

# OTHERS: Hunters can opt for a variety of game birds

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geese and protect the migratory birds once they start coming down in October," Maddox explained. "People can get some Canadas in the lower Mobile-Tensaw Delta, but the best way to hunt them is to find a farmer who may be harvesting crops. Those geese start hitting agriculture fields hard as soon as they're harvested. Knocking on the door of a farmer, or calling a farmer might result in an opportunity to hunt some giant Canada geese."

People can also hunt rails and gallinules, shorebirds that like to stay in the thickest reeds. They thrive in the lower delta as well as on lake shorelines, wherever they can find abundant grass. Clapper rails, however, prefer salt marshes, such as those found along the coast.

Rail and gallinule seasons run concurrent with teal season, Sept. 12-27. The seasons



Photos by John N. Felsher

**A drake purple gallinule** tiptoes through the reeds along a shoreline.

reopen from Nov. 27 through Jan. 19, 2021. In Alabama, sportsmen can shoot up to 15 birds in any combination of clapper rails, Virginia rails, sora rails and purple or common gallinules. King rails are not legal to hunt in Alabama.

"While out teal hunting, if it's a slow day, people can take advantage of rail and gallinule seasons, especially in south Alabama," Maddox advised. "They're really un-

derutilized species. Not many people hunt them or even know that they're available, but they are fun to hunt."

Quail season opens Nov. 7 and continues through Feb. 28, 2021. In recent years, the state did considerable habitat work to restore wild quail populations in some areas. Pockets of huntable wild quail exist where they can find good habitat, but most people hunt pen-raised birds at any number of commercial preserves across the state.

An abundant bird, but rarely hunted, snipe season runs from Nov. 14 through Feb. 28, 2021 with a limit of eight per day. Few people intentionally hunt snipe, but shoot them incidental to other types of hunting like waterfowl. They can provide extremely challenging wing-shooting and gave their name to military marksmen who can hit extremely difficult targets.

"Snipe is another species that few people pursue, but the population is really high," Maddox stated. "Look for snipe around shallow water areas. They like mudflats, exposed shorelines and habitat like that. They dip their bills in the mud and pick out insects, invertebrates and seeds."



**Daniel Felsher admires** a common gallinule he killed while hunting in the Mobile-Tensaw Delta near Mobile, Ala. Largely ignored by most sportsmen, rails and gallinules can be hunted in Alabama from Sept. 12-27 and again from Nov. 27 through Jan. 19, 2021.

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