Environmental Profile: Grant County, Indiana

Information & County Contacts

Grant County Visitor’s Center:
(765) 668-5435

Grant County Soil & Water Conservation District:
(765) 651-2417

Endangered Species:

Virginia Rail (*Rallus limicola*)

A secretive bird of freshwater marshes, the Virginia Rail most often remains hidden in dense vegetation. It possesses many adaptations for moving through its habitat, including a laterally compressed body, long toes, and flexible vertebrae.

- The forehead feathers of the Virginia Rail are adapted to withstand wear from pushing through dense marsh vegetation.
- The Virginia Rail can swim under water, propelling itself with its wings. It swims in this way probably only to flee predators.
- The Virginia Rail and other rail species have the highest ratio of leg muscles to flight muscles of any birds.
- The Virginia Rail builds numerous "dummy nests" in addition to the one where eggs are actually laid.¹

¹ https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/virginia_rail/lifehistory
Henslow’s Sparrow (Ammodramus henslowii)

An uncommon and famously inconspicuous bird, the Henslow’s Sparrow breeds in weedy grasslands of the east-central United States. Its population numbers have declined steadily over the past few decades, largely because of habitat loss.

- The Henslow's Sparrow sings most actively at dawn and dusk, but sometimes sings all night long.

- The Henslow's Sparrow takes flight only with great reluctance, preferring to flee from threats by running through the grass.

- Henslow's Sparrow was named by John James Audubon in honor of John Stevens Henslow, a botanist, minister, good friend of Audubon, and teacher of Charles Darwin.²

² https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Henslows_Sparrow/lifehistory