

Alectoris rufa -- (Linnaeus, 1758)

ANIMALIA -- CHORDATA -- AVES -- GALLIFORMES -- PHASIANIDAE

Common names: Red-legged Partridge;

European Red List Assessment

European Red List Status

LC -- Least Concern, (IUCN version 3.1)

Assessment Information

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Assessment Rationale

Global and European regional assessment: Least Concern (LC)

EU27 regional assessment: Least Concern (LC)

This bird is endemic to the European region, although introduced and reproducing elsewhere. At both European and EU27 scales this species has a very large range, and hence does not approach the thresholds for Vulnerable under the range size criterion (Extent of Occurrence 10% in ten years or three generations, or with a specified population structure). Despite the fact that the population trend appears to be decreasing, the decline is not believed to be sufficiently rapid to approach the thresholds for Vulnerable under the population trend criterion (30% decline over ten years or three generations).

For these reasons the species is evaluated as Least Concern within both Europe and the EU27.

Occurrence

Countries/Territories of Occurrence

Introduced:

Greece; Ireland, Rep. of; United Kingdom

Native:

Andorra; France; Germany; Italy; Portugal; Spain

Vagrant:

Belgium; Luxembourg; Netherlands; Switzerland

Population

The European population is estimated at 5,060,000-7,080,000 pairs, which equates to 10,100,000-14,200,000 mature individuals. The entire population is found in the EU27. For details of national estimates, see [Supplementary PDF](#).

Trend

In Europe and the EU27 the population size is estimated to be decreasing by less than 25% in 11.7 years (three generations). For details of national estimates, see [Supplementary PDF](#).

Habitats and Ecology

The species is found in open habitats ranging from Mediterranean to humid temperate zones but not in boreal, oceanic or arid zones (Tucker and Heath 1994, McGowan and Kirwan 2013). It prefers lowland areas and avoids forest and wet areas if possible. It uses habitats with a wide variety of soils and land uses including dry hilly land with scattered bushes up to about 1,300 m (occasionally up to 2,000 m) in montane foothills, inhospitable dry terrain on lower mountain slopes and marginal cultivation, cropland, orchards or woodland (McGowan and Kirwan 2013). Over most of its range it is associated with arable farming, using low-intensity cropping with a mixture of cultivated, fallow and uncultivated ground (Tucker and Heath 1994). Laying dates vary between countries; April to early May in Portugal, late April to May in England and May to mid-June in France. The nest is a scrape in the ground lined with a few pieces of vegetation. Clutch sizes average 11.2–

12.7 eggs. It feeds on seeds, leaves and roots with grasses and legumes particularly important in winter. It will also eat insects. The species is mostly sedentary but may descend to lower ground during the winter (McGowan and Kirwan 2013).

Habitats & Altitude			
Habitat (level 1 - level 2)		Importance	Occurrence
Artificial/Terrestrial - Arable Land		suitable	resident
Artificial/Terrestrial - Plantations		suitable	resident
Grassland - Temperate		suitable	resident
Rocky areas (eg. inland cliffs, mountain peaks)		suitable	resident
Shrubland - Mediterranean-type Shrubby Vegetation		suitable	resident
Shrubland - Temperate		suitable	resident
Altitude	max. 2000 m	Occasional altitudinal limits	

Threats

The disappearance of uncultivated land due to changes in agricultural practice has resulted in the loss of nesting cover and chick food. In pastoral areas, pastures have been agriculturally improved and areas of low, herb-rich scrub converted to grassland and further habitat loss has occurred through the loss of arable farming from open hill areas, if livestock are removed (leading to encroachment of tall scrub and forest) (Tucker and Heath 1994). Urbanization and agricultural expansion have also caused habitat fragmentation. In the Iberian Peninsula, hunting has led to steep declines; in Portugal over 60% of estimated potential population may be shot each year (McGowan and Kirwan 2013). Also illegal importations of *A. graeca* and *A. chukar* may also be causing problems through hybridization and competition (Tucker and Heath 1994, McGowan and Kirwan 2013).

Threats & Impacts					
Threat (level 1)	Threat (level 2)	Impact and Stresses			
		Timing	Scope	Severity	Impact
Agriculture & aquaculture	Agro-industry farming	Ongoing	Majority (50-90%)	Slow, Significant Declines	Medium Impact
		Stresses			
		Ecosystem degradation			
Biological resource use	Hunting & trapping terrestrial animals (intentional use - species is the target)	Ongoing	Minority (<50%)	Rapid Declines	Medium Impact
		Stresses			
		Species mortality			
Invasive and other problematic species, genes & diseases	Chukar (<i>Alectoris chukar</i>)	Ongoing	Minority (<50%)	Negligible declines	Low Impact
		Stresses			
		Hybridisation; Competition			
Invasive and other problematic species, genes & diseases	Rock Partridge (<i>Alectoris graeca</i>)	Ongoing	Minority (<50%)	Negligible declines	Low Impact
		Stresses			
		Hybridisation; Competition			
Residential & commercial development	Housing & urban areas	Ongoing	Minority (<50%)	Slow, Significant Declines	Low Impact
		Stresses			
		Ecosystem conversion; Species mortality			

Conservation

Conservation Actions Underway

EU Birds Directive Annex II and III. In 1993, the release of any *Alectoris* species other than *A. rufa* was discontinued in the U.K. (Tucker and Heath 1994).

Conservation Actions Proposed

The promotion of low-level agriculture in the lowlands and the maintenance of traditional farming practices in marginal hill areas should be put in place. Releases of other *Alectoris* species should be stopped in the rest of Europe. Sustainable hunting practices should be developed and adopted and promoted by

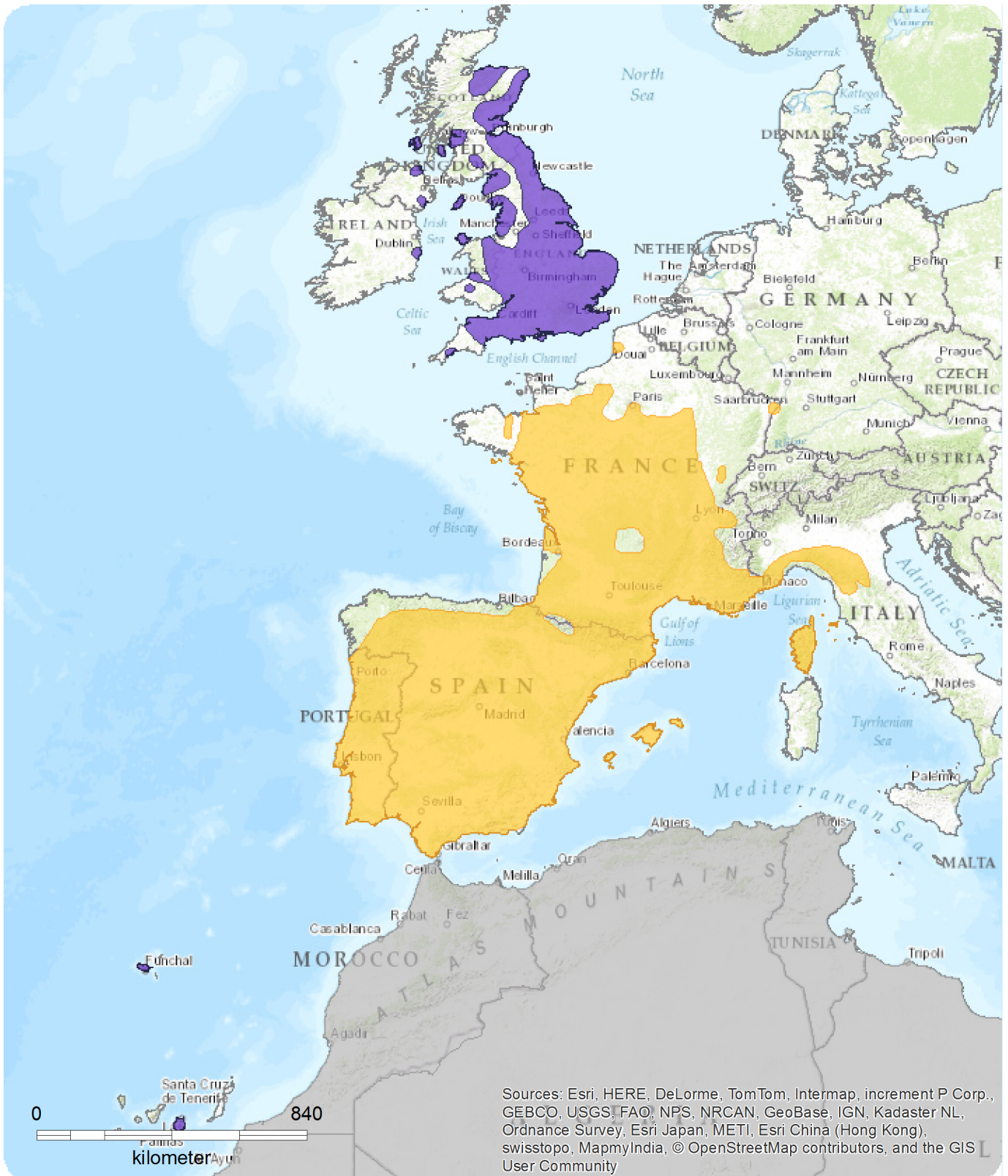
hunting organisations and their members (Tucker and Heath 1994).

Bibliography

- McGowan, P.J.K., Kirwan, G.M. and Boesman, P. 2013. Red-legged Partridge (*Alectoris rufa*). In: del Hoyo, J., Elliott, A., Sargatal, J., Christie, D.A. and de Juana, E. (eds.) 2013. Handbook of the Birds of the World Alive. Lynx Edicions, Barcelona. (retrieved from <http://www.hbw.com/node/53383> on 14 May 2015).
- Tucker, G.M. and Heath, M.F. 1994. *Birds in Europe: their conservation status*. BirdLife Conservation Series no. 3, BirdLife International, Cambridge.

Map (see overleaf)

European Regional Assessment



Alectoris rufa

Range

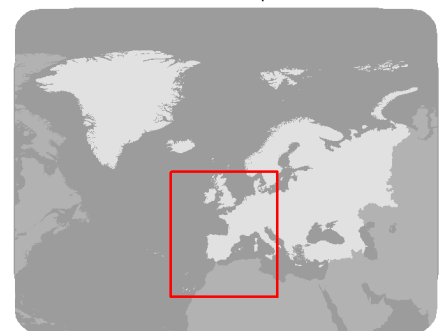
- Extant (resident)
- Introduced

Citation:
BirdLife International (2015)
European Red List of Birds

NE DD LC > NT VU EN CR EW EX

LEAST CONCERN

Map created 05/13/2015



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