



# La Pélite

The red gorge shows up in your mailbox when you least expect it.

We wish you all  
a happy new year!

## Discovering...

### Galliforms

Due to its wide slopes, the reserve is home to 4 species of Galliformes, an order of heavy-bodied birds.

The **red-legged partridge** (*Alectoris rufa*) is the most common and dwells in lowlands. The **rock partridge** (*Alectoris graeca saxatilis*) prefers habitats between 1,500 and 2,400 m above sea-level. It is considered a vulnerable species in the PACA region, where lives close to half of the country's rock partridge population. Neglected grazing lands and cereal crops are the main reason why their number is dwindling. In the reserve, there is an area where the red-legged partridge and the rock partridge cross-breed naturally. Their offspring is fertile. The Daluis gorge is located between the Alps and the Mediterranean Sea, an area where the two species meet.

The **black grouse** is the Alps' iconic bird. The male, with its magnificent feathers, is a celebrity in the alpine fauna iconography. The female has unextravagant feathers to hide better from predators.

Finally, remains of **hazel grouses** (*Bonasa bonasia*) were found in raptors' pellets. Scientific monitoring in the reserve will confirm if the species is present in Alpes-Maritimes, where there is no known population.

## Meeting...

### Gugu

**Mr. Baudin**, called Gugu by his friends and family, is from Péone. This mountain enthusiast has witnessed how the environment has been changing over the past 80 years.



Black grouse © J. C. Vinal

At age 16, he started to go mountain gamebird hunting, **emblematic animals** that are getting rarer and rarer. Every fall, Mr. Baudin and his loyal griffon used to explore every nook and cranny of the surrounding mountains. He learnt, patiently, by taking long walks, and now knows the woods and heathland like the back of his hand. He also knows each species' call: a unique knowledge and the mountain living memory. Nowadays, only a few animals are hunted each year, depending on how many were previously counted and on the specificities of each territory.

In Valberg's skiing area, a "**Tetras-quiet**" zone has been created so that black grouses can get through the winter in peace. It is also a good way to let people know about the species conservation challenge .

## Upcoming...

### Astronomical week-end

On **4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> February**, in Valberg, take a fresh look at the sun and the night sky through our astronomical equipment. You can also visit our planetarium.

## 'Family Plus' Activities

Once a week during February school holidays, children from 7 to 12 can participate in 2 hours' nature-themed activities at Mercantour National Park Nature Centre. You can also attend a conference on black grouses.

## Did you know...?

### Black grouse (*Tetrao tetrix*)

The black grouse is present in the region's alpine departments and in the reserve. Its ideal habitat is a mix of woodland, heathland, grassland, and scree, between 1,600 and 2,200 metres above sea-level.

Even though it is classified as a "vulnerable" species on the list of the region's endangered birds, it is still possible to hunt it. Black grouse hunting is strictly controlled to preserve the populations.

This gamefowl is also threatened by changes in forest management and farming methods, increasing outdoor leisure activities, and certainly climate change.

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