

= Snoring rail =

The snoring rail (*Aramidopsis plateni*) also known as the Celebes rail or Platen 's rail is a large flightless rail , the only member of the genus *Aramidopsis* . It is an Indonesian endemic found in dense vegetation in wet areas of Sulawesi and nearby Buton . The rail has grey underparts , a white chin , brown wings and a rufous patch on the hindneck . The sexes are similar , but the female has a brighter neck patch and a differently coloured bill and iris . The typical call is the snoring ee @-@ orrrr sound that gives the bird its English name .

Its inaccessible habitat and retiring nature mean that the snoring rail is rarely seen and little is known of its behaviour . Only the adult plumage has been described , and the breeding behaviour is unrecorded . It feeds on small crabs and probably other small prey such as lizards . Although protected under Indonesian law since 1972 , the rail is threatened by habitat loss (even within nature reserves) , hunting for food and predation by introduced species ; it is therefore evaluated as Vulnerable on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species .

= = Taxonomy = =

The rails are a large and very widespread family , with nearly 150 species . They are small to medium @-@ sized , terrestrial or wetland birds , and their short bodies are often flattened laterally to help them move through dense vegetation . Island species readily become flightless ; of 53 extant or recently extinct taxa restricted to islands , 32 have lost the ability to fly .

The snoring rail was first classified as *Rallus plateni* by German ornithologist August Wilhelm Heinrich Blasius in 1860 , but was moved to its current monotypic genus *Aramidopsis* by English zoologist Richard Bowdler Sharpe in 1893 . Following Taylor (1998) , it was considered to be more similar to the Inaccessible Island and white @-@ throated rails than to members of the *Rallus* genus , but a 2012 mitochondrial gene study suggests that it should actually be placed in *Gallirallus* , with Lewin 's rail and the slaty @-@ breasted rail as its closest relatives .

Aramidopsis derives from the genus name of the limpkin , *Aramus* and the Greek suffix *opsis* , " resembling " . Although the rail shares the origin of its name with the South American *Aramides* species , its distinctive bill , thick legs and barred lower belly distinguish it from that group . The species name *plateni* commemorates Carl Constantin Platen , a German doctor who collected birds and butterflies in the Malay Archipelago and gave Blasius his specimen of the rail . The common name refers to the rail 's distinctive call , and was given to the bird as *der Vogel Schnarch* (the snoring bird) by German entomologist Gerd Heinrich when he rediscovered the species in 1932 .

= = Description = =

The snoring rail is 30 cm (12 in) long and weighs 143 ? 160 g (5 @.@ 0 ? 5 @.@ 6 oz) . It is flightless , with short wings , a very short tail and strong legs and feet . The back and the underparts from the forecrown to the breast are grey , apart from a white chin , and the sides and rear of the neck are deep orange @-@ red . Most of the rest of the upperparts are brown , and the belly , flanks and undertail have white barring . The male has black legs , a yellow iris and a brown and greenish down @-@ curved bill . The female is similar , but has a brighter hindneck colour , less white on the chin , a red iris , a cream and reddish bill and blue @-@ grey legs . Immature and juvenile plumages are undescribed . Visual confusion with sympatric rails is unlikely . The blue @-@ faced rail is similar in size , but is chestnut above and black below , and the buff @-@ banded rail has strongly marked upperparts , breast and head . The slaty @-@ breasted rail is smaller and has barred upperparts .

The call , given frequently , is a short wheez followed by a distinctive snoring ee @-@ orrrr . A deep hmmm sound has also been recorded .

= = Distribution and habitat = =

The snoring rail is an uncommon Indonesian endemic species of lowland and hill forests in northern , north central and southeastern Sulawesi . Another population was found on Buton island in 1995 .

The typical habitat of this species is dense vegetation in wet areas . This may include impenetrable bamboo and liana in forests , rattan in regrown forests , or elephant grass and bushes on the hillsides of the Minahassa Peninsula . Claims of the species occurring in rice fields are believed to be due to confusion with the buff @-@ banded rail . The snoring rail occurs from sea level to 1 @,@ 300 m (4 @,@ 300 ft)

= = Behaviour = =

Its inaccessible habitat and sparse distribution means that little is known about this species . A few birds were shot by Platen and another expedition led by Paul Sarasin and his second cousin , Fritz , between 1893 and 1898 , but the rail was then not seen for more than thirty years until Heinrich found it almost at the end of a two @-@ year survey of Sulawesi , then known as Celebes . He described it as " the most priceless catch that I have ever hunted or will hunt " . More than a decade later , Dutch ornithologist Louis Coomans de Ruiter also took a year to find the rail , despite concentrating on known suitable habitat . There were then no documented sightings until birds were observed in 1983 and 1989 . Sight records remain infrequent , and only about ten specimen corpses have been studied .

The snoring rail catches crabs in highland streams , and these crustaceans may be a major dietary item . It also forages in muddy areas , and has been recorded as consuming lizards . Nothing is known of its breeding behaviour other than a report of an adult seen feeding with two chicks in August 1983 , but the original report gives no details of the claimed sighting .

= = Status = =

The snoring rail is restricted to Sulawesi and Buton , and has an estimated population of 3 @,@ 500 ? 15 @,@ 000 individuals . Its numbers are thought to be decreasing , and its restricted range and small population mean that the species is classified as Vulnerable by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) .

It may always have been thinly spread , but there has been widespread deforestation within its range resulting in loss and fragmentation of suitable habitat . The rail has been protected under Indonesian law since 1972 , and the large Lore Lindu and Bogani Nani Wartabone National Parks are within its range , but logging and rattan cutting occurs even in these protected areas , and human encroachment is also a problem at Lore Lindu . The rail has been trapped for food in the past , and is sometimes killed by dogs , cats and other introduced predators . A 2007 survey of protected areas of Sulawesi failed to find the rail , suggesting that it is genuinely rare even in reserves .