

Adult Female.

The female is much smaller than the male, and differs in being destitute of the bare skin on the fore neck, in having the superciliary membranes smaller, the plumage entirely of ordinary texture; the tail less elongated, with the feathers less narrow and ending in a rounded point. All the upper parts, fore neck and sides are variegated with brownish-black, yellowish-grey and whitish, disposed nearly as in the male; the throat whitish, the fore part of the breast white, the middle part brownish-black, the legs and tarsi as in the male, as are the quills; the tail-feathers mottled like the back and tipped with white.

Length to end of tail 22 inches; wing from flexure $10\frac{1}{2}$; tail $7\frac{3}{4}$; bill along the ridge $1\frac{4}{12}$; tarsus $1\frac{10\frac{1}{2}}{12}$; middle toe $1\frac{8\frac{1}{2}}{12}$, its claw $\frac{6}{12}$.

The size of this species has been exaggerated, it having been by some compared to the Turkey, and by others to the Great Wood Grouse of Europe, *Tetrao Urogallus*, whereas, in fact, it seems not much to exceed *Tetrao hybridus*. In some individuals, as I am informed by Mr. TOWNSEND, the hair-like shafts of the feathers on the sides of the neck are considerably longer than in my figure of the male.

SHARP-TAILED GROUSE.

+TETRAO PHASIANELLUS, *Linn.*

PLATE CCXCVIII.—MALE AND FEMALE.

This is another species of our birds with the habits of which I am entirely unacquainted. Dr. RICHARDSON's account of it is as follows:—"The northern limit of the range of the Sharp-tailed Grouse is Great Slave Lake, in the sixty-first parallel; and its most southern recorded station is in latitude 41° , on the Missouri. It abounds on the outskirts of the Saskatchewan plains, and is found throughout the woody districts of the Fur Countries, haunting open glades or low thickets on the borders of lakes, particularly in the neighbourhood of the trading paths, where the forests have been partially cleared. In winter it perches generally on trees, in summer is much on the ground; in both seasons assembling in coveys of from ten to



Sharp-tailed Grouse

1. Male. 2. Female.

Drawn from Nature by J. Audubon F.R.S.E.L.S.

Engraved by J. T. Bowen Phila.

sixteen. Early in spring, a family of these birds select a level spot, whereon they meet every morning, and run round in a circle of fifteen or twenty feet in diameter, so that the grass is worn quite bare. When any one approaches the circle, the birds squat close to the ground, but in a short time stretch out their necks to survey the intruder; and, if they are not scared by a nearer advance, soon resume their circular course, some running to the right, others to the left, meeting and crossing each other. These "Partridge dances" last for a month or more, or until the hens begin to hatch. When the Sharp-tailed Grouse are put up, they rise with the usual whirring noise, and alight again at the distance of a few hundred yards, either on the ground or on the upper branches of a tree. Before the cock quits his perch, he utters repeatedly the cry of *cuck, cuck, cuck*. In winter they roost in the snow like the Willow Grouse, and they can make their way through the loose wreaths with ease. They feed on the buds and sprouts of the *Betula glandulosa*, of various willows, and of the aspen and larch; and in autumn on berries. Mr. HUTCHINS says that the hen lays thirteen white eggs, with coloured spots, early in June; the nest being placed on the ground and formed of grass, lined with feathers."

Mr. TOWNSEND informs me that while crossing the north branch of the Platte (Lorimie's Fork), he found this species breeding, and that as an article of food it proved to be a very well-flavoured and plump bird, considerably superior to any of the other large species that occur in the United States.

TETRAO PHASIANELLUS, Bonap. Amer. Orn., vol. iii. p. 37.

TETRAO PHASIANELLUS, Bonap. Syn., p. 127.

TETRAO (CENTROCERUS) PHASIANELLUS, SHARP-TAILED GROUSE, Swains. and Rich. F. Bor. Amer. vol. ii. p. 361.

SHARP-TAILED GROUSE, Nutt. Man., vol. i. p. 669.

SHARP-TAILED GROUSE, *Tetrao Phasianellus*, Aud. Orn. Biog., vol. iv. p. 569.

Male, $17\frac{1}{2}$, 23.

Missouri, lat. 41° , to Slave Lake, lat. 61° . Rocky Mountains. Abundant on the Saskatchewan Plains. Accidental in the northern parts of Illinois. Resident.

Adult Male.

Bill short, strong, as broad as high; upper mandible with the dorsal line arcuato-declinate, the ridge narrow at the base on account of the great extent of the nasal sinus, which is feathered, the sides convex toward the end, the edges overlapping and thin, the tip declinate and blunt, but thin-edged; lower mandible with the angle of moderate length and width, the dorsal line ascending and convex, the edges sharp and inclinate, the tip obtuse.

Head rather small, oblong; neck of moderate length; body full. Feet rather short, stout; tarsus roundish, feathered, bare and reticulated behind. Toes of moderate size, with numerous scutella above, but covered over at the base by the hair-like feathers which grow from the sides and the intervening basal membranes, laterally pectinate with long, slender, projecting, flattened scales; first toe small, second a little longer than fourth, third much longer. Claws slender, arched, moderately compressed, rather obtuse; that of the third toe with the inner edge dilated.

Plumage dense, soft, rather compact, the feathers in general broadly ovate; those on the head and upper part of the neck short, but some on the upper and hind part of the former elongated and forming a slight crest. There is a papillate coloured membrane over the eye, as in the other species; and on each side of the neck is a large bare space, concealed by the plumage, which I have no doubt is inflated, as in *Tetrao Cupido* and *T. Urophasianus*, during the love season. Wings rather short, concave, much rounded; the primaries stiff and very narrow, so as to leave large intervals when the wing is extended; the third quill longest, the fourth next, the second shorter than the fifth, the sixth longer than the first. Tail short, much graduated, of sixteen feathers, of which the lateral are three inches shorter than the central; all the feathers are more or less concave, excepting the two middle worn along the inner edge, obliquely and abruptly terminated, the two middle projecting an inch beyond the next.

Bill dusky above, brown beneath; iris light hazel; superciliary membrane vermilion; toes brownish-grey, claws brownish-black. The upper parts are variegated with light red or brownish-orange, brownish-black and white; the black occupying the central part of the feathers, the light red forming angular processes from the margin, generally dotted with black, and a lighter bar near the end; the white being in terminal, triangular, or guttiform spots on the scapulars and wing-coverts. The alula, primary coverts, secondary coverts and quills are greyish-brown, the coverts spotted and tipped with white; the primaries with white spots on the outer web, the inner tipped with white, as are all the secondaries, of which the outer have two bars of white spots, and the inner are coloured like the back. The tail is white, at the base variegated, and the two middle feathers like the back. Loréal space, and a line behind the eye, white; a dusky streak beneath the eye, succeeded by a light coloured one. The throat is reddish-white, with some dusky spots; the fore part and sides of the neck barred with dusky and reddish-white; on the lower part of the neck and fore part of the breast, the dusky bars become first curved, and then arrow-shaped, and so continue narrowing on the hind part of the breast, and part of the sides, of which the upper portion is barred; the abdomen, lower tail-coverts, axillar feathers,

and most of the lower wing-coverts, white. The hair-like feathers of the tarsi are light brownish-grey, faintly barred with greyish-white.

Length to end of tail $17\frac{1}{2}$ inches, to end of wings 14, to end of claws 17, extent of wings 23; wing from flexure $8\frac{1}{4}$, tail $4\frac{1}{2}$; bill along the ridge $\frac{10\frac{1}{2}}{12}$; along the edge of lower mandible $1\frac{1\frac{1}{2}}{12}$; tarsus $1\frac{7\frac{1}{2}}{12}$; hind toe $\frac{6}{12}$, its claw $\frac{6}{12}$; middle toe $1\frac{7\frac{1}{2}}{12}$, its claw $\frac{7}{12}$.

Adult Female.

The female is considerably smaller, but is coloured like the male, the tints being duller.

GENUS II.—LAGOPUS. PTARMIGAN.

Bill short, robust; upper mandible with its dorsal outline decurved, the ridge indistinct and rounded, the sides convex, the edges overlapping, the tip declinate, thin-edged, rounded; lower mandible with the angle of moderate length and rounded, the dorsal line convex, the sides rounded, the edges a little inclinate, the tip rounded; nasal sinuses large and covered with feathers, leaving the ridge narrow between them. Nostrils basal, roundish, concealed by the feathers. Head small, ovate; neck rather long; body bulky. Feet rather short, stout; tarsus feathered, as are the toes, which have two or three terminal scutella; hind toe extremely short, lateral toes equal. Claws slightly arched, depressed, thin-edged, rounded. Plumage full and compact, the feathers rounded. Wings short, convex, the primaries strong, narrow, tapering, the third longest, the fourth and second little shorter. Tail short, nearly even, of more than twelve broad feathers.



Sharp-tailed Grouse

1. Male. 2. Female.

Drawn from Nature by J. Audubon F.R.S.E.L.S.

Engraved by J. T. Bowen Phila.



Audubon, John James. 1842. "Sharp-Tailed Grouse, *Tetrao phasianellus*, Linn. [Pl. 298]." *The birds of America : from drawings made in the United States and their territories* 5, 110–113. <https://doi.org/10.5962/p.319412>.

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