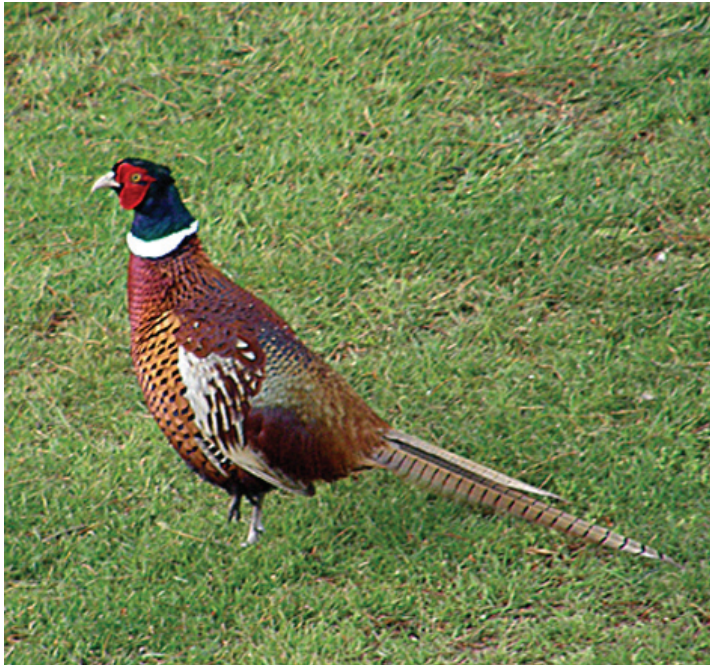


CHAMBERS, S. 2009.

Birds of New Zealand - Locality Guide. 3rd edn.

Arun Books, Orewa, New Zealand.

Pheasant: pp 129-131.



## PHEASANT.

**Family** Phasianidae

**Species** *Phasianus colchicus*

**Common name** Pheasant

**Status** Introduced

**Abundance** Common

**Size** 800 mm (cf sparrow 145 mm)

**Habitat** Prefers a wooded country environment with plenty of cover.

**New Zealand range** Ranges throughout the North Island away from forests, and in the Canterbury areas of the South Island.

**Discussion** Three subspecies of Pheasant were originally introduced to New Zealand for hunting purposes. They were the Black Pheasant (*P. c. colchicus*) from Europe, the White-collared Pheasant (*P. c. mongolicus*) from Mongolia

and the Ring-necked Pheasant (*P. c. torquatus*) from China. Today the most common subspecies is the Ring-neck Pheasant. There is also the Melanistic Mutant Pheasant (*P. c. tenebrosus*) breeding true to form in some areas but not recognised as a subspecies by most authorities.

**Description – male bird – (*P. c. torquatus*) (above)**

**Face** Red. **Head** Black, with bluish tinge on neck. White neck-collar. Two short ear tufts are on each side of the crown. **Wings** Grey with light brown. **Back** Golden-brown with black speckling. **Rump** Golden-brown. **Tail** Buff-striped horizontally, with up to sixteen separate black bars. **Underparts** Golden-buff with some black speckling. **Bill** Light brown. **Legs** Grey.

**Description – female – (*P. c. torquatus*) (below)**

**Overall body** A dull, buff coloured, bird.

**Description – male – (*P. c. colchicus*)**

**Overall** Less colourful than *torquatus* being darker and lacking the white neck-collar.

**Description – female – (*P. c. colchicus*) (P.129)**

**Overall** As for *torquatus*.

**Description – male – (*P. c. mongolus*)**

**Face** Wattle larger, plumage darker, and neck-collar thinner than *torquatus*.

**Wings** Lack grey colouring of *torquatus*.

**Description – female – (*P. c. mongolus*)**

**Overall** As for *torquatus*.

**Description – male – (*P. c. tenebrosus*)**

**Back, breast and underparts** Purplish-blue, scalloped with buff and red. **Wings** Olive-black. **Tail** Olive-brown with black horizontal barring.

**Description – female – (*P. c. tenebrosus*)**

**Overall** Purplish-black.

**Conspicuous features**

- Short ear-tufts.
- Male birds highly coloured.

**Conspicuous characteristics**

- Often seen gliding across gullies.
- When disturbed in grass it rises quickly with very fast wing beats.

**Call** Loud “kor-r-kok” crow, accompanied whirring of wings before and after calling.

**Nest** In dense grasses on the ground. Up to 9 olive-brown eggs are laid.

**Where to find – North Island**

**Northland** – Common in many areas especially in the far north.

**Auckland** – Comes into city parks such as Cornwall Park in Epsom and Waitarua. P. 297, 298.

**South Auckland** – At Miranda and Kaiiua the Melanistic Mutant Pheasant (*P. c. tenebrosus*) is regularly recorded near the town. Further north of Kaiiua and south of Miranda *P. c. torquatus* becomes the common variety. P. 302.

**King Country** Common in many areas.

**Where to find – South Island**

**Marlborough** Regularly seen from Picton through to Collingwood.

**Canterbury** Regularly seen from Kaikoura south to Oamaru. Not recorded further south in Otago and Southland.

