

## Yellow Creek State Park – Lake

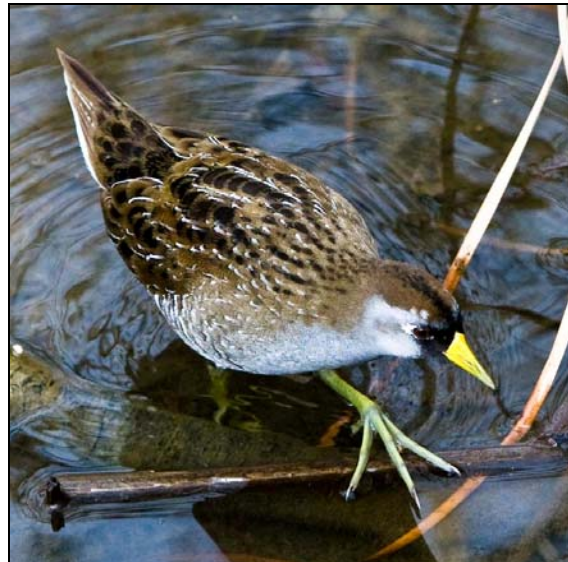
The southern shore of the Yellow Creek State Park impoundment provides an extensive area of emergent aquatic vegetation, which supports nesting habitat for three different wetland bird species of concern: **least bittern** (*Ixobrychus exilis*), **sora** (*Porzana carolina*), and **Virginia rail** (*Rallus limicola*). Each of these species utilizes a different portion of the emergent wetland habitat and forages on a different component of the aquatic life supported by the wetland. While it has been a significant period of time since these species were directly observed within these wetlands, this is not surprising given that these birds do not frequent portions of the wetlands where they are easily observable and generally avoid contact with humans.

### Threats and Stresses

These bird species are generally disturbance sensitive and become especially so during the breeding season. They are also “area sensitive” in that if the wetland they occupy becomes too small through either succession or hydrologic modification they will abandon it. A final concern is maintaining an acceptably large prey base to support breeding within these wetlands. This may require management of invasive plant species within the wetland to maintain sufficient native biodiversity.

### Conservation Recommendations

During the breeding season access to these wetlands should be restricted including access from both the shore and the water. A “no go” buffer of at least 50 meters should be established around the wetland edge to reduce both noise and wake from motorboats and other recreational watercraft that use the impoundment during the summer. Any control of invasive non-native plant species within the wetland should be done, ideally, outside of the breeding season for these species. If management is mandatory during the breeding season it should be done as quickly and strategically as possible by the smallest number of individuals possible.



a sora (*Porzana carolina*), one of the marsh-nesting birds at this site.