

# Chuckar Partridge

Male



Introduced from Eurasia, the sandy-brown Chukar is a game bird that lives in high desert plains of western North America, as well as in Hawaii and New Zealand. Its namesake call echoes across dry rocky slopes. It runs and scampers up steep terrain with the agility and speed of a mountain goat, prompting hunters to nickname it the "devil bird" for the brutal chase it gives. Dark bars on the sides and a band across the head and neck adorn this red-billed game bird.

The Chukar is the national bird of Pakistan and Iraq.

## Habitat

Rocky, grassy, or brushy slopes; arid mountains, canyons. Successfully introduced mainly around rocky cliffs, steep canyon slopes where winter snow will melt quickly, grassland mixed with sagebrush or saltbush. Needs cover of grass, brush; introduced cheatgrass is key element. Often in very dry country, but may require access to water unless it can eat plenty of green leaves.

Chukars bathe with dust on an almost daily basis to keep their feathers in tiptop shape. They make shallow depressions in the ground and toss and scratch dust over their bodies.

## Diet

Seeds, leaves, berries, insects. Diet varies with season. Many of major food plants are also introduced from Eurasia. Grasses provide much of food (seeds, leaves). In winter may feed mostly on seeds, such as cheatgrass and Russian thistle. Eats berries of Russian olive and other plants. Spring and summer diet includes many green leaves, insects.