

king rail *Rallus elegans*

Kingdom: Animalia

Phylum: Chordata

Class: Aves

Order: Gruiformes

Family: Rallidae

ILLINOIS STATUS state endangered, native

FEATURES

The king rail is about 15 inches in length (bill tip to tail tip in preserved specimen). This bird has rust-red feathers and a long, thin bill. A small white stripe is present over the eye. The back feathers have a bold black and tan pattern.

BEHAVIORS

The king rail is a rare migrant and summer resident in Illinois. It is a very rare winter resident in the state. Spring migrants begin arriving in mid-April. Fall migration starts in late October. The species winters in the Gulf Coast states. The king rail inhabits cattail marshes or other areas with shallow water and many plants where it finds aquatic macroinvertebrates, plants, seeds and amphibians to eat.

HABITATS

Aquatic Habitats

lakes, ponds and reservoirs; marshes

Woodland Habitats

none

Prairie and Edge Habitats

none

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