

Farm Structures FACTSHEET



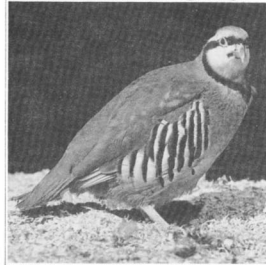
BRITISH
COLUMBIA

Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries

Order No. 343.100-2
1982

Raising Chukar Partridges

RAISING CHUKAR PARTRIDGES



Introduction

Raising Red-legged partridge, commonly referred to as the "chukar," can be an enjoyable hobby, or if properly managed, a profitable business.

Many bird fanciers consider the chukar one of the easiest game birds to raise in captivity, especially when it is raised on wire to minimize disease problems.

Initially introduced into California in the early 1930s to help supply birds for hunting recreation, the chukar partridge in recent years has gained popularity as a gourmet food. The texture and taste of cooked partridge compares favorably with that of the Bobwhite quail.

With modern techniques it is possible to raise chicks during any season, thus producing a marketable product all year. This has definite monetary advantages for the producer who can more efficiently utilize his growing facilities. It is still recommended, however, that managers establish dependable markets before venturing into business on a large scale.

Distribution

The Red-legged partridge familiar to most game bird fanciers in the United States is thought to be a composite (hybrid) of several subspecies

Cooperative Extension
Division of Agricultural Sciences
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

of the genus *Alectoris* originating from central Asia. There are at least 13 subspecies of Red-legged or rock partridge that look alike yet have unique traits that identify them with their respective habitats.

The *chukar* partridge recently reclassified by some taxonomists as belonging to the species *chukar*, is presently identified as *Alectoris chukar chukar*. This subspecies was first liberated in California in about 1932; 20 years later some 53,000 birds had been released in all but four counties. As a result of these releases, chukars are established in the desert and semi-arid regions of northern and southern California where yearly precipitation rarely exceeds 10 inches. The bird has been successfully established in other western states including Nevada, Washington, Oregon, Utah, Montana, Wyoming, Idaho and Arizona.

Use of the term *chukar* in this leaflet is synonymous with the Red-legged partridge, *Alectoris chukar chukar*.

Description

The chukar can best be identified by the black band running across the forehead through the eyes, down the neck, and meeting as a gorget, between the white throat feathers and upper breast. The lower breast and back are generally ash-gray. Feathers on the flanks are gray at the base and have two black bands at the tip, giving the appearance of numerous bands of black bars flanking the side. The bill, legs and feet of both sexes are orange-red.

Sex Determination

There is no obvious feather color dimorphism in chukars. Consequently, sexing adult birds for the untrained eye is most difficult. However, it is possible to distinguish adult males from female by body size, shape of the head (blocky appearance in males) (figure 1) and presence of the metatarsal spur (which can be present on some females).

A more reliable technique for determining sexes in partridges was developed by University of California workers who found that examining the genital protuberance for evidence of a rudimentary sex organ is about 95 percent accurate for determining differences in sex. In adult males the cone-shaped protuberance is usually centrally located on the cloacal fold

LEAFLET 21321



This leaflet contains information on raising Red-legged partridge, commonly referred to as the "chukar" which can be an enjoyable hobby, or if properly managed, a profitable business. To obtain a copy, please contact.

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Website: <http://anrcatalog.ucdavis.edu/merchant.ihtml?pid=427&step=4>