

Recommendations on driven days

1. The headkeeper or shoot captain on each shooting day should appraise all the party of the likely presence of black grouse, how to identify them, their conservation importance and the requirement not to shoot them.
2. Loaders should be able to identify black grouse and warn guns of their approach.
3. Each estate should consider fining guns that shoot black grouse. Monies from fines could be ploughed back directly into their conservation, either through improved habitat management or as a research donation to the Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust.
4. If birds are unintentionally shot, then a record of each corpse should be made available to the Black Grouse Recovery Project Officer (see contact details).



Contacts

For more information about conserving black grouse in northern England please contact the Project Officer:

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Source code: PPU1070608*

Information sheet 3:

Black grouse identification guide for game shooters

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Ministry of
Defence



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Need for clear identification

Black grouse in England are still under threat, with 1,000 males remaining in 2006. Their range has severely contracted and they are now only found in the northern Pennines from Wensleydale to the south, through to the Scottish border. Game management plays an important role in securing the population of black grouse in England with approximately 90% of the remaining black grouse found on the edges of moorland managed for red grouse, benefiting from the habitat management and predator control implemented.

In northern England very few shoots deliberately shoot black grouse, but accidents through mistaken identity are worryingly common. These notes aim to help guns identify black grouse and thus reduce losses through shooting.

Research by the Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust shows that in the region, breeding success is low, but is countered by high adult survival. Until populations recover adequately, sportsmen can play their part further in maintaining high survival rates by not shooting black grouse. These guidelines should be used to help guns to identify black grouse on a shoot day and thus reduce the risk of mistakenly shooting one.



Identification

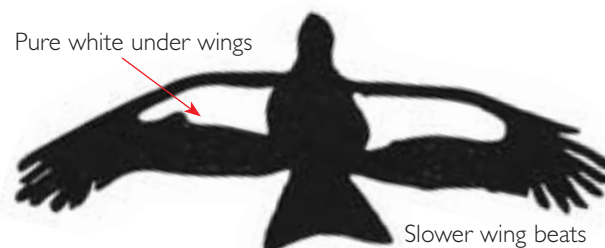
Black grouse are found on the moor fringe and could be found on red grouse, partridge and pheasant drives. The male or 'blackcock' is very distinctive, with his glossy blue-black plumage. The female or 'greyhen' is rufous brown. Black grouse are larger than red grouse. The wing beats of the black grouse mistakenly give the impression of a slower flight than red grouse, but instead they fly faster and usually higher.

Key points for identifying greyhens

- Larger than red grouse (0.95kg)
- Brown, barred with black plumage
- Shallow forked tail

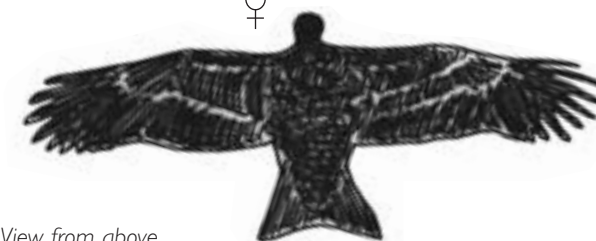


Laurie Campbell



View from below

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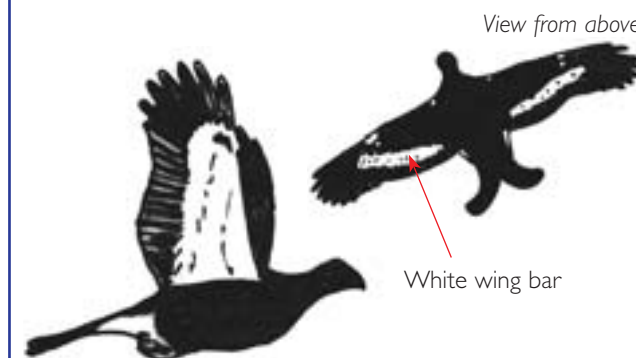
View from above

Key points for identifying blackcocks

- Large size (1.25kg)
- Glossy blue-black plumage
- Striking white wing bars
- Curved, 'lyre-shaped' outer tail feathers

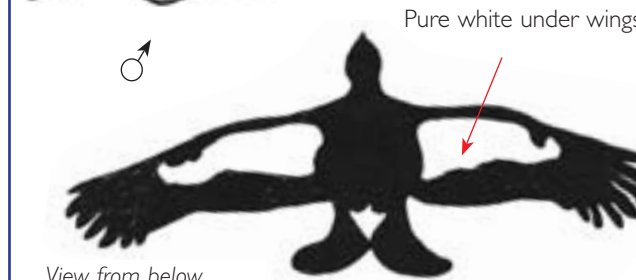


Laurie Campbell



View from above

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View from below