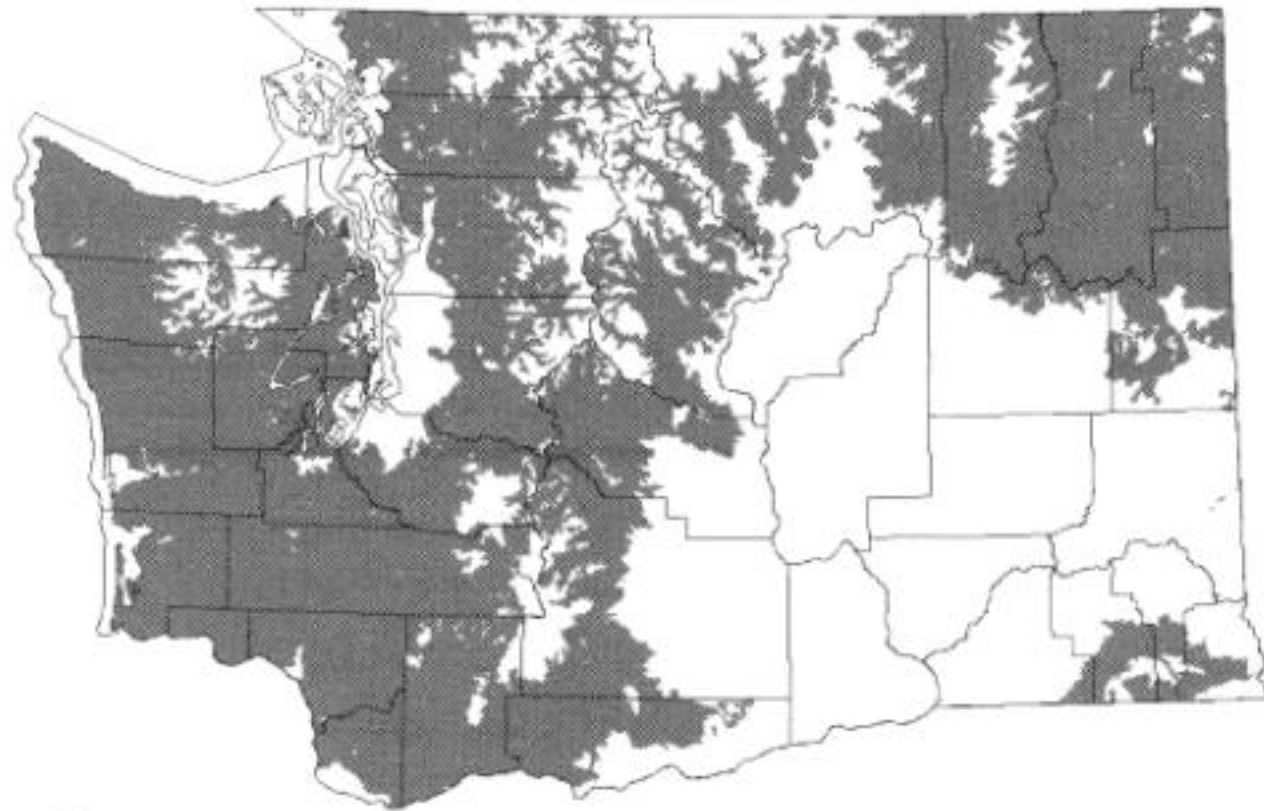


Ruffed Grouse*Bonasa umbellus*

Widespread, fairly common resident in deciduous and mixed-conifer shrublands and forests throughout most of Washington.



● Year-round

Subspecies: *B. u. brunnescens* in Puget Trough lowlands, *castanea* on Olympic Pen. s. to w. Oregon, *sabini* on w. side of Cascades from B.C. to Oregon, *affinis* on e. side of Cascades, n. Washington, and Blue Mts., and *phaia* in ne. corner.

Habitat: Deciduous and mixed deciduous/conifer forest containing birch, alder, and/or poplar. Fairly common in fire serres, brushy stream courses, alder thickets, and brushy forest edges. Birds shift habitats seasonally within home ranges; in winter they tend to use brushy areas and in summer areas that are more open.

Occurrence: Indigenous to all state regions except expansive areas of shrub-steppe. Except in developed w. lowlands, widespread in all forested zones below the silver fir zone; from low elevations into grand fir zone on Cascades e. slope, across n. counties to Spokane Co., and in Blue Mts. Common in hardwood and mixed forests at lower elevations and in riparian corridors at higher elevations, mostly absent from riparian corridors below the ponderosa pine zone in the Columbia Basin (Smith et al. 1997). Unrecorded in the past 50 years in the San Juan Is. (Lewis and Sharpe 1987). Though most common in lowlands, occurs in suitable habitats to mid-elevations (e.g. to 1300 m at Tunk Mt., 1600 m in the Blue Mts.; Jewett et al. 1953) and to about 1250 m in Yakima Co. (Stepniwski 1999). Overlaps with Blue Grouse up to elevations where hardwoods decline (Smith et al. 1997). Core areas include Indian Dan Canyon, Pogue Mt., Scotch Cr., Sinlahekin, and Chesaw WMAs in Okanogan Co.; Badger Mt. in Douglas Co.; along the Hoh R. in Jefferson Co. (MAS). Birds are sedentary, occupying

the same territory year round, though juvs. can disperse as far as 19 km and birds occasionally occur in formerly occupied portions of their range such as urban and agricultural habitats. Down-slope movements in winter unknown.

Numbers have declined over w. N. America (Rusch et al. 2000). Population trends in Washington are uncertain: inter-annual variability is considerable. Smith et al. (1997) suggest increases in w. following logging and conversion of mature conifer forests to second-growth hardwood and mixed tracts. Statewide, declines are suggested due to decreases in brush fires (Jewett et al. 1953), habitat loss to urbanization and other developments (Smith et al. 1997), removal of riparian habitat and over-hunting in Yakima Co. (Stepniwski 1999), and likely predation on young by cats and dogs in urbanized areas (Wahl 1995).

Long-term data apparently minimal and restricted to relatively developed areas. Numbers declined on all long-term westside CBCs: these were in or nr. populated areas. CBC eastside numbers also lower at Spokane and Walla Walla. No birds were found at Wenatchee after 1985.

Remarks: Although populations fluctuate dramatically annually, they appear to be relatively unaffected by most management practices. The gray color phase is most common in e. Washington and the reddish-brown phase most common in coastal w. Population data and hunting harvest numbers are uncertain for this species, as well as Blue and Spruce grouse, which are all classed as and data lumped under Forest Grouse (WDFW 2000b). Harvest surveys for 2000-01 indicated 148,193 Forest Grouse taken.

Noteworthy Records: *Peripheral areas:* Turnbull NWR in 1968-1972; n. portion of Pend Oreille Co. in 1980-1986 (MAS); 1 on 26 Aug 1972 in the low dunes at Leadbetter Pt.; 1 record at Kamiak Butte (Weber and Larrison 1977).

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