

## RAILS, GALLINULES, AND COOTS — FAMILY RALLIDAE

### Yellow Rail *Coturnicops noveboracensis*

The Yellow Rail lives in dense marshes of grass. It is extremely secretive and one of the most difficult North American birds for the human observer to see. It has also declined greatly, at least in its frequency as a winter visitor to California. From southern California there are only three recent records, one for San Diego County, all of birds lost in unsuitable urban habitat.

**Winter:** The single record for San Diego County is of one found alive on a city street in a recently developed area of north Santee (O12) before dawn on 16 December 1998. The bird was exhausted or sick; though it was brought to rehabilitators at Project Wildlife it died later that day and is now preserved as SDNHM 50186. The only other two Yellow Rails known from southern California since 1917 resulted from similar episodes in Santa Barbara and in Manhattan Beach near Los Angeles (Rottenborn and Morlan 2000, Erickson and Hamilton 2001).



Photo by Jim Melli