

Genus TETRAO, *Linn.*

GEN. CHAR. *Bill* short, strong; upper mandible convex, and arched from the base to the tip. *Nostrils* basal, lateral, partly closed by an arched scale, and hidden from view by small closely set feathers. *Eye brows* naked, and adorned with a red papillose and fringed skin. *Wings* short; first quill much inferior in length to the second, which is shorter than the third and fourth. *Tail* of sixteen feathers. *Feet* with three toes before, united as far as the first joint, and one behind, short; the edges of all pectinated. *Tarsi* feathered to the toes.

CAPERCAILZIE, OR COCK OF THE WOOD.

Tetrao Urogallus, Linn.

Le Tetras Auerhan.

THIS noble bird, the largest of the Grouse tribe, was once common in the forests of Scotland, and, in all probability, in the northern parts of our island; for centuries, however, it has been gradually diminishing in number until at length it has become completely extinct there. Mr. Selby informs us that "the last individual of this species in Scotland was killed about forty years ago, near Inverness; previous to which date the breed had become extinct in Ireland."

Those who wish to see this bird in a state of nature must visit the extensive forests which cover the greater portion of Norway and Sweden, from whence our markets are annually supplied with this celebrated game. Although these countries may be considered as its great depôt, it is also to be found in all the wild and mountainous districts of Europe wherever extensive pine-woods afford it food and shelter.

In habits and disposition the Capercaillie and the Black Cock (*Tetrao Tetrix*), differ considerably from the genuine Grouse; they are, in fact, more essentially arboreal, and their feet being furnished with horny papilli enable them to rest on the smooth and slippery branches of the pine and other alpine trees. As the breeding-season approaches, the male becomes greatly excited, and perched on some large branch, in a dense part of the forest, invites his mate by often-repeated and loud calls, which very frequently leads to his own destruction by apprising the sportsman of the immediate locality in which he is seated: hence in the months of April and May the London markets are frequently stocked with fine males in their highest state of plumage, and with a favourable wind for the lobster-boats, which are the general means of conveyance, arrive in good order.

The male far exceeds his mate in size and in the beauty and elegance of its plumage.

The Capercaillie is decidedly polygamous in its habits, and lives separate from the females except in the breeding-season. The female rears her young in independent seclusion: the nest is placed amidst brakes and dense underwood; the eggs are from eight to sixteen in number, of a yellowish white spotted with darker yellow.

The young of both sexes during the first autumn resemble the female; but as spring approaches, the males assume their sexual characteristics of plumage.

The food of the Capercaillie consists of alpine berries, tops of fir, snails, &c.

The male has the head, neck, whole of the upper surface, flanks and under tail-coverts dark ashy grey, with innumerable small irregular markings of black; forehead and throat dusky black, the feathers of the latter being long and pendulous; breast fine dark glossy green; wings fine chestnut brown, with innumerable small irregular markings of black; secondaries slightly tipped with white; quills dull brown on their inner webs, paler on the outer; under surface black with spots of white, which are most numerous about the thighs and vent; the two outer rows of the upper tail-coverts are tipped with white, are considerably longer than those in the middle, and, gradually lengthening, reach nearly to the end of the tail, which is rounded and of a black colour with a few irregular spots of white on the sides; bill yellowish white; irides hazel; over the eye a bare red skin; legs covered with brown hair like feathers.

The female has the head, neck, and upper part of the back barred with reddish brown, grey and black; wings and lower part of the back dark brown, each feather edged and tipped with irregular markings of reddish brown; secondaries tipped with white; quills as in the male but lighter; throat pale reddish brown; breast rich reddish brown; under surface pale reddish brown, each feather being barred near its extremity with dark brown and tipped with greyish white, which colour predominates on the under tail-coverts; tail rich rufous brown, numerously barred with very dark brown; bill greenish horn colour; legs pale brown.

We have figured a male and female about two thirds of the natural size.