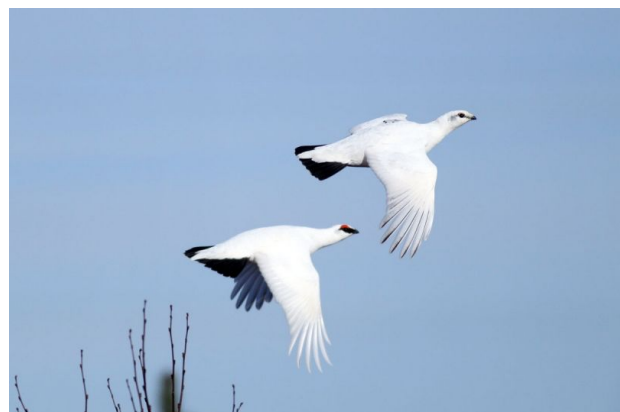


## Ptarmigan

### *Lagopus mutus*

The Ptarmigan is the only gallinaceous bird that lives wild in Iceland. They are plump with short, wide wings. Breeding plumage is mainly brown, in males with grey flecks and in females with yellow specks. In late summer males adopt a greyish-brown autumn plumage. The winter plumage is white, males have red combs above their eyes. The belly and feathered feet stay white all year, along with the flight feathers. The bill is black short and sturdy, feet are white, feathered with long, dark claws.

They are good walkers, often run and climb in trees. They fly fast with rapid wingbeats and glide with their wings curved. Breed in heathland, scrub, woods and well-vegetated lava fields, from seashore to mountains. In autumn they head for the mountains, when winter comes and snow covers the ground they seek food in the lowlands.



The Ptarmigan is a popular game bird in Iceland and has been hunted for centuries. The hunting season is now only a few weekends during early winter and then the hunters flock to the mountains to try to catch their Christmas dinner.

Jóhann Óli Hilmarsson. (2005). *Icelandic bird guide*. Reykjavík: Iðunn.

Image: Ólafur K. Nielsen, taken from

<https://www.ni.is/biota/animalia/chordata/aves/galliformes/rjupa-lagopus-muta>