



ROCK PTARMIGAN

Lagopus muta



The rock ptarmigan is a member of the grouse family. It has feathered legs and feet to protect it from the cold climate in which it resides. The rock ptarmigan molts its feathers three times a year to match its environment. During the winter, this species is completely white except for a black tail. During the summer they become mottled brown, although the wings retain their white color. During the spring and the fall the plumage is patchy white and brown. Nests are usually placed on bare rocky outcrops. Between seven and ten eggs are laid per clutch. The young leave the nest one day after hatching.



SPECIES QUICK FACTS

SIZE

Adult rock ptarmigan are between 13 and 16 inches in length.

WINGSPAN

The rock ptarmigan can have a wingspan of up to 22 inches.

FOOD HABITS

The rock ptarmigan typically eats birch and willow buds, especially in the winter, but their diet also includes berries and leaves.

HABITAT

The rock ptarmigan is found in alpine and tundra habitats.

GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION

The rock ptarmigan is found in alpine and tundra regions of Alaska, Canada, Greenland, Europe, and Asia.

FUN FACT

The rock ptarmigan molts three times a year to help it blend in with its changing environment.