



## **PULATTAT (common moorhen)**

*Gallinula chloropus guami*

### **Endangered Species**

### **Subspecies endemic to the Marianas**

This duck-like bird, called "pulattat" in Chamorro, is really a member of the rail family. Adults are black with a red forehead and beak. They live in wetlands such as Fena Lake, Agana Swamp, and smaller wetlands in southern and central Guam. They spend part of their time swimming in water and part walking in reedy areas along the shore. Although the pulattat's feet are not webbed, their long toes have lobes on them that make it possible for them to walk across plants floating in the water.

Pulattat eat plants, insects and snails. They make a hidden nest in the reeds, complete with an escape ramp to the water for the moorhen chicks to use when danger threatens. The female lays five to six eggs. Both parents sit on the eggs. When the eggs hatch the chicks are covered with fluffy black down. They have white feathery eyebrows and a white beak. Like most ground nesters, the chicks are able to run and protect themselves from predators soon after hatching. As they grow, their feathers turn brown and their beaks turn a dirty orange-brown. Finally, as adults, their feathers are black and their beak and forehead turn red.

These interesting birds once were fairly common in Guam's wetlands. As large areas of wetlands have been filled for development and less taro and rice are grown than in the past, there is less habitat for the pulattat.

The pulattat is on the federal and local endangered species lists. This means it is against the law to hurt, kill, harass, disturb or in any way, harm this bird.