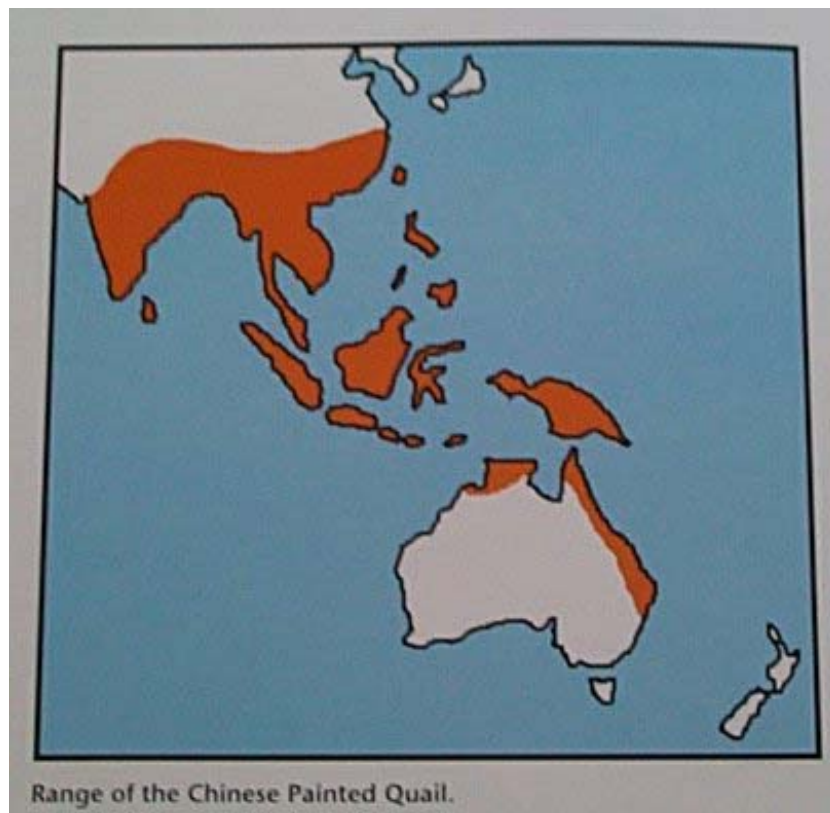




How to Make Money Raising Button Quail. Raising Button Quail For Fun & Profit!

by Carl G. Kline, MBA



This map has been borrowed from a wonderful book called [The Atlas of Quails](#) by David Alderton (copyright 1992 by T.F.H Publications, Inc.).

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Introduction

The market for Button Quail is not as big as it is for some of the other birds we hear about, like pheasants, Coturnix Quail, etc. But, there are distinct advantages to raising these unique tiny birds.

First, some of the things they are not. They are not a game bird like Bobwhite Quail, so, the marketing for stocking and release is not there. They are not a meat bird because they are too small and few people would find these tiny birds desirable for food.

Second, the things they are. They are easy and inexpensive to raise. It takes little food to bring a Button Quail to maturity. Their space requirements at all stages are small, requiring very little investment in equipment such as brooders, raising pens, etc as compared to a game bird. They are an ornamental bird and highly desired by bird fanciers. The prices for these birds are better than for many other birds. Since the cost of raising is small, the profit margin is higher.

So, who does buy the smallest of the quail family? The main markets are bird fanciers, hobbyists, pet shops and other raisers.

All of these points will be further discuss in detail in the material that follows.

I. Getting Started

Successful projects are well planned ones. Advanced planning is strongly recommended when you are going to raise Button Quail. Chicks can and will die while waiting for you to get ready, so get everything ready in advance of their arrival. Test the brooder light or heater to make sure it's holding the right temperature by running it for a day or two before the hatch. Check the temperature frequently before and after putting the birds in. It should be set at the proper temperature and be located away from drafts. If the birds are arriving by airfreight, do not let them sit at the airport any longer than necessary. Do not drive them home in the back of an open truck or a car with the windows down or the air vents open.

If you're planning to raise Button Quail to sell and want to get a fast and inexpensive start, your best bet is to buy day-old chicks or eggs. This eliminates the need to obtain breeder quail. Buying day-old checks shifts the burden of hatching to the raiser you are buying them from. Before attempting to hatch your own chicks, read the section in this book on incubation. After you have raised your chicks, select breeders for the following season and set them aside. Keep a few more than you need for breeding in case you did not select all "winners". Sell the rest. By selling your excess, you should be able to cover most expenses and if you have not had bad luck or kept too many breeders, there may be that elusive thing called profit. Button are not raised for release in order to stock your raising facility or a wild life area. Typically, they are raised as a hobby or for sale of chicks, eggs or adults. Their space requirements are small; they don't eat a lot, and are a favorite ornamental bird.

Button quail eggs are nearly identical in taste and nutritional quality to chicken eggs. So, they can be eaten. But, it will take quite a few to equal a chicken egg. Few people use them for food as there are more effective sources of eggs for food. Button quail egg prices make them a good source of revenue. Button hens need a fraction of the feed to produce eggs. You can set the eggs yourself or sell them in ornamental bird markets. Because of their small size, they are easy to

ship if packaged correctly and shipped to arrive next day. Approximately eight to ten Button eggs equal one chicken egg. Quail eggs are all different in appearance, being speckled and mottled. The picture on the right shows two quail eggs beside a chicken egg.



It would seem cheaper to buy eggs and hatch your own and this may be, if you have a good forced-air incubator and have experience hatching eggs. The hatching rate for Button eggs is about 60% and generally half of them will be young cocks. If you should decide to go this route, make sure the eggs you buy are from a good raiser and not been mishandled by the seller, the transporter, or you. Eggs are extremely sensitive to heat, cold, time, dirt, and jolts. Without a microscope and an expert, the only way you can tell if an egg will hatch is to set it. Therefore, buy from an established, reputable raiser. Hatching eggs come with no guarantee because the producing raiser has no control over them once they leave that raising facility. The shipping agent or the receiver could have mishandled them. The attempts to hatch eggs in a poor incubator at the wrong temperature with no control of humidity is an old and common story heard many times a season by the raiser that has shipped good hatching eggs. Instead of finding the cheap way to get started, the beginning raiser has just found the expensive way and not only blames the raiser but unfortunately gives up and misses the exciting adventure of raising his own Button Quail. Both parties, the producer and the receiver, are disappointed and are left with a bad taste. Nobody profits, least of all the raiser that lost a good customer.

Beginning with adult breeders can work for you if you can find them at about 6-8 weeks old. They will be more expensive than eggs or chicks because the producer will have feed and raised them. Typically, they can be obtained year-round. Raisers often keep them in heated buildings or quarters because of their small space requirements.

In order to start right and grow into the business of raising quail, starting with chicks seems to be a most economical and practical way. Eggs can produce a poor hatch and buying adult birds is more expensive. By raising your own chicks, you can select the best for breeders and keep them. If you want to have the complete cycle of raising, breeding, and hatching, starting with chicks can be both fun and profitable.

II. Chick Care

Whether you have bought or hatched your Button chicks, the disappointment will be extremely great if your efforts to raise them fail. Chick care, especially during the first few weeks, is critical.

Brooders

First decide on how big a flock you want. Then look over the following material to determine which brooding methods you want to use. There are two basic methods for brooding chicks. Some raisers use battery brooder units with wire floors and heaters built in. Small groups are often started using aquariums with the birds on fresh clean litter on the floor as shown below. In the first picture you can see the various waters and their sizes. Be sure and put marbles or gravel