

## 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. The estate should consider fining guns that accidentally shoot black grouse. The GWCT is currently running a scheme, in partnership with moor owners, where fines are ploughed directly back into black grouse conservation in northern England. For further information please contact Phil Warren.
4. If birds are unintentionally shot, then a record of each corpse should be made available to the GWCT (see contact details).



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## Contacts

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

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## Black grouse identification guide for game shooters



[gwct.org.uk](http://gwct.org.uk)





## Need for clear identification

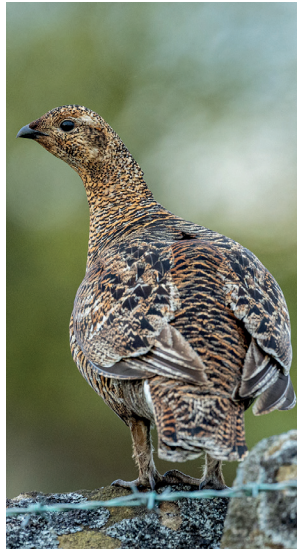
Black grouse are still under threat with approximately 1,000 to 1,500 males in England remaining. Their range has severely contracted and they are now only found in the northern Pennines from the Yorkshire Dales to the south, through to the Scottish border, with birds recently released in the North York Moors.

Game management plays an important role in securing the population of black grouse in England with approximately 95% 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 (GWCT) 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.

(L-R) The difference in colourings between a female red grouse and black grouse. The greyhen is also larger.



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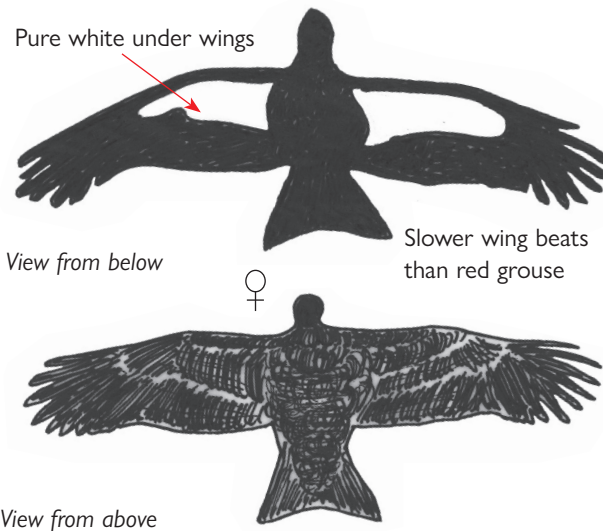
## Identification

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

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## 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

