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RED GROUSE, MOST FAMOUS OF BRITISH GAME BIRDS, SHOWN IN HABITAT GROUP

By H. B. CONOVER

RESEARCH ASSOCIATE, DIVISION OF BIRDS

Probably the most important game or sporting bird of the British Isles is the red grouse. While more people may enjoy pheasant shooting, the pursuit of the grouse is not only a great sporting and social event, but it is economically a great asset to parts of Great Britain, especially the Scottish Highlands. Good grouse moors bring a large rental, and a great sum of money is spent by the sportsmen during the shooting season. Much of this expenditure goes to the local people in the form of wages for gamekeepers, drivers or beaters, and servants. As long ago as 1910 it was estimated by a writer that the annual rentals of Scottish shootings (mostly grouse moors), exclusive of deer forests, were between three and a half and four million dollars and that expenses of the renters and sportsmen came to a like amount. A later estimate for the whole of Great Britain has given ten million dollars as the annual sum expended on this form of sport.

A habitat group of the British red grouse has recently been opened in Field Museum's Hall of Birds (Hall 20). The scene depicted is a section of moor in Selkirkshire, Scotland, as it appears in late October. It is a typical grouse environment, and a number of the birds are seen at rest in the snow on one of the hilltops. Despite the snow, the season is still early enough so that the grass is green lower down in the hills, and in the valley where is seen a small meandering stream. The region depicted is one where many of the large estates are devoted primarily to grouse moors, and where August 12, traditional opening day of the

shooting season, has come to be regarded almost as a national holiday. The nearest approach in the United States to the excitement and thorough organization which greets the red grouse shooting season in Great Britain is that which surrounds the hunting of partridge or bob-white on some

Göteborg, Sweden, where they were said to have done well. In 1894 some of the birds were liberated on a high tract of moorland on the borders of Germany and Belgium, south of Spa, where red grouse still existed as late as 1910. Whether any are now to be found in these localities is unknown.

Grouse are shot in two ways. The first and oldest form of the sport is to hunt them over pointing dogs in a manner similar to the American method of hunting the quail and the different species of grouse found on this continent. Hunting over dogs is still practised on some of the moors, especially the smaller ones in Ireland, and on the Orkneys and Hebrides. By far the greatest number of birds are shot, however, by the method called driving.

The driving method of hunting is supposed to have originated because the red grouse in many places became too wild to be hunted with dogs. Whatever its origin, it has become the most popular form of the sport. By

its use larger bags are made, and in general a greater number of hunters can take part. It has been criticised as being a lazy man's way of shooting, and as not being very sporting. However, the truth of the matter is that a driven grouse generally is a far harder shot than one flushing before a dog. This is because a bird arising before a dog has not had time to get up full speed, whereas a driven grouse is coming at its fastest. Driven birds also provide the shooter with a greater variety of shots, as they can come from all angles.

In this form of shooting, anywhere from two to twelve hunters, or "guns," as they are called in England, are stationed in individual hides or blinds, called butts, and the grouse



In the Heather-covered Hills of Scotland After an Early Snow

Habitat group of red grouse recently installed in the Hall of Birds (Hall 20). This bird, a favorite of the sportsman, is found only in the British Isles, although some species of grouse inhabit America and other countries. The birds were mounted by Staff Taxidermist John W. Moyer; Staff Artist Arthur G. Rueckert painted the background, and the foreground accessories were made under the supervision of Preparator Frank H. Lett.

of the large plantations in the southern states.

The British red grouse is peculiar to the British Isles. It is found only on moors where the British heather grows, this plant being necessary for its existence, as it feeds to a great extent on the buds. Its habitats include the moors of Scotland, the Hebrides and Orkney Islands, northern England, Wales, and Ireland. Its center of abundance lies in Scotland, but in few places are grouse more numerous than the moors of southern Yorkshire in the vicinity of Sheffield, and Derbyshire.

Attempts have been made to introduce red grouse elsewhere, but with little success. At one time they were introduced near

are driven over them. The butts are located in a straight line, about fifty yards apart, generally along the slope of a hill, but sometimes in a valley. They are made either by hollowing out a part of the hillside leaving a low wall in the direction from which the birds will come, or they are built above ground by forming walls of sod in the shape of a rectangle or horseshoe, with the entrance away from the direction of the drive. The walls of the butts are about four and a half feet in height so as to conceal the "gun" as well as possible without interfering with his opportunity to shoot.

The actual driving of the grouse over the guns is quite an art, and calls for a good knowledge of the ground, habits of the birds, and their actions under different weather conditions. It is the responsibility of the head gamekeeper, who needs to show good generalship in the handling of the drivers. The number of drivers used varies from a dozen to fifty or more according to the extent of ground to be driven. Most of these men are formed in a line, either straight or semicircular, generally parallel to the line of "guns" and at a distance of anywhere from about one to three miles. This line moves toward the line of butts, flushing and driving the birds ahead of them. To keep the grouse from flying out to the side instead of toward the line of "guns," men are stationed at different places along the edge of the drive. These so-called flankers keep hidden, and only show themselves when necessary to turn back birds which are attempting to fly around the line of the butts.

BIRDS DILIGENTLY PROTECTED

As the amount of the rental that is obtained for each moor depends on the number of birds that can be shot, great care is taken of the grouse. Each year a part of the old heather is burnt so as to have always some new tender plants available, as grouse feed largely on the buds. Vermin, such as rooks, hooded crows, stoats, weasels, and other birds and animals that prey on the grouse or their eggs, are kept under control, and the ground is patrolled to keep off poachers. Each season an estimate is made of the number of birds on each property, and the kill is limited so that a good breeding stock will be left. Conversely, care is taken that the stock of birds left after the shooting season is not too large, as it has been found that this conduces to a spread of the so-called grouse disease, which periodically causes havoc.

Some of the bags made are as follows: In Lancashire on August 12, 1915, eight "guns" killed 2,929 grouse. At Moy Hall, Invernesshire, owned by the Mackintosh of Mackintosh, ten "guns" in 1900 killed 1,740 birds, while the total bag for the season was 6,092. In one year a moor of 4,000 acres produced 5,000 grouse, while another 3,000-acre property yielded 3,600 birds.

The red grouse (*Lagopus scoticus*) is in

reality a specialized type of ptarmigan. Normal ptarmigan are clothed in pure white body plumage acquired during the regular post-nuptial molt, and in the spring this coat changes to a mottled brown plumage characteristic of the breeding season. But the red grouse omits the winter phase of white plumage.

RELATIVES OF RED GROUSE

There are three other species in the genus *Lagopus*—the willow grouse, the rock ptarmigan, and the white-tailed ptarmigan. The first two are circumpolar in range, while the white-tailed ptarmigan is found only above timber line in the Rocky Mountains from the Kenai Peninsula of Alaska to northern New Mexico.

Except in the breeding season red grouse congregate in flocks. Like the American prairie chicken, the male red grouse performs an interesting series of antics in courtship of the female that it selects as mate.

The birds in the Museum group were mounted by Staff Taxidermist John W. Moyer, the accessories were made by Preparator Frank H. Letl, and the background was painted by Staff Artist Arthur G. Rueckert.

SPRING LECTURE COURSE WILL OPEN MARCH 2

The seventy-third free course of illustrated lectures on science and travel for adults will open March 2, and thereafter there will be a lecture each Saturday afternoon during March and April. They will be given in the James Simpson Theatre of the Museum, and all will begin at 2:30 o'clock. Motion pictures and stereopticon slides will be used to illustrate the subjects presented by the eminent scientists, naturalists, and explorers who have been engaged for the series.

The first lecture, on March 2, will be "Springtime in the Rockies," and the speaker will be Mr. Alfred M. Bailey, formerly a member of Field Museum's staff, and now Director of the Colorado Museum of Natural History, Denver. Mr. Bailey will tell of the plant and animal life found in various habitats ranging from the plains to the high peaks of the Rocky Mountains, and will touch also upon the fauna and flora of California and British Columbia.

A complete schedule of all nine lectures will appear in the March issue of *FIELD MUSEUM NEWS*.

No tickets are necessary for admission to these lectures. A section of the Theatre is reserved for Members of the Museum, each of whom is entitled to two reserved seats on request. Requests for these seats may be made in advance by telephone (Wabash 9410) or in writing, and seats will be held in the Member's name until 2:30 o'clock on the day of the lecture. All reserved seats not claimed by 2:30 o'clock will be made available to the general public.

If It's So, How Do You Know? *Museum Answers On Radio*

Under the title "How Do You Know?" Field Museum began a series of weekly radio broadcasts in co-operation with the University Broadcasting Council on January 25. In these programs, various questions regarding scientific facts and theories are presented, and answered by summarizing the evidence obtained from research by members of the staff of Field Museum and other scientists.

Coast-to-coast reception of this program is assured by its presentation over the Blue Network of the National Broadcasting Company each Thursday from 1 to 1:30 P.M. (Central Standard Time). However, because there is no local outlet available in Chicago at that hour, the broadcasts are being electrically transcribed, and are re-broadcast from the records in Chicago on Saturday afternoons from 4 to 4:30 o'clock over station WENR. Present plans call for the continuation of the broadcasts each week until late in May.

The January 25 (January 27 in Chicago) program consisted of introductory material explaining the purposes, scope, and methods to be employed on the series. Following are the programs scheduled for February:

National network	In Chicago	Subjects:
HOW DO YOU KNOW—		
Feb. 1	Feb. 3	—what meteorites are?
Feb. 8	Feb. 10	—the name of a plant you have never seen before?
Feb. 15	Feb. 17	—that insects are of great value to man?
Feb. 22	Feb. 24	—where the Indians came from?
Feb. 29	Mar. 2	—when the cliff houses were built?

Programs for other months will be announced in succeeding issues of *FIELD MUSEUM NEWS*, and in the radio programs published in the daily newspapers.

Field Museum is contributing the scientific data upon which the programs are based, and expert radio technique in their presentation is being furnished by the National Broadcasting Company through its Chicago Educational Director, Miss Judith Waller, and her staff, and Mr. Allen Miller, Director of the University Broadcasting Council, and his associates. Although the programs are aimed especially at pupils in the schools, where radios are now being widely used in classrooms, they are also designed for listeners of all ages.

Have you attended any of the Sunday Afternoon "Layman Lecture Tours" conducted by Mr. Paul G. Dallwig? Reservations may be made at the Museum, or by mail or telephone (Wabash 9410).



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