

**IDENTIFICATION:** The Eastern black rail (*Laterallus jamaicensis*) is north America's smallest rail species. Much of the breast, neck and head are pale to dark gray in color with varying amounts of chestnut brown on the back, rump and tail. The eyes are red in color. It is very secretive and relies heavily on dense marsh vegetation in salt, brackish, and freshwater wetlands in the eastern United States, Mexico, Brazil, Central America, and the Caribbean. Quite capable of moving quickly through dense vegetation but will take short flights to escape if needed. Feeds on a multitude of invertebrates and seeds.



One of four subspecies, the Eastern black rail was [listed as a threatened species](#) and provided protection under the Endangered Species Act on November 9, 2020. Information regarding population dynamics and structure is limited due to little research and knowledge of the species. Although it is migratory, scientific literature suggests that some individuals may be found in Alabama's coastal marsh areas of Baldwin and Mobile counties year-round.

Habitat changes, including dredging, draining, filling, burning and urban development are some of the most impactful ecological stressors to this species.

**FORESTRY CONSIDERATIONS:** These birds are affected by human disturbance but are unlikely to be impacted by forestry activities following Best Management Practices for Forestry.

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