

WILD ARIZONA: CHUKAR PARTRIDGE

# They Came As Immigrants In 1900s

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AZGFD SMALL GAME PROGRAM  
MANAGER

The chukar partridge, *Alectoris chukar*, has a generic Greek name meaning “chicken” or “farmyard fowl,” with the specific epithet being onomatopoeic for their common “chu-kar” call.

Chukars are robust birds that are smaller than a dusky grouse but larger than our southwestern quail species. They average about 15 inches long and weigh about 20 ounces. Females are slightly smaller than males and lack the spurs males sport.

Both sexes display the same conspicuous coloration, with a prominent black line through the eyes and forehead that rings a white throat and cheeks.

Plumage is generally grayish-brown to olive above, with buffy underparts and a gray chest. Flank feathers show black and chestnut barring. The bill, legs and feet are red; the eye is dark with a red ring around it.

### Game Birds In Many Rocky Mountain States

This striking immigrant to the eastern United States arrived from Iran, Ne-

pal and other arid Asian nations in the 1900s. Chukars struggled until they were set loose in the arid, open uplands of Nevada in 1935. Today, chukars are important game birds in many Rocky Mountain states. Though relatively sparse in Arizona, they can be found on talus slopes and steep, rocky areas in northwestern Arizona, primarily along the Arizona Strip.

Chukars are seed-eating birds, but will also forage on other plant parts. Some favored foods are seeds or green shoots of cheatgrass, filaree, tansy mustard, Indian ricegrass and wheatgrass. Chicks feed on insects at first and then focus gradually on eating plant foods. During hot summers,



birds heavily use any available water sources. Most active in the morning and late afternoon, chukars forage their way uphill.

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## WINTER

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the channels with jigs and deep-diving crankbaits. Isolated rockpiles on the edges of the channels or on big flats are hot spots, he says, especially if the rockpile is on a flat that is otherwise smooth and muddy.

### It Can Work For You Too

“The thing to remember about the fall is that until the bass really start to relate to structure, they can be just about anywhere,” Prothe emphasizes. “You just have to keep fishing until you find them, then go over the area several times. Usually that will get you a couple more.” Choose a lure that resembles the primary baitfish in color and/or size, and be persistent. It pays off for Prothe, and it can work for you, too. You’ve got until spring to prove it to yourself! ■

## WATERFOWL

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Secure feed bins from rodents and wild birds.

Contact a veterinarian if any of your

birds get sick or die.

### Additional Information

- USDA-APHIS Avian influenza
- CDC Avian influenza
- USFWS Avian influenza

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