

COMMON PARTRIDGE.

Perdix cinerea, *Lath.*

La Perdrix grise.

So exclusively European is this celebrated bird, that as far as our own observations go, and these have not been circumscribed, we have never seen an example either from Asia or Africa; although M. Temminck states that it visits Egypt and the shores of Barbary. In affinity it appears to us to rank directly intermediate between the Quails and Redlegs, and with some species from India to form an independent genus to the exclusion of the Quails on the one hand and the Redlegs on the other; and as the Quails have been already separated, it is to us very evident that the Redlegs ought to be separated also.

We do not propose to enter into any details respecting the circumstances that render the Partridge so interesting to sportsmen, as the subject has already engaged the attention of numerous writers, to whose accounts we have nothing to add.

The Partridge pairs early in spring, when fierce contests ensue between the males for the possession of the females. They rear one brood in the year, consisting of from ten to eighteen young, which generally make their appearance about the end of June, and continue associated during the autumn and winter, forming what the sportsman calls a covey, and in the ensuing spring separate, each selecting its mate. The eggs are deposited on the ground in a small hollow, scratched for the purpose under the cover of a tuft of grass or any similar material, and is not unfrequently found in fields of clover or standing corn. The males are distinguished from the females by being larger in size, by possessing a brighter colour about the face, by having a large chestnut-coloured mark on the breast, and by wanting the transverse bars of brown on the upper surface so conspicuous in the plumage of the female.

The Partridge prefers wide tracts of rich corn land to more barren and uncultivated districts, and in bleak and mountainous situations is almost unknown.

The male has the cheek, throat, and a stripe over each eye pale buff; the neck and breast bluish grey ornamented with fine zigzag black lines; on the breast a large horseshoe-shaped patch of chestnut brown; flanks grey, banded with pale brown; back, wings, rump, and upper tail-coverts brown transversely barred and spotted with black; shafts of the scapularies and wing-coverts yellowish white edged with black; quills blackish grey barred with brown; tail reddish orange; bill, legs, and toes bluish grey; irides brown; naked skin behind the eye red.

The particulars in which the female differs having been pointed out above, it will be unnecessary to repeat them here.

We have figured male and female of the natural size.