

# Lagopus lagopus -- (Linnaeus, 1758)

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

**Common names:** Willow Grouse; Willow Grouse and Red Grouse

## European Red List Assessment

### European Red List Status

VU -- Vulnerable, (IUCN version 3.1)

### Assessment Information

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Assessor(s):	BirdLife International
Reviewer(s):	Symes, A.
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### Assessment Rationale

**European regional assessment: Vulnerable (VU)**

**EU27 regional assessment: Vulnerable (VU)**

This grouse is undergoing rapid population declines across the European part of its extremely large global range. It is therefore classified as Vulnerable (A2abcd+3bcd+4abcd) in both Europe and the EU27.

## Occurrence

### Countries/Territories of Occurrence

#### Introduced:

Belgium; Faroe Islands (to DK)

#### Native:

Belarus; Czech Republic; Estonia; Finland; Germany; Ireland, Rep. of; Latvia; Lithuania; Norway; Russian Federation; Spain; Sweden; United Kingdom

#### Vagrant:

Poland

## Population

The European population is estimated at 1,010,000-2,150,000 pairs, which equates to 2,020,000-4,310,000 mature individuals. The population in the EU27 is estimated at 361,000-704,000 pairs, which equates to 721,000-1,410,000 mature individuals. For details of national estimates, see [Supplementary PDF](#).

## Trend

In Europe and the EU27 the population size is estimated to be decreasing by 30-49% in 12.6 years (three generations). For details of national estimates, see [Supplementary PDF](#).

## Habitats and Ecology

The species is found primarily in Arctic tundra, extending south in alpine mountain ranges and along or below the tree line, in openings of boreal forest. It prefers low, moderately moist areas with low shrubs, mosses, grasses and herbs avoiding rocky or lichen-rich tundra and steep slopes. Males prefer territories in areas with vegetation lower than eye level and elevated sites such as rocks, trees or hummocks for displaying on. Laying mainly occurs in May and June, but slightly earlier in the U.K. in April and May. It normally lays eight to eleven eggs. The nest is a shallow scrape with a thin lining in thick vegetation which usually partially covers it. It feeds on buds and twigs of Salix and birch (Betula) in winter. From spring to autumn leaves and berries of Vaccinium and Empetrum are important parts of its diet. It is sedentary in Scotland and Scandinavia, only making short-range altitudinal movements (de Juana et al. 2013).

Habitats & Altitude		
Habitat (level 1 - level 2)	Importance	Occurrence
Forest - Boreal	suitable	resident
Grassland - Subarctic	suitable	resident

<b>Habitats &amp; Altitude</b>			
Habitat (level 1 - level 2)		Importance	Occurrence
Grassland - Temperate		suitable	resident
Grassland - Tundra		major	resident
Shrubland - Boreal		suitable	resident
Altitude		Occasional altitudinal limits	

## **Threats**

The species is hunted everywhere except the Baltic Countries and Belarus. In the Russian tundra annual bags estimated at c. 2,000,000 west of the Urals (de Juana et al. 2013). The species seems to withstand such a heavy pressure, however in combination with other pressures, such as reductions in habitat quality and extent it can have adverse effects (Madge and McGowan 2002). Important declines in Finland were attributed to excessive hunting. Range contractions in Europe have been attributed to climatic changes (de Juana et al. 2013). It is also vulnerable to collisions with high-tension powerlines and deer fences (Madge and McGowan 2002).

<b>Threats &amp; Impacts</b>					
Threat (level 1)	Threat (level 2)	Impact and Stresses			
Biological resource use	Hunting & trapping terrestrial animals (intentional use - species is the target)	Timing	Scope	Severity	Impact
		Ongoing	Whole (>90%)	Negligible declines	Medium Impact
		Stresses			
		Species mortality			
Climate change & severe weather	Habitat shifting & alteration	Timing	Scope	Severity	Impact
		Future	Whole (>90%)	Unknown	Unknown
		Stresses			
		Ecosystem degradation; Indirect ecosystem effects			
Transportation & service corridors	Utility & service lines	Timing	Scope	Severity	Impact
		Ongoing	Minority (<50%)	Negligible declines	Low Impact
		Stresses			
		Species mortality			

## **Conservation**

### **Conservation Actions Underway**

The species is protected in the Baltic countries and Belarus (Madge and McGowan 2002), elsewhere the setting of hunting seasons and bag limits is generally the only management activity. Monitoring does occur in parts of Europe; In Norway several populations are regularly monitored, whereas in other parts of Fennoscandia and Britain, only some populations are monitored. In Britain, intensive habitat management has increased the density of this species well above natural levels in some areas (Storch 2007). There have been many attempted introductions, although most of them failed, (e.g. scoticus in Germany and Belgium) (de Juana et al. 2013).

### **Conservation Actions Proposed**

Monitoring of populations in areas with potentially high hunting pressures should be undertaken to ensure they are sustainable. Research into the impacts of hunting and habitat alteration on population dynamics should be undertaken. More understanding of its migration and dispersal behaviour and its ability to cope with climate warming in some of its range is needed (Storch 2007).

## **Bibliography**

de Juana, E., Boesman, P. & Garcia, E.F.J. 2013. Willow Grouse (*Lagopus lagopus*). In: del Hoyo, J., Elliott, A., Sargatal, J., Christie, D.A. & de Juana, E. (eds.) (2013). *Handbook of the Birds of the World Alive*. Lynx Edicions, Barcelona. (retrieved from <http://www.hbw.com/node/53323> on 27 April 2015).

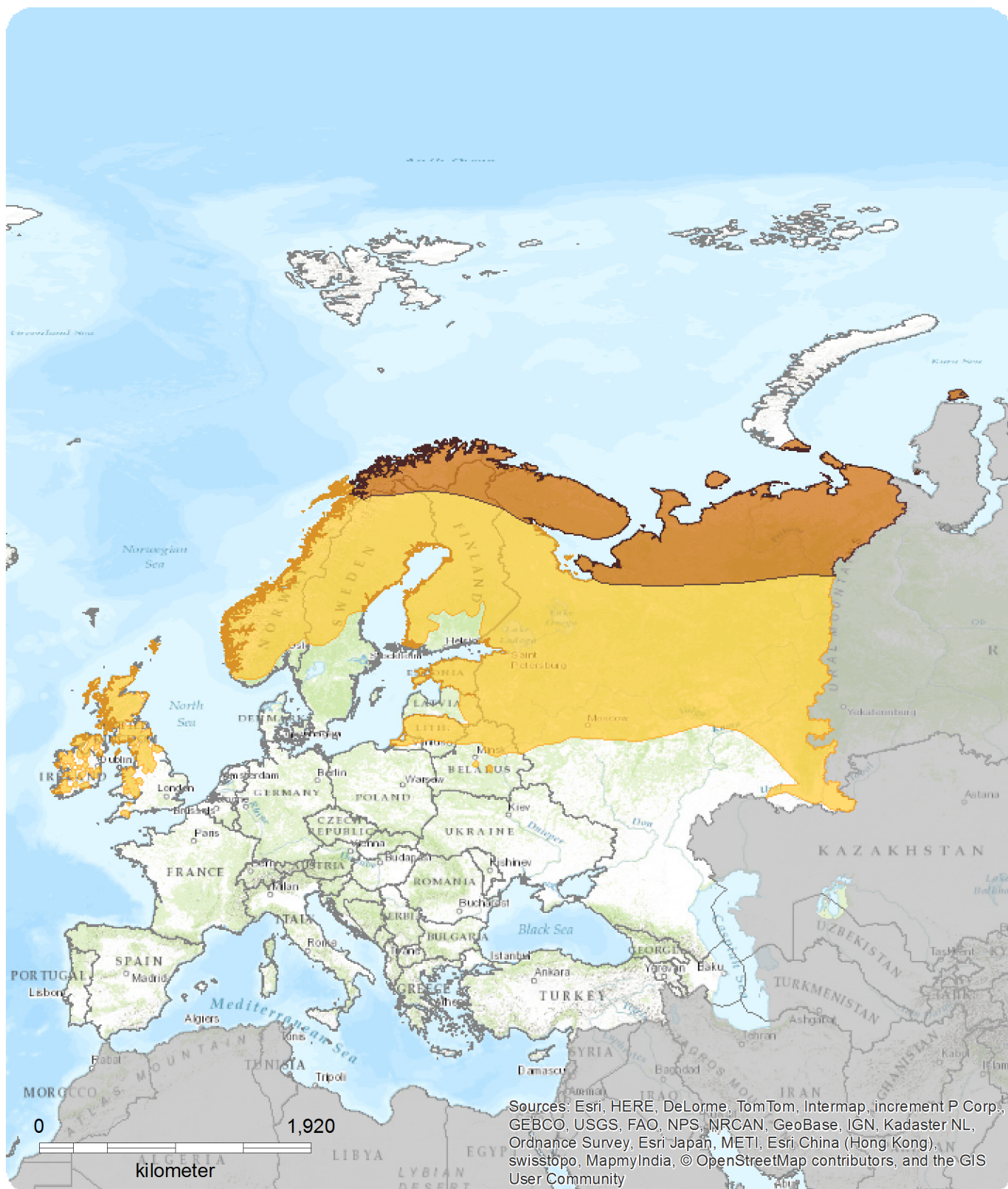
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# European Regional Assessment



## *Lagopus lagopus*

### Range

- Extant (breeding)
- Extant (resident)

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



Map created 05/13/2015



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