


Quick Quail Tips

	Button Quail	Northern Bobwhite	Standard Coturnix	Jumbo Coturnix	Average Chicken
Laying Age (weeks)	8	22	7	8	24
Egg Size (grams)	5-6	8-9	11-12	15-16	50-60
Eggs per Month	5-10	10-15 (In Season)	25-30	20-25	15-20
Hen Weight (ounces)	1-3	5-7	9-12	13-15	5-8 lbs
Rooster/Hen Ratio	1:1 Pair	1:1 Pair	1:5	1:5	1:10
Square Feet/Bird	1	2	.5	.5	4 coop 8 run
Flying Ability	Poor	Good	Poor	Poor	Poor

Hatching Calendar



Hatching: It takes approximately 18 days for quail chicks to hatch. Candle on day 10 to check fertility and stop turning the eggs and raise humidity on day 15 (lockdown).

Brooding: Move chicks from the incubator to the brooder when they are dry and fluffy but don't open the incubator more than necessary. Use a heat plate or heat lamp to keep the chicks warm. They are too cold if they're huddle up in a pile directly under the heat source. They are too hot if they're staying as far away from the heat source as possible.

Feed & Feeders: A gamebird starter with between 25%-30% protein should be used until the quail are about 10 weeks old. After that, an equal mix of the gamebird starter and a 15% layer crumble gives quail both the protein they need and calcium for strong eggs. A variety of quail feeders are available for purchase or make your own using PVC elbows.

Water: A quail watering cup from Little Giant works great for new chicks as well as adults. They fit a standard canning jar so no need to buy their special jugs. Watering systems use horizontal, vertical or cup type nipples connected to a PVC pipe fed by a 5 gallon bucket.

Housing: Most people keep quail off the ground in a hutch type cage but some keep them in a coop or aviary. Quail shoot straight up when spooked so it's recommended to have either a cage no more than 12" tall or a coop with a ceiling at least 6 feet high to minimize the chance of them breaking their necks. Vinyl coated 1/2" hardware cloth is much easier on their feet than galvanized hardware cloth.

Weekly Milestones:

Week 1: The little chicks like to pile up on one another and sleep.

Week 2: They get a little more active and run around flapping their little wings.

Week 3: The quail are fully feathered and you should be able to tell the males from females (unless they are the white quail). Hens have a speckled pattern on their chest while roosters have a solid, rusty colored chest with no speckles.

Week 4: The roosters start crowing.

Week 5: The roosters may start getting aggressive so it could be necessary to separate them from the hens. They no longer need supplemental heat.

Week 6: They are close to fully grown at this age and the hens may start laying eggs.

Week 8: The quail are fully mature and can be used for breeding. Start mixing the 15% layer crumble with the gamebird starter feed.

Light: Quail hens need at least 14 hours of light in order to lay eggs. Artificial light can be provided for almost year round laying. It doesn't need to be bright, an LED rope light or a string of Christmas tree lights is plenty. They benefit from at least a few hours of darkness each night so use a timer with the supplemental light if possible.

Overwintering: Quail are tough and can easily handle Minnesota winters provided they have a sheltered place out of the wind where they can stay dry. I have kept quail in an outside hutch multiple winters where it reached 20 below and did not lose any birds. The hutch did have an enclosed end with a heat lamp but that was mainly to help keep their water and eggs from freezing.

Molting: Depending on weather conditions and hours of light, quail will first molt (lose and regrow feathers) around the 7 month mark. A higher protein diet should be fed during this time as they regrow feathers.

Compost: Quail manure makes incredible compost but is very high in nitrogen and considered "hot". As such, fresh quail manure should not be put directly on new or existing plants. It needs to be mixed with higher carbon "brown" material (like leaves, grass clippings or straw) and composted for at least one year before being used to amend the soil.

Lifespan: Coturnix have a lifespan of 2-3 years but it depends on how they are raised. If supplemental lights are used to maximize egg production, they may not make it to two years old. If no artificial light is used and they're given a break through the winter months, egg production will continue into year 2 and they may live to be three years old.