

GREY PARTRIDGE

PERDIX PERDIX

DISTINGUISHING MARKS:

Length is 30-33 cm and weight 350-400 g. As big as pigeon, toddler-like grey partridge is easy to know from its orange brown face and dark brown, horseshoe-shaped stomach fleck.

PREVALENCE:

Grey partridge has earlier belonged as an inseparable part to the field landscape of South-Finland. Nowadays species is however rareness, thus it is met here and there in the southern Finland and on South-Bothnia. Partridge populations have declined steeply starting from the beginning of 1900's, although they are aspired to boost with planting. The probable reason for decline is power agriculture. Also spreading of the racoon dog is thought to be one explanation for dramatic reducing grey partridge. For the amount of the population is estimated as being 5000- 8000 couples. Diminish partridge populations are tried to add by letting the ranched birds to the nature, but the results of the planting efforts have however remained poor.

HABITAT:

Originally being from the prairies and meadows, partridge spread to Finland in 19th century from the south-east or from the south, became accustomed to our barren conditions and formed the northernmost partridge population of the world. Little flocks of partridges belonged earlier to the southern Finnish field landscape has decreased, because fields are underdrained and verges growing weed and shrubbery cannot be found anymore. Poisoning of the fields have reduced the necessary insect nourishment of the chicks.

LIFE STYLES:

Grey partridge is a swarm bird that lives alone only when nesting. It flies gliding between low whirring wing strokes. Birds however depend upon their protective colouring and rise to the flight just in front of the stroller. Frightened partridge lets anxious, shrill shout series; otherwise partridges are rather quiet. Moving swarms are difficult to find on the snowy fields in the wintertime. As a good hint there are wading footprints and messed snow pits on the snow; now and then from the snowy field into sight peeks an observant head that exposes the location of food digging swarm under snow.

NOURISHMENT:

Partridges are mainly vegetarians, whose main food are sprouts and seeds. In the winter birds get to the vicinity of barns and drying-houses to examine the grass and straw which have dropped to the ground. Furthermore they dig the spring up of the grain and clover, when snow cap is thin enough. They visit also gladly in the protected feeding roof of the field bank, where there is offered grain. Chicks eat mainly insects.

BREEDING:

Nest of the partridge is on the ground in the protection of the densest meadow vegetation. The female lays regularly 15- 19 eggs, but also 29 eggs' nest is met. Partridge is called the world's master egg layer. The female bathes 23-25 days while the male is guarding. Hens take care of from the kids for 3 months time, when they become independent. The chicks learn to fly in 14 days of age.

