

140 Capercaillie

CAPERCAILLIE (*Tetrao urogallus*)

IDENTIFICATION

Male 86-110 cm.; **female** 60-75 cm. **Male** with dark grey head and neck; black upperparts, with grey tinge; black breast; brown wing coverts; black tail with pale tinge; white bill. **Female** with brown plumage, white spotted on head, neck and rump; brown wings; reddish brown tail with black barred; grey bill.

SIMILAR SPECIES

This species is unmistakable

AGEING

3 types of age can be recognized:

Juvenile birds, only during a short intermediate stage, with plumage described in **SEXING**.

1st year autumn/2nd year spring like **adults** but **male** with short and narrow tail feathers, poorly mottled white; crown, hindneck and sides of head grey and poorly glossy; upper tail coverts strongly vermiculated grey; with moult limit between the retained two outermost **juvenile** primaries and the other ones; upperwing coverts very brown. **Female** similar to **adult female**, but with pale brown and narrow tail feathers; with moult limit between the retained two outermost **juvenile** primaries and the other ones.

Adults with body feathers as described in **SEXING**; primaries without moult limit; tail feathers broad, strongly mottled white in **male** and dark brown in **female**.

SEXING

Male unmistakable with dark grey plumage; metallic blue-green breast; lower flanks and belly mottled white; black tail; flight feathers and wing coverts brown; with a small white patch on marginal coverts at leading edge of wing; bare skin over the eye bright red; pale yellow bill: wing longer than 350 mm. **Female** with dark brown plumage, densely barred pale buff; cinnamon breast with some brown spots and white fringes, which are wider on lower flanks and belly; tail densely barred dark brown with pale tips; pale brown flight feathers; pale brown wing coverts mottled and tipped buff; bare skin over the eye pale red; grey brown bill: wing shorter than 284 mm.

Juveniles can be sexed using plumage characters: **male** with buff-grey crown and neck; upperparts pale brown, barred and vermiculated dark brown; pale grey throat, barred black; wing coverts mottled rufous brown with pale buff triangles at tips. **Female** with buff-brown crown and neck; upperparts similar to **male** but boldly patterned; pale buff throat, finely spotted black; wing coverts similar to **male** but boldly patterned.

MOULT

Complete **postbreeding** moult; usually finished by October. Partial **postjuvenile** moult remaining unmoulted the two outermost primaries; usually finished in September.

PHENOLOGY

I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X	XI	XII

STATUS IN ARAGON

Resident, breeding in the Eastern Pyrenees related with well preserved forests.