



The California quail, named California's official state bird in 1931, is known for its hardiness and adaptability. This small, stout bird lives in all but the very highest and driest parts of the state. Quail are highly social, forming groups called coveys, which can range from a few individuals to sixty or more. They communicate with one another using at least a dozen different calls—the call to regroup, “chi-ca-go,” is the one most commonly heard.

# The California Quail

## Our State Bird

California Indians valued the quail as an important food source and decorated their baskets with its feathers. The California quail was first officially documented in 1791, by a Spanish expedition, when its distinctive coloration and elegant topknot of black feathers caught the attention of the expedition's artist. Following the gold rush, millions of quail were killed for food, reducing their numbers so alarmingly that laws regulating the hunting of quail were enacted. Despite these laws, quail are still threatened by a continuing loss of habitat and by predators such as free-roaming cats.

