

TAXON SUMMARY

Lewin's Rail (Western Australian)

1	Family	Rallidae
2	Scientific Name	<i>Rallus pectoralis clelandi</i> Mathews, 1911
3	Common Name	Lewin's Rail (Western Australian)
4	Conservation status	Extinct

5 Reasons for listing

There have been no records of this subspecies since 1932, despite an intensive survey being undertaken.

6 Intraspecific taxa

R. p. brachipus (Tasmania) is Least Concern.

R. p. pectoralis (mainland, eastern Australia) is Near Threatened. There are seven other subspecies in New Zealand, New Guinea, Indonesia and the Philippines; global status is Least Concern.

7 Past range and abundance

This subspecies of Lewin's Rail was confined to the south-western corner of Western Australia. Whittell (1933) implied that it was reasonably common in the early 1930s. However he procured only one specimen, near Bridgetown in December 1931, and saw another bird 10 months later. His records are the last to appear in the literature. None were recorded during an intensive survey of wetlands in the early 1980s (Jaensch *et al.*, 1988).

8 Ecology

The western subspecies of Lewin's Rail occupied swamps (Whittell, 1933), but no more detailed description of its habitat or ecology exists.

9 Reasons for extinction

The subspecies would have been particularly vulnerable at times of drought, when it is likely to have been confined to a few refugia. Many swamps in south-western Australia were drained for agriculture early this century (Sedgwick, 1940, Serventy, 1947), and other swamps in the south-west were burnt regularly by graziers (A. H. Burbidge, R. E. Johnstone).

10 Bibliography

Jaensch, R. P., Vervest, R. M. and Hewish, M. J. 1988. Waterbirds in nature reserves of south-western Australia 1981-1985: Reserve Accounts. *RAOU Report* 30.

Sedgwick, E. H. 1940. The birds of the Rockingham district. *Emu* 40:129-152.

Serventy, D. L. 1947. Birds of the Swan River district, Western Australia. *Emu* 47:241-286.

Whittell, H. M. 1933. The birds of Bridgetown district, south-west Australia. *Emu* 32:182-189.

Comments received from

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