

Quail

Coturnix japonica · Layer/meat breed

DIFFICULTY Easy

TYPE Poultry, kept for eggs and meat, very small space
PRODUCTIVE LIFE Lays from 6–8 weeks, productive about a year



SPACE

0.1m² per bird, keep in colonies



DIET

Game bird/quail crumble, high protein



WATER

Fresh daily, shallow dish to avoid drowning chicks



TEMPERAMENT

Skittish, best left undisturbed

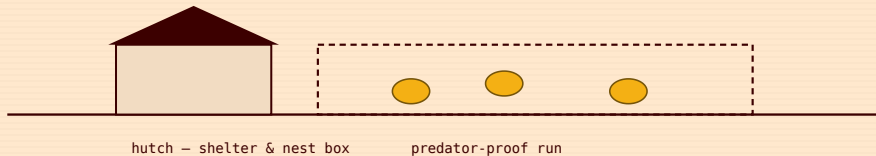


LIFESPAN

2–3 years

01 Small footprint, fast cycle

Quail need only a fraction of the space chickens do and mature extremely fast, making them a good option where land is limited or a very quick return is wanted.



02 Housing & setup

SHELTER	Solid-sided enclosure with a covered top — quail fly straight up when startled and can injure themselves on mesh roofs.
FENCING	Fully enclosed aviary-style housing rather than an open run.
BEDDING	Deep litter, changed regularly given the small footprint.

03 Daily care

- Provide a covered enclosure — quail startle upward and need a soft or high ceiling.
- Feed a high-protein game bird crumble.
- Handle minimally; quail don't tame the way chickens do.
- Keep in small colonies rather than as single birds — they're a flock species.

04 Health & problems

- **Injury from startling** — the main risk; ensure a soft or sufficiently high covered top.
- **Cannibalism/pecking in crowded conditions** — keep stocking density reasonable.
- **Egg eating** — collect eggs promptly and often.
- **Short lifespan** — plan for a faster turnover of breeding stock than with chickens.

05 Production & harvest

YIELD	Up to 300 tiny eggs a year per hen in good layer lines.
MEAT BREEDS	Processed as early as 6–8 weeks for meat-focused lines.
COLLECTION	Daily, multiple times if possible given how small and easily lost the eggs are.
STORAGE	Eggs: several weeks refrigerated. Meat: fridge a few days, freezes well.

06 Compatibility & considerations

GOOD WITH

Small backyards or limited-space setups

AVOID KEEPING WITH

Open-topped runs

Handling-heavy environments

NOTE

A good starter livestock option for testing homestead animal husbandry before committing to larger animals.