

Water Rail

Regno: fauna

Birds

 [porciglione.jpg](#) [1]

Water Rail - *Rallus aquaticus*

The squeals, wails and grunts at dusk that come from the reed thickets are all part of the strange vocal repertory of the Water Rail, a small, shy water bird. It looks like a typical Rallidae (rails and crakes), a family of dark coloured birds which move nimbly through the thick marshland vegetation, thanks in part to their long tapering fingers.

They rarely shift about in flight, only during migration. Over short distances, their legs characteristically dangle in flight. It rarely swims.

Although a shy bird, it is not unusual to spot it in open, shallow waters, but always near the water's edge near canes or bulrushes.

Not a gregarious species (and very territorial during the breeding season), the water rails spends most of its time meticulously patrolling its territory in search of food, which consists of invertebrates, small fish and plant material. Sometimes it may feed on animal carcasses.

Mediterranean populations are resident, but those in north and east Europe migrate towards the south-west. A fairly common species of the Tuscan wetlands.

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