

**GAME BIRDS AND
GAME FISHES OF
THE PACIFIC COAST**

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Game birds and game fishes of the Pacific Coast by H. T. Payne

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H. T. PAYNE

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BY
H. T. PAYNE



Illustrated with Half-tones from Photographs of
Live and Carefully Mounted
Birds and Fishes.

With Ready Reference Diagrams of Each Family,
Giving the Scientific and Common Names
of Each Genus and Species, Their
Relationship, Breeding Grounds
and General Range.

NEWS PUBLISHING CO., Los Angeles.

INTRODUCTION

Laws recently enacted by most of the states for the better protection of the game, imposing a nominal license for the privilege of hunting it, have enabled us to take a census, as it were, of that vast number of the American people who enjoy the health-giving sports of the field. This census reveals the fact, that, of the whole population of the Pacific Coast, nearly twenty per cent of all those over fifteen years of age are licensed sportsmen. Add to these the large number of anglers, not counted in this enumeration, and the rapidly increasing number of young ladies who are learning to enjoy the exhilarating sports of the field and stream, and this percentage will be appreciably increased. It is, therefore, obvious that a study of the game birds and game fishes must be one of interest to a very large portion of our people, and especially to the younger generation whose knowledge of the game they bring to bag is still in the formative state.

Unlike all other works treating of the birds and fishes, this one is written from the standpoint of the practical sportsman and angler, rather than for the student of ornithology or ichtheology. I have, therefore avoided the use of technical names as much as possible, and employed in the description of the various species the plainest language consistent with a clear understanding of their distinguishing features. I have, however, for the benefit of those who wish to learn their scientific names and genetic relationship, added after the description of the members of each family, a tabulated form, giving the Order, Family, Subfamily and Genus to which the several species belong; together with their common names, general range and breeding grounds. A new and convenient feature of ready reference.

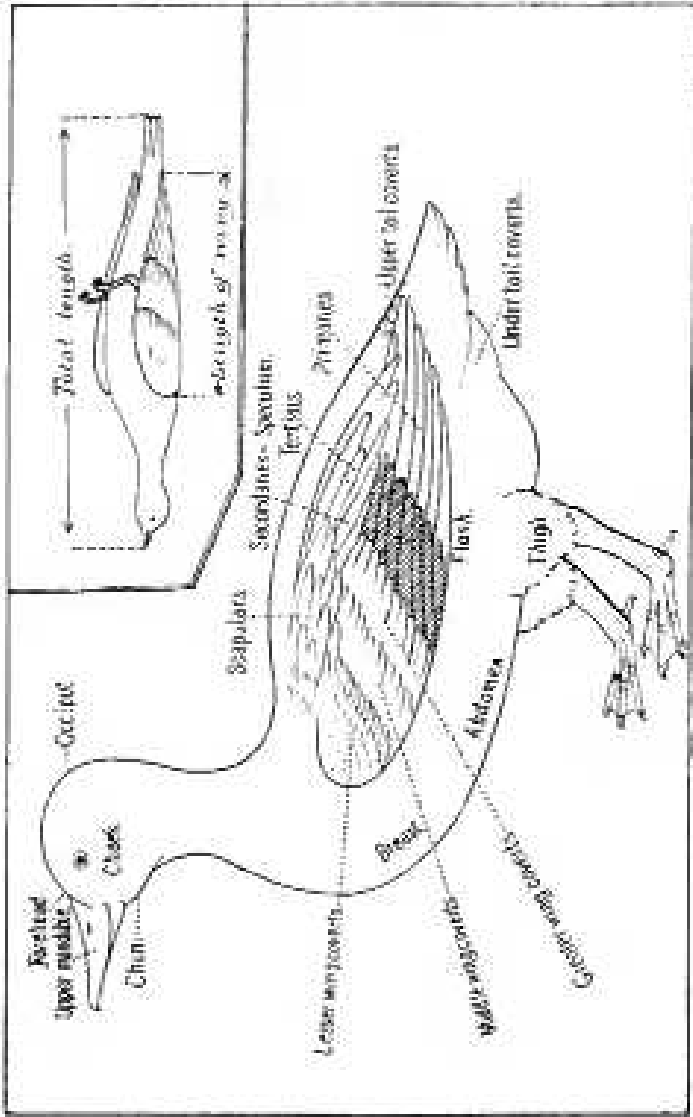
The numerous illustrations, which are from photographs of the actual birds, is a new feature of great importance to the student, as they give the perfect markings of every feather, and the true gradation of color as appearing in nature.

That, by placing within the reach of the younger generation of sportsmen, such knowledge of the game birds and game fishes as I have gained through more than half a century spent in their pursuit, may, in a measure, liquidate the deep debt I owe for the many happy hours and excellent health drawn from the exhilarating sports of the field and stream, is the earnest wish of

THE AUTHOR.

~~B-4619~~⁷

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THE GAME BIRDS OF THE PACIFIC COAST

In describing the game birds of the Pacific Coast, I have included all those found in any considerable numbers from the British Columbia line, south to and including the state of Arizona, the Mexican states of Sonora and Chihuahua and the peninsula of Lower California, for in some of these less frequented places, game birds are found in great numbers and great variety. This is especially true in these southern sections with the quail, for here its voice is heard in all the notes of the gamut, from the soft, turkey-like call of the mountain species, the soul-stirring whistle of the bobwhite, or the sharp, decisive "can't see mo" of the valley quail, through all the varied changes of the blue quail family, to the low plaintive note of the massena quail of Mexico.

While it is not the purpose of this work to give a scientific classification of the game birds of which it treats, a brief statement of the manner in which they are grouped and classified by the ornithologist will materially assist the reader in the study of those species herein mentioned.

The ornithologist groups all the birds of North America into seventeen "Orders"; each of these including all birds of a similar nature. Some of these orders are divided into two or more suborders, where, while clearly belonging to the order, there is yet a sufficient difference in certain groups of families to justify this further separation. The next division is the "family," which is again divided into "genera," and each "genus" into "species."

Of the seventeen orders of American birds, the scope of this work includes only six; for all of the birds, commonly called game birds, belong to one or the other of the following orders:

The Gallinæ—All gallinaceous, or chicken-like birds. Of this order we only have to consider two families: The **Tetraonidæ**, composed of the quail and grouse; and the **Phasianidæ**, composed of the turkeys and pheasants.

The Anseres—Lamellirostral, or soft-billed swimmers, such as the ducks, geese, swans and mergansers, comprising the one family, **Anatidæ**, which is divided into five subfamilies, with four of which we are concerned, viz.: The **Anatinæ**, the fresh-water ducks; the **Fuliginæ**, the salt-water ducks; the **Anserinæ**, the geese and



MOUNTAIN QUAIL
(*Oreortyx pictus*)

PLUMBED QUAIL
(*Oreortyx pictus plumiferus*)

brant; and the *Cygninæ*, the swans.

The *Columbæ*—This order has but one family, the *Columbidæ*, composed of the pigeons and doves.

The *Limicolæ*—This order has seven families, only three of which I have mentioned as being of sufficient interest to the sportsmen of the Pacific Coast to justify a description of them. These are the *Recurvirostridæ*, composed of the stilts and avocets; the *Scolopacidæ*, the snipes, curlews, yellow-legs, willetts, marlins, sandpipers, etc.; and the *Charadriidæ*, the plovers.

The other two orders, the *Herodionæ* and the *Paludicolæ*, the first composed largely of the herons, storks, ibises, and egrets, and the latter of the cranes, rails, gallinules and coots, afford more pleasure to the sportsman through their stately appearance on his hunting grounds than as game birds. The coots, however, are not considered game by our sportsmen.

It is well to state here also, that ornithologists do not always agree in the classification and nomenclature of birds. One claiming that a certain species or genus should be separated, while others insist that there is no reason for such separation. With the one exception of the California valley quail, I have followed the plan of the American Ornithologists' Union. In this exception I have followed such good authorities as Banapart, Elliott, Ridgeway and Gambel, and given the California valley quail the generic name of *Lophortyx*, instead of classing them with the *Callipepla*, to which belong the scaled quail, a species with no distinction between the sexes.

THE QUAIL.

While the eastern half of the continent has but one genus of quail, the Pacific Coast, including Mexico, is well supplied with five genera and eighteen species, to which may be added four subspecies. Nine species of the genus, *Colinus*, however, and two of the genus, *Callipepla*, do not come into the United States.

Properly speaking we have no quail in America, all of our so-called quail being partridges, but the use of the word "quail" has become so common that these birds will, in all probability, be known as quail for all time. But whatever the name, they are resourceful beyond comparison, and game to the fullest degree; affording with dog and gun the most enjoyable of all outdoor sport.

THE MOUNTAIN QUAIL (*Oreortyx pictus*)

The mountain quails are the largest and most beautiful of all the American quails, though the least hunted and the least gamey. There is but one genus, with one species and two subspecies. Two of these inhabit the mountains of California and Oregon, and the third, the high ranges of the peninsula of Lower California. While most of the sportsmen of the Pacific Coast are conversant with the general character and coloration of the mountain quail, I believe but few of them have ever seen the more beautiful species that inhabit the San Pedro Martir mountains of Lower California.

The present species, given the English name of mountain partridge, by the ornithologists, and which he has taken for his type, is a small race found only on the Coast Range from the Bay of San Francisco north into Oregon, and, therefore, never reaches the high altitudes reached by its near relatives, the *Oreortyx pictus plumiferus*, to which the English name, plumed partridge, has been given. In fact, both of these varieties are plumed, though that of the latter is a trifle the longer. The fact that the plumed quail ascends the mountains each spring to heights of from five to eight thousand feet for nesting purposes, gives it a better claim to the name, mountain, than has the other variety.

The present species, the mountain quail, is generally found in the canyons and on the damp hillsides where ferns are abundant. They have very little of the migratory habits of the other species, except when driven down in the winter by the snows. Their habits and general plan of coloration are so much like those of the other two species that I shall describe them all together, with the proper mention of wherein they differ.

THE PLUMED QUAIL (*Oreortyx pictus plumiferus*)

The range of the plumed partridge is throughout the entire length of the Sierra Nevadas and of the coast range south of San Francisco bay into Lower California, where it intergrades with the San Pedro partridge, but it does not cross the Colorado river and enter Arizona or the mainland of Mexico. This species begins its migrations early in the spring, keeping close to the snow line until they reach altitudes as high as 7000 to 8000 feet, where they nest and rear their young. In