

Cal 11-03-15

**TITLE: Moorhen and Rail seasons**

PROBLEM: These birds are seldom encountered in the field. Historically there was a reason to shoot any bird for food. Few if any hunters care to hunt them and eat them. Very few can identify them especially on the wing. They are quite difficult to differentiate from shorebirds and protected rail species. Rails are generally not overly common and they are a prized species for serious and casual birders. Rails are generally only heard in the thickest emergent vegetation and don't normally fly to escape danger.

Currently , Sora and Virginia Rails are legal game but even serious birders have difficulty identifying a flying rail if they are lucky enough to see any. King, Yellow and Black Rails are present as well but are not legal game.

As moorhens are currently legal, they are difficult to differentiate from legal coots and illegal gallinules. Very few if any hunters willingly hunt or target these birds anymore. They should no longer be included with other legal game species. The rails and gallinules have special attraction and value to birders as well.

If we eliminate these two groups from the "hunnable waterfowl" we might score a PR victory with the general public.

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Conservation Congress at its annual meeting in Columbia County on April 13, 2015 recommends that the DNR remove moorhens and rails as legal game species.

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