



Adult male least bittern (*Ixobrychus exilis*) stalking prey among cattails
Photo by Ed Eder

Saving Secretive Marsh Birds

February 26, 2017, 2:00 P.M.
Sherwood Regional Library

The Friends of Dyke Marsh invite you to hear a presentation on secretive marsh birds and how we can improve their habitat.

Some marsh birds, like the king rail, Virginia rail, sora, least bittern, and American bittern are difficult to detect, often hidden in dense vegetation, camouflaged by their plumage. Secretive marsh birds are in decline across their range and are designated in need of conservation in most states. Because they are hard to find and see, there is relatively sparse information available on their ecology.

Patrice Nielson, a Ph. D. candidate at the University of Maryland, surveyed secretive species in 25 marshes in the DC area between 2013 and 2015. She collected data on many aspects of the birds' habitat and modeled the presence of the birds as a function of these habitat characteristics. Among many findings, her research indicates that decreasing woody vegetation, increasing tall vegetation cover, and managing for a variety of co-dominant species to avoid monocultures would likely improve habitat for these wetland birds.

This program is cosponsored by the Audubon Society of Northern Virginia, the Virginia Society of Ornithology, the Northern Virginia Bird Club, the D.C. Audubon Society, and the Prince George's Audubon Society. It is free and open to the public.

The Sherwood Regional Library is at 2501 Sherwood Hall Lane, Alexandria, Virginia 22306.

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