



WHERE AND HOW TO HUNT BLUE GROUSE IN COLORADO

GENERAL INFORMATION

Blue grouse are medium-sized game birds, adult males weighing up to 3 pounds, and are bluish-gray or blackish with a light band at the tip of the tail. Adult females average 2 pounds and are gray-brown, barred with black and they also have a band along the tip of the tail. Young grouse of both sexes resemble the adult female, but lack a well-defined band on the tail. Young birds are usually a little smaller in body size than adults.

WHERE TO HUNT

In the fall, blue grouse may be found singly or in small flocks as they move from their summer range in shrub-meadow valleys to their winter range of coniferous ridge tops. In

Colorado, the summer and winter ranges are usually found between 7,000 and 10,000 feet elevation in conifer and aspen stands. Most blue grouse range is on public land. Adult males and females without broods tend to migrate first and, therefore, are found at slightly higher elevations than the young and females with broods. Broods start to break up as they begin their migration.

HOW TO HUNT

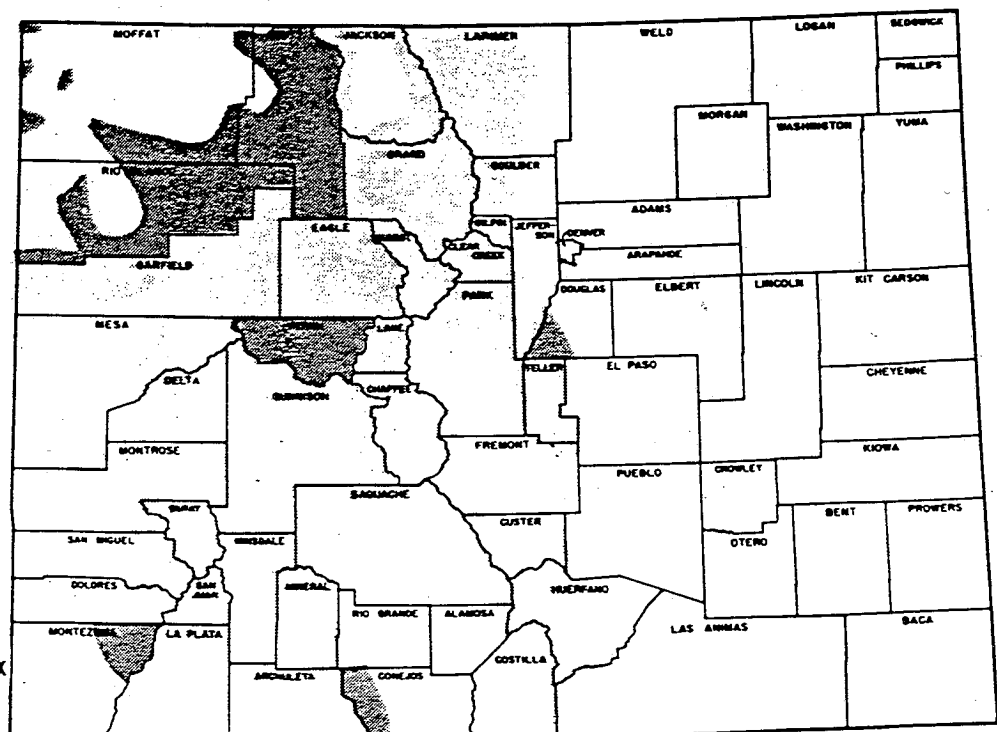
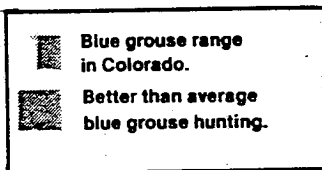
Blue grouse flush more readily when approached from the uphill side than the downhill side. When flushed from the ground they commonly fly into a nearby tree, especially if they are approached from the downhill side. If they flush downhill, they frequently sail for great distances (the steeper the slope of the hill, the longer the glide). Birds flushed from a flock will frequently begin to call to other members of the flock soon after they land. Listening for the "clucking" sound of the call can be useful in locating singles.

EQUIPMENT

Shotguns and .22 rimfire rifles are most commonly and effectively used to hunt blue grouse. Size 6 shot with a field load are effective in the common shotgun gauges. If a .22 caliber firearm is used, care should be taken to get close enough to assure a head shot. Blue grouse shot with a .22 bullet in the body may still flush and glide down the mountainside or into thick timber.

HANDLING THE MEAT

As with all game, blue grouse should be field dressed as soon as possible. The feathered head or wing must remain attached to the bird until it is transported to the location where it will be consumed. A young blue grouse is usually prepared for consumption similar to a frying chicken. An adult grouse is prepared more like a roasting chicken.



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