

Adult male. Photo: Simon002/iStock

About This Bird

Climate Vulnerability

Learn More

Gray Partridge

Perdix perdix

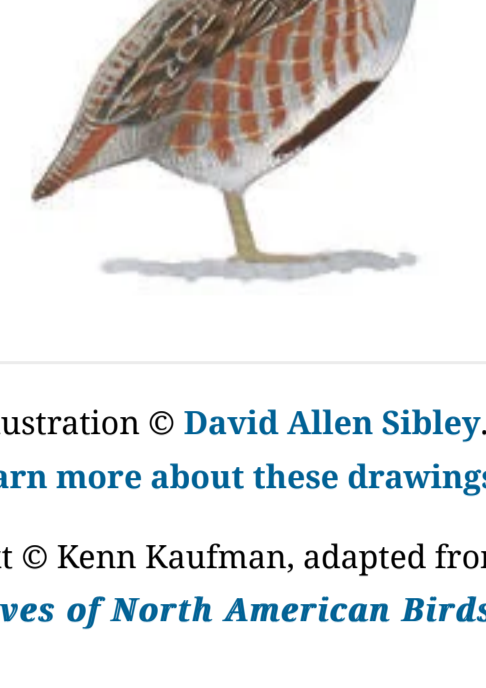


Illustration © David Allen Sibley. [Learn more about these drawings.](#)
Text © Kenn Kaufman, adapted from *Lives of North American Birds*

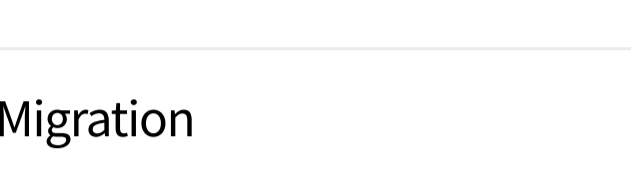
Conservation status North American population may be lower now than in 1950s, but still widespread, common in many areas.

Family [Pheasants and Grouse](#)

Habitat Cultivated land, hedgerows, bushy pastures, meadows. Mostly lives in grasslands and agricultural fields. Farmland is excellent habitat as long as hedgerows and shelterbelts are left between fields. In winter often in stubble fields, moving into edges of woodlots in harsh weather.

Share this bird [Twitter](#) [Facebook](#) [Pinterest](#) [Email](#)

Download Our Bird Guide App



Migration

North American populations apparently do not migrate. Some in eastern Europe may move south in particularly harsh weather.

Photo Gallery

Feeding Behavior

Forages in coveys most of year, alone or in pairs in spring. Takes most food from ground. In winter, may burrow into snow to reach seeds on ground.

Diet

Mostly seeds, also leaves and insects. Eats seeds from a wide variety of plants, including many grasses and weeds, also waste grain from crops such as wheat, oats, corn, sunflower. Seeds are most of diet in fall and winter; eats more green leaves in spring, insects in summer. Young chicks eat mostly insects.

Eggs

Usually 12-18, sometimes up to 22 or more, sometimes fewer than 10. Fewer eggs in later clutches. Eggs buff, brown, or olive. Incubation begins after last egg is laid; until that time, eggs are covered with grass and weeds when female is away from nest. Incubation is by female only, 21-26 days, usually 25. Young: All eggs usually hatch on same day, and downy young leave nest together with parents. Both parents tend young and may lead them directly to food, but young feed themselves. Young can make short flights at less than 2 weeks, may be full-grown at 3-4 months, remain with parents through first winter.

Nesting

In courtship, male stands upright, flicks tail up and down, puffs out chest feathers to display dark belly patch and barred flanks; female approaches with bobbing movements of head. Nest site is on ground among dense cover, sometimes in open field but more often under hedgerow or shelterbelt or on brushy roadside. Nest (built by female, with male keeping watch nearby) is a shallow scrape lined with grass, leaves.

Young

All eggs usually hatch on same day, and downy young leave nest together with parents. Both parents tend young and may lead them directly to food, but young feed themselves. Young can make short flights at less than 2 weeks, may be full-grown at 3-4 months, remain with parents through first winter.



- All Seasons - Common
- All Seasons - Uncommon
- Breeding - Common
- Breeding - Uncommon
- Winter - Common
- Winter - Uncommon
- Migration - Common
- Migration - Uncommon

See a fully interactive migration map for over 450 bird species on the [Bird Migration Explorer](#).

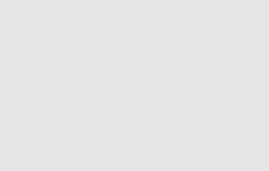
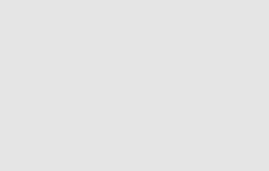
[Learn more](#)

Songs and Calls

Hoarse kee-ah; when flushed, a rapid cackle.

calls of captive

Audio © Lang Elliott, Bob McGuire, Kevin Colver, Martyn Stewart and others. [Learn more about this sound collection.](#)



These birds need your help

Get Audubon in Your Inbox

Let us send you the latest in bird and conservation news.

Email address [Sign Up](#)

Find Audubon Near You

Visit your local Audubon center, join a chapter, or help save birds with your state program.

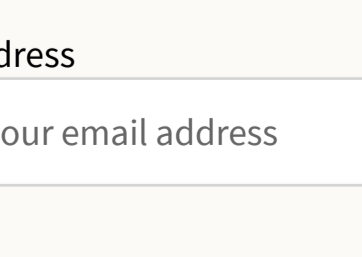
[Explore the Network](#)

Become an Audubon Member

Membership benefits include one year of Audubon magazine and the latest on birds and their habitats. Your support helps secure a future for birds at risk.

[Join Today](#)

Spread the word. It's the least you can do.



Stay abreast of Audubon

Get updates about our conservation work and how to help birds.

Email address [Sign Up](#)