to the Yuma Ridgway's Rail since 2008. Of that sum, \$7,500 has been spent on inventorying, surveying, and/or monitoring this subspecies. Additionally, over \$14,000 was put toward the construction, creation, restoration, and/or protection of the Yuma Ridgway's Rail's habitat.

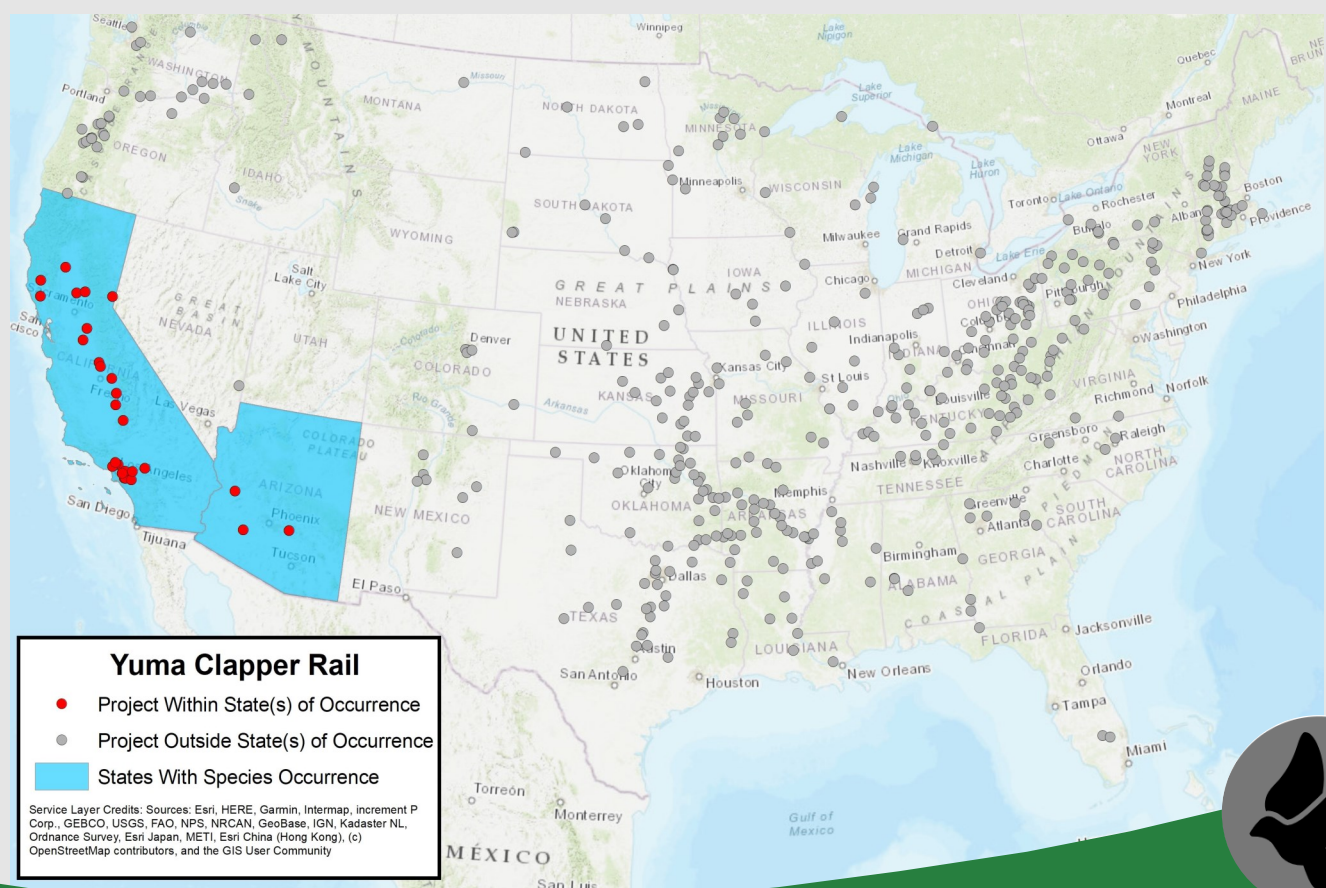
*Photo, Right:* A photo taken at Alamo Dam provided by U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Los Angeles District.



## WHAT IS USACE DOING:

USACE operates a number of projects within this subspecies' range, including Alamo Dam. Found along the Bill Williams River, Alamo Dam has some of the largest and most intact, preserved riparian habitat remaining in the lower Colorado River Drainage.

This habitat is vital to supporting local populations of native birds and other wildlife. Moreover, the area around the lake is home to a number of protected species such as the Southwestern Willow Flycatcher, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Northern Mexican Gartersnake, Bonytail Chub, and the Yuma Ridgway's Rail.



Source: Map provided by Ashleigh Boss, ORISE Fellowship, Institute for Water Resources

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