

Rails

Common moorhen / *Gallinula chloropus* / Ban / バン

The common moorhen is a medium-sized (30 to 38 centimeters long) member of the rail family. It is usually found in freshwater habitats, including rice paddies, swamps, and near the mouths of rivers. It has a charcoal-gray body and a brownish back with a ragged stripe of white on the side. The bright-red bill (with a yellow tip) extends on a shield up the face to the top of the head. The moorhen is migratory, though some are resident on Amami-Oshima. Despite its ability to fly long distances, the bird is more graceful walking or swimming than in flight. It is omnivorous, eating both aquatic plants and animals, and forages on land and in the water.

Eurasian coot / *Fulica atra* / Oban / オオバン

The Eurasian coot is both migratory and a winter resident on Amami-Oshima. It is the largest (36 to 39 centimeters long) and roundest member of the rail family, weighing as much as 1 kilogram. Its plumage is a sooty black, and it has red eyes and a striking white bill extending to a frontal shield on its forehead. It feeds on freshwater aquatic vegetation as well as insects and fish, which it catches on underwater dives that can last up to 15 seconds. The bird is also noticeable for its clumsy takeoff, which it accomplishes with dangling toes and a lot of splashing.