

This secretive species inhabits the rushy vegetation of the wide marsh habitats fringing Lago de Junín, central Peru, where it may be fairly common but is at risk from pollution and water-level changes, and would benefit from a package of measures targeting the general welfare of the lake.

DISTRIBUTION The Junín Rail is known only from the shores of Lago de Junín (“Laguna Chinchaycocha de Junín”), 4,080 m in the Andes in Junín department, central Peru; while it is likely that it occurs through large portions of the 15,000 ha of marshland surrounding the lake, the only specific area for it is near Ondores and Pari on the south-west shore of Lago de Junín (Fjeldså 1983, J. Fjeldså *in litt.* 1992).

POPULATION It may be common within the appropriate (*Juncus*-zone) habitat, by report “sometimes appearing in semicolonies of a dozen birds” (Fjeldså 1983).

ECOLOGY It inhabits the “vast marshes” bordering Lago de Junín, but detailed information on habitat selection is lacking: birds were seen “in the inner parts of 4 km wide *Juncus* zones, in areas with mosaics of small beds of 1 m tall *Juncus andecolus* and open areas of waterlogged marl sparsely covered by weeds”, these beds having “small openings with a velvety bottom vegetation of mosses and low herbs as e.g. *Castelleja fissifolia*, *Cardamine bonariensis*, *Mimulus glabratus*, *Epilobium denticulatus* and globular algae, *Nostoc*, on flooded parts” (Fjeldså 1983). This description was condensed to “rushy areas with open spaces with partly flooded moss or short matted grass” by Fjeldså and Krabbe (1990), who pointed out that its close relative the Black Rail *Laterallus jamaicensis* is crepuscular and extremely secretive, running mouse-like through vegetation rather than flushing.

Breeding is reported to occur at the end of the dry season, i.e. in September–October (Fjeldså and Krabbe 1990 say “in the rainy season”); only two eggs are laid (Fjeldså 1983). The “semicolonies” referred to under population may be the consequence of patchy distribution of optimal habitat or reflect some unknown feature of the species's behavioural ecology.

THREATS Pollution and man-made changes in water level have been affecting the lake since at least 1955 (for details, see Threats under Junín Grebe *Podiceps taczanowskii*) and may adversely influence the fringing vegetation in which this rail lives (J. Fjeldså verbally 1987).

MEASURES TAKEN The status of the lake and efforts to reduce pollution and water-level changes are described in the corresponding section under Junín Grebe.

MEASURES PROPOSED This bird merits further study as part of an integrated initiative to manage Lago de Junín for its endemic wildlife (see corresponding section under Junín Grebe).

REMARKS The Junín Rail was described as a distinctive race of the Black Rail (Fjeldså 1983) and was subsequently retained as such (Fjeldså and Krabbe 1990), but both these sources admit the bird's possible status as a full species, as already accorded it by Collar and Andrew (1988).