

Genus PERDIX, *Lath.*

GEN. CHAR. *Bill* short, strong, naked at the base; upper mandible convex, with the point bending considerably downwards. *Nostrils* basal, lateral, pierced in a large membrane, and partly concealed by an arched naked scale. *Wings* short, concave, the first three quills shorter than the fourth and fifth, which are the longest. *Tail* of fourteen or eighteen feathers, generally bending towards the ground. *Feet* with three toes before, which are united by a membrane as far as the first articulation, and one behind. *Tarsi* in the male bird frequently with one or more than one spur or tubercle.

RED-LEGGED PARTRIDGE.

Perdix rubra, *Ray.*

Le Perdrix rouge.

From this peculiar and beautiful group the Common Partridge may with great propriety be separated, as their habits and characters vary considerably, the Red-legs being spurred, and according to some authors perching on trees, which the common species never does; and it is also destitute of spurs.

Of the Red-legs five distinct species are now recognised, three of which are natives of Europe: of these the species here represented is the most common, and is, we believe, confined entirely to the Continent and the islands of Guernsey and Jersey. Like the Pheasant, the Red-legged Partridge is now naturalized in the British Islands, but it must nevertheless be considered an introduced species, and consequently as not strictly belonging to our Fauna; and we much question whether those who have them on their estates have not cause to regret their introduction, for although highly ornamental in their appearance, their flesh is not equal to that of the Common Partridge (*Perdix cinerea*), which from its diminutive size and less pugnacious habits is compelled to retreat and give place to its more powerful opponent. It is more shy and wary than the common species, and is very difficult to approach, even at the commencement of the shooting-season, a covey being seldom flushed without having run before the dogs for a considerable distance, when they mostly rise out of gunshot. It is now becoming extremely numerous in many parts of England, particularly Suffolk and the adjoining counties. Although it does extremely well in preserved manors, arable lands, &c., still it appears to evince a partiality for sterile wastes and heathy grounds. It is very abundant throughout the plains of France and Italy, is rarely found in Switzerland, and scarcely if ever in Germany or Holland. It is very prolific, the female laying from fifteen to eighteen eggs, of an orange yellow freckled all over with markings of a red colour. The young before the second moult have their plumage striated somewhat after the manner of the young of the common species, but by the end of October this colouring is exchanged for the transversely marked plumage of the adult: the old birds of both sexes are so nearly alike in the colouring and markings, that were it not for the blunt spur, which always forms an appendage to the male, it would be difficult to distinguish them. Its food consists of wheat and other grains, vegetables, insects, &c. Its flesh is whiter and more dry than that of the common species.

The male has the forehead grey; crown of the head and whole of the upper surface greyish brown with a tinge of rufous; throat white surrounded by a black band, which dilates upon the chest and the sides of the neck into a number of small black spots on a grey ground; abdomen and under tail-coverts sandy red; feathers of the flanks grey at their base, to which succeeds a broad transverse band of black, the tips being chestnut red; outer tail-feathers rufous, the centre ones more grey; legs, bill, and eyelids red.

The Plate represents a male of the natural size.