

SORA
(*PORZANA CAROLINA*)

Navajo/Federal Statuses: NESL G4 / MBTA; not listed under the ESA.

Distribution: Breeding range includes most of Canada, northern and western US, south to central AZ and NM; winters in extreme southern US, Mexico, and Central America. Known from various ponds/lakes on Navajo Nation including several in Chuska Mountains, Morgan Lake, and near Tuba City. Potential at suitable wetlands throughout Navajo Nation.

Habitat: Nests in wetlands with shallow to intermediate-depth water and fine-leaved emergent vegetation (typically cattails, sedges, bur-reeds, and bulrushes); floating and submerged vegetation increases habitat quality. Wetlands with heavy snow, ice or high water until early May are unusable for nesting. Migration habitat is typically wetlands with tall, dense vegetation and shorter seed-producing plants, but occasionally may include upland habitats (e.g. fields and pastures).

Similar Species: Virginia Rail has longer bill and red legs, bill and breast; Common Snipe has long bill, black-striped head, and reddish tail.

Phenology:

- e.APR-m.MAY: arrival to breeding area, courtship
- e.MAY-l.JUL: egg-laying, incubation (16-19 days)
- l.MAY-m.AUG: nestling period (2-3 days), fledging of young
- l.JUN-l.AUG: independence of young (28 days post-fledging)
- e.SEP-m.OCT: migration to wintering area

Survey Method: ≥ 1 pedestrian survey with high-power optics during 1 MAY-1 AUG for individuals, or year-round for potential habitat.

Avoidance: For nesting habitat, no surface disturbance within 60 m of lakes and Category I wetlands and 45 m of Category II wetlands, per Navajo Natural Heritage Program (1994); no activity within 0.2 km (1/5 mi) of active nest during 1 MAY-1 AUG; buffer may be less depending on activity type and duration, but not less than 0.1 km.

References:

- Melvin, S.M. and J.P. Gibbs. 1996. Sora (*Porzana carolina*). In The Birds of North America, No.250 (A.Poole and F.Gill, eds.). The Academy of Natural Sciences, Philadelphia, and The American Ornithologists' Union, Washington, D.C. (description p.2)
- Navajo Natural Heritage Program. 1994. Draft Guidance, Navajo Nation Aquatic Resources Protection Plan. Window Rock, AZ.