

Rock ptarmigan

Lagopus muta (Montin, 1776)

The ptarmigan's legs are feathered to the tips of its toes, acting like snowshoes in the snow. The summer plumage is brown/grey and becomes pure white in winter, except for the tip of the tail which remains black throughout the year. Unlike the female, the male has a continuous black band between the eye and the bill and a more or less visible red bead above the eye.

Because of its mimicry, it is particularly difficult to detect. We hear it more often than we see it. Listen to [the sound](#) of the ptarmigan.

Not to confuse

Ptarmigan are smaller than black grouse (45-60 cm). No confusion possible for males. The female black grouse has brown plumage with black stripes, which she keeps throughout the year. The female ptarmigan has a white plumage in winter and brown/grey with more or less white spots the rest of the year.

To know

[INPN sheet](#)



Common names

Rock ptarmigan

Environment

snowbeds, moors

Altitude

2000- 3000m

Size

30-40 cm

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