

# GALLIFORMES

(Gamebirds)

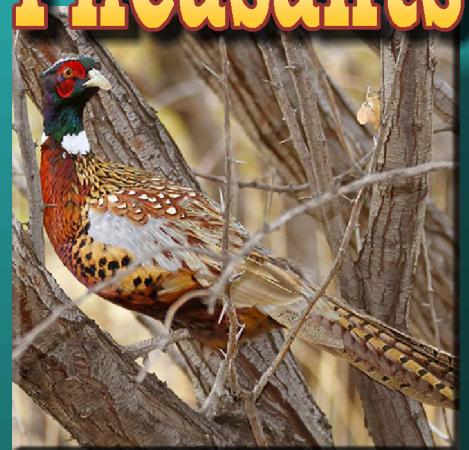
## Quails



## Turkeys



## Pheasants



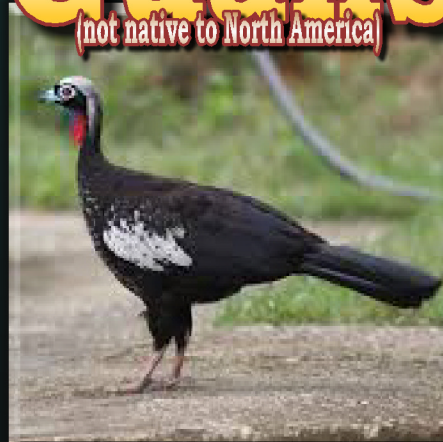
## Bushturkeys

(not native to North America)



## Guan

(not native to North America)



## Guineafowl

(not native to North America)





# Family ODONTOPHORIDAE (Quails)

## Gambel's Quail (*Callipepla gambelii*)

**male**



Valley of Fire SP; NV

**copper crown**



Bear's Best GC; LV, NV

**female**



Valley of Fire SP; NV

**small knot**

**gray head**



Valley of Fire SP; NV

### Measurements:

Length: 10" Wing Span: 14"

Average Weight: 6.4 oz

### Distinguishing Field Characteristics:

plump bluish-gray body with brown wings, distinctive black top knot; **(m)**: copper crown, black face and throat bordered by white, white stripe above eye, buff belly with black central patch; **(f)**: gray crown and face, smaller top knot, lacks black belly patch

### Notes:

common; thrives in desert regions of the sw US surrounding the Colorado Plateau Province from sw CA east to extreme w Tx and sw CO, and s UT south into nw Mexico; forages on ground for plant material and seeds; travel in coveys of 12 or more individuals

**Mojave presence:** year-round resident

### Comments:

When a potential threat approaches, the male (left) will climb to the top of shrubbery to attract the attention of the intruder, while mom and the kids (right) make good on their getaway.

Like roadrunners, quail prefer to run rather than fly to safety. Of course, that doesn't mean they don't know how! Plus, check out that awesome "chicken dance" routine below left. Anything to impress the ladies!

**male**



Bunkerville, NV



Valley of Fire SP; NV



Valley of Fire SP; NV

**female**



Bunkerville, NV



Red Rock NCA; LV, NV



# Family PHASIANTIDAE (Turkeys)

## Wild Turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo*)



### Measurements:

Length: (m) 46" (f) 37" Wing Span: (m) 64" (f) 50"

Average Weight: (m) 16.2 lbs (f) 9.2 lbs

### Distinguishing Field Characteristics:

large, heavy bodied, dark brown overall; small head on long neck, long legs; tuft of feathers (beard) extending from chest; (m): multi-colored iridescence; naked head with blue skin and red wattles; fan-shaped tail tipped with white or buff; (f) duller overall with coppery sheen on rump and tail; lacks wattles; shorter beard if present



Overton WMA; Overton, NV

Overton WMA; Overton, NV

### Notes:

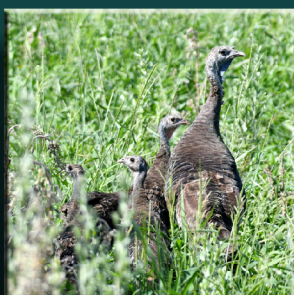
relatively uncommon; native to e US in forests, fields, etc., from Atlantic coast west through the Great Plains, also central Mexico (introduced in isolated patches elsewhere in w US, Europe, NZ, etc.); omnivorous, feeding on nuts, seeds, berries, leaves, insects, and occasionally small reptiles and amphibians; ancestor of the domestic turkey; six subspecies are known

**Mojave presence:** rare (introduced in southern NV)

### Comments:

The birds introduced to the Overton Wildlife Management Area in 1991 are the Rio Grande subspecies *Meleagris gallopavo intermedia*. There are only about 500 individuals in this habitat, and the only ones I have ever witnessed in the wild. Several adult females shared responsibility for protecting their young collectively.

The males, taking no parental responsibilities, were obviously up to no good somewhere else!



# Family PHASIANIDAE (Partridges)

## Chukar (*Alectoris chukar*)



### Measurements:

Length: 14"    Wing Span: 20"

Average Weight: 1.3 lbs

### Distinguishing Field Characteristics:

plump, medium-sized; gray to sandy brown overall with bold black bars on pale flanks; buff-colored face and throat bordered by black band that runs through the eyes; red bill; (m) spur on back of legs

### Notes:

uncommon; introduced from Eurasia; found in the high-desert plains of w NA, including e CA, NV, UT, w OR, ID, w WA, and into BC, Canada; numerous subspecies native throughout Asia; omnivorous, foraging for leaves, seeds, and insects; generally very wary, so seldom seen; like quail, prefers to flee by running rather than taking flight; little sexual dimorphism except for male's leg spurs and female's smaller size

**Mojave presence:** rare; year-round resident



Dante's View; DVNP



# Family PHASIANIDAE (Partridges) Indian Peafowl (*Pavo cristatus*)



Floyd Lamb SP; LV, NV

## Measurements:

Length: 84" Wing Span: 60"

Average Weight: 10 lbs

## Distinguishing Field Characteristics:

(m, peacock) bright iridescent blue body; wire-like crest topped with a spatula of blue feathers; long, iridescent green train (tail);

(f, peahen) duller, brown plumage, green lower neck; lacks train



Floyd Lamb SP; LV, NV



Floyd Lamb SP; LV, NV

## Notes:

common in its native range (Indian subcontinent, Sri Lanka); prefers forests near water, but adaptable to urban areas; diurnal; omnivorous diet, mainly seeds, fruit, and insects, but will also take small reptiles, amphibians, rodents, etc.; can live to 20 years

**Mojave presence:** rare; year-round resident



Floyd Lamb SP; LV, NV

## Comments:

Though native to tropical forests in India and neighboring countries, Indian Peafowl (aka Common or Blue Peafowl) have been introduced to many other countries around the world, and have adapted well to varied habitats, including the Mojave Desert! Though not a desert bird, it can still be found in urban parklands hosting plenty of water and shade.



This fine, free-ranging fellow posed for photos at Floyd Lamb State Park in Las Vegas, Nevada, in February of 2021. He and his companions are the descendants of peafowl that were introduced and raised here, along with other animals, when the area that is now a state park was a working ranch dating to the early 1940s.

