

Genus PHASIANUS, *Linn.*

GEN. CHAR. *Bill* of mean length, strong; upper mandible convex, naked at the base, and with the tip bent downwards. *Nostrils* basal, lateral, covered with a cartilaginous scale; cheeks and region of the eyes destitute of feathers, and covered with a verrucose red skin. *Wings* short, the first quills equally narrowed towards their tips, the fourth and fifth the longest. *Tail* long, regularly wedge-shaped, and composed of eighteen feathers. *Feet* having the three anterior toes united by a membrane as far as the first joint, and the hind toe articulated upon the tarsus, which in the male birds is furnished with a horny, cone-shaped, sharp spur.

COMMON PHEASANT.

Phasianus Colchicus, *Linn.*

Le Faisan vulgaire.

THIS bird has been so long naturalized that it may now be said to claim a place in the European Fauna; it would, however, appear that Europe is not its aboriginal habitat, and that there is every reason to believe that it was introduced at a very early period from the western confines of Asia; and history assigns to Jason the honour of having brought it from the banks of the Phasis on his celebrated expedition; and from whence the various modifications of the word are derived, viz. *Phasianus* in Latin, *Pheasant* in our own language, *Faisan* in French, *Faisiano* in Italian, &c. The ancient Colchis is the Mingrelia of the present day, and here it is said to be still found wild and unequalled in beauty.

All the details connected with the habits and manners of this species are so well known to every one that we need do little more than refer our readers to the minute and accurate descriptions published by Montagu and Mr. Selby, of the changes of plumage, diseases to which it is subjected, &c.

The nest is very inartificial, and is placed on the ground in long grass or thick underwood, and not unfrequently in fields of clover: the eggs are of a clear dull green, and from ten to fourteen in number. The young, which are hatched during the months of June and July, continue with the females until they begin to moult and assume the adult plumage, which commences about the beginning of September, and is completed by the middle of October.

The food of the adults consists of grain and seeds in winter, of roots and insects in spring and summer; but the young are fed exclusively upon the latter. "I have observed," says Mr. Selby, "that the root of the Bulbous Crowfoot (*Ranunculus bulbosus*), a common but acrid meadow plant, is particularly sought after by this bird, and forms a great portion of its food during the months of May and June. The root of the garden tulip is also an article of diet, which it omits no opportunity of obtaining, and which by means of its bill and feet, it is almost certain to reach, however deep it may be buried."

The male has the cheeks naked and of the brightest scarlet, minutely speckled with black; the crown of the head bronzed green; on each side of the occiput a tuft of dark golden green feathers, capable of being erected at pleasure, and very conspicuous in the pairing-season; upper part of the neck dark green, glossed with purple and violet blue; lower part of the neck, breast, and flanks deep reddish orange, showing in some positions beautiful reflections of light purple; each feather bordered and terminated with pansy purple; centre of the belly and thighs blackish brown; centre of the back and scapular feathers black or brownish black, surrounded with a yellowish white band and bordered with deep reddish orange; lower part of the back and upper tail-coverts green, intermingled with brownish orange and purplish red; tail-feathers brown, crossed by bands of black, and fringed with reddish brown; bill pale yellow; irides pale brownish orange; legs and toes greyish black.

The female has the cheeks covered with small closely set feathers, and the whole of the plumage yellowish brown, mingled with different shades of grey, brown, and black.

We have figured an adult male and female one third less than the natural size.