



## Guide to Hunting in Germany

### 08j – FEATHERED GAME (*FEDERWILD*)

#### (3) Woodcock (*Waldschnepfe*)



*Waldschnepfe* (Woodcock)

Breeding season  
Eggs per nest

March – April  
4, dirty brown color

The Woodcock (*Waldschnepfe*) reaches a length of about 12 inches and a weight of about 3/5 of a pound.



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The beginning of the Woodcock's flight is distinguished by a swishing sound. The rapid and dodging flight is usually a short trip.

Both genders have the same protective rust-brown coloring over the body and wings with black, gray, and yellow markings. The lower abdominal parts are somewhat lighter.



*Waldschnepfe* (Woodcock)

Woodcocks prefer marshy soil with brush and small woodlots, which provide it with the best living conditions, shelter, and food. Woodcocks are migratory.

Based on their feeding habits, Woodcocks normally move north after the northern ground has thawed and return to the south before the northern ground freezes.

The Woodcock's food consists of insects, worms, and other invertebrates, which it finds by probing the moist ground with its long bill.

The Woodcock's mating time is in March and April and may coincide with the bird's migration. While producing deep guttural tones interrupted by a higher tone, the males fly at dusk, often fighting among themselves during the flight. The hens, hidden on the ground, answer the males with a quieter call. When the male hears this call, he lands near the hen and trips around her with bristling feathers, drooped wings, and fanned tail.



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The hen usually lays four eggs, which are dirty-brown. The incubations period is about 21 days. In Germany, the female often raises a second brood in June or July.

The Woodcock is hunted only in fall during its migration south. A bird dog is necessary for finding killed or wounded birds. The hunter can find the Woodcock in low-bottom lands, along the banks of small streams or creeks, in wooded bogs, and in marshy areas.

Hunters should select an open place in the woods or on a swampy hillside late in the evening to wait for the birds as they pass during their mating flight. Hunting may continue after dark.

The Woodcock, in addition to being an edible game bird, possesses two trophies frequently worn by German hunters as a hat ornament.

The painter's feather (*Malerfeder*), which is a stiff, pointed feather, found immediately preceding the first wing feather.

The Woodcock beard (*Schnepfenbart*), which is the hairy covering of the fat gland at the base of the tail.

