

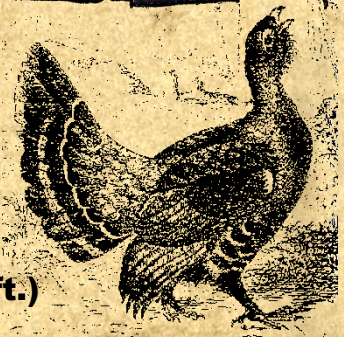
A Letter!

It's a normal day in the Enchanted Forest. Ferdinand, the Little Folk's Postman, who is usually moving at a snail's pace, wants to deliver a letter to Anthony Capercaillie. But he can't find him anywhere. He asks Velt, the Feldberg-Elf, for help.



Anthony, the Capercaillie Cock

Size:	80 cm (3 ft.)
Weight:	4 - 6 kg (11 pounds)
Age:	12 - 18 years
Wingspan:	more than one meter (4 ft.)
Colour:	greenish-black body brownish wings



Home abandoned !

As a matter of fact, Velt and Ferdinand should have known that at this time of day Anthony is normally strolling around in the forest.

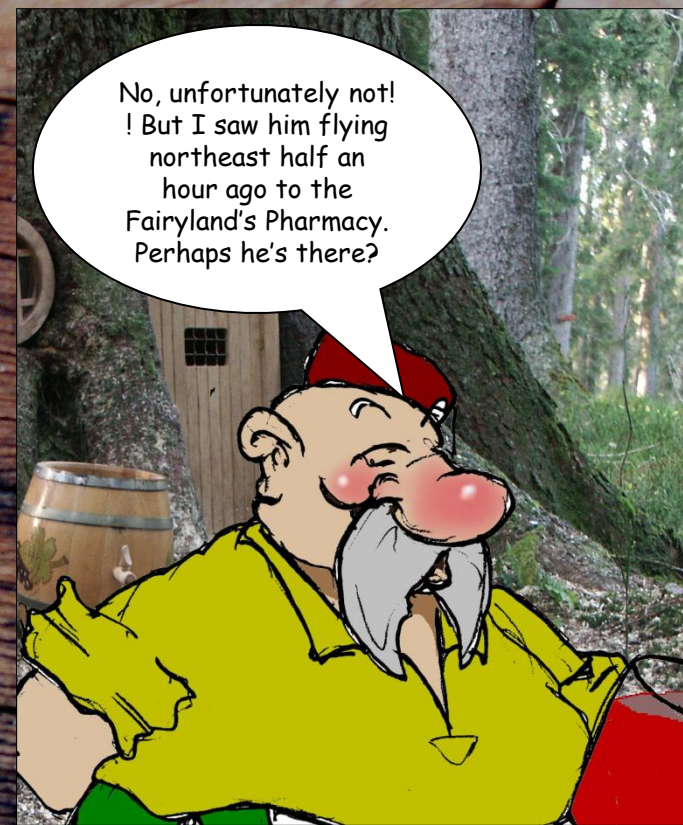


The Dormitory Tree

Capercaillies usually sleep sitting on branches of old trees. Sometimes they use their dormitory tree for quite a long time. That's why you find a lot of the Capercaillie's excrements on the ground. Hunters call it "droppings".

Second Breakfast

Rocky has been publican of "The Sweet Bilberry" for some 230 years. He's most famous throughout fairyland for his delicious Rowanberry Pie and Bilberry Crumble



What does a Capercaillie feed on?

For the first few weeks the capercaillie-chicks are fed insects. They desperately need animal protein. Grown-up capercaillies are normally vegetarian. In summer they go absolutely wild for the green tender leaves of all kinds of plants. In autumn they stuff their bellies with berries, especially bilberries. They must put on some considerable weight, especially subcutaneous layers of fat, to survive the fierce winter season, where they can only find the odd leaf bud or fur needles to feed on and that's not a filling diet!

Woody, the Three-toed Woodpecker

Woody Woodpecker comes from Switzerland. Originally the three-toed woodpeckers inhabited the Black Forest, too, but had become extinct here. In fact, he and his kind started to migrate back into the Black Forest from around 1991 onwards, when he had been spotted for the first time again. But he is still a rare inhabitant. Woody likes it here much better now, as forestry commissioners are no longer removing dead old trees, which he usually relies on for pecking his food, from the forests.



Send a Morse Message to Anthony

A	. . (short – long)
N	. . (long – short)
T	- (long)
O	- (long–long– long)
N	. . (long – short)

Can you hear him?

What a pity! We are not able to hear Anthony Capercaillie's characteristic sounds, but many other different sounds of the forest instead. (Use the old-style hearing aid!)

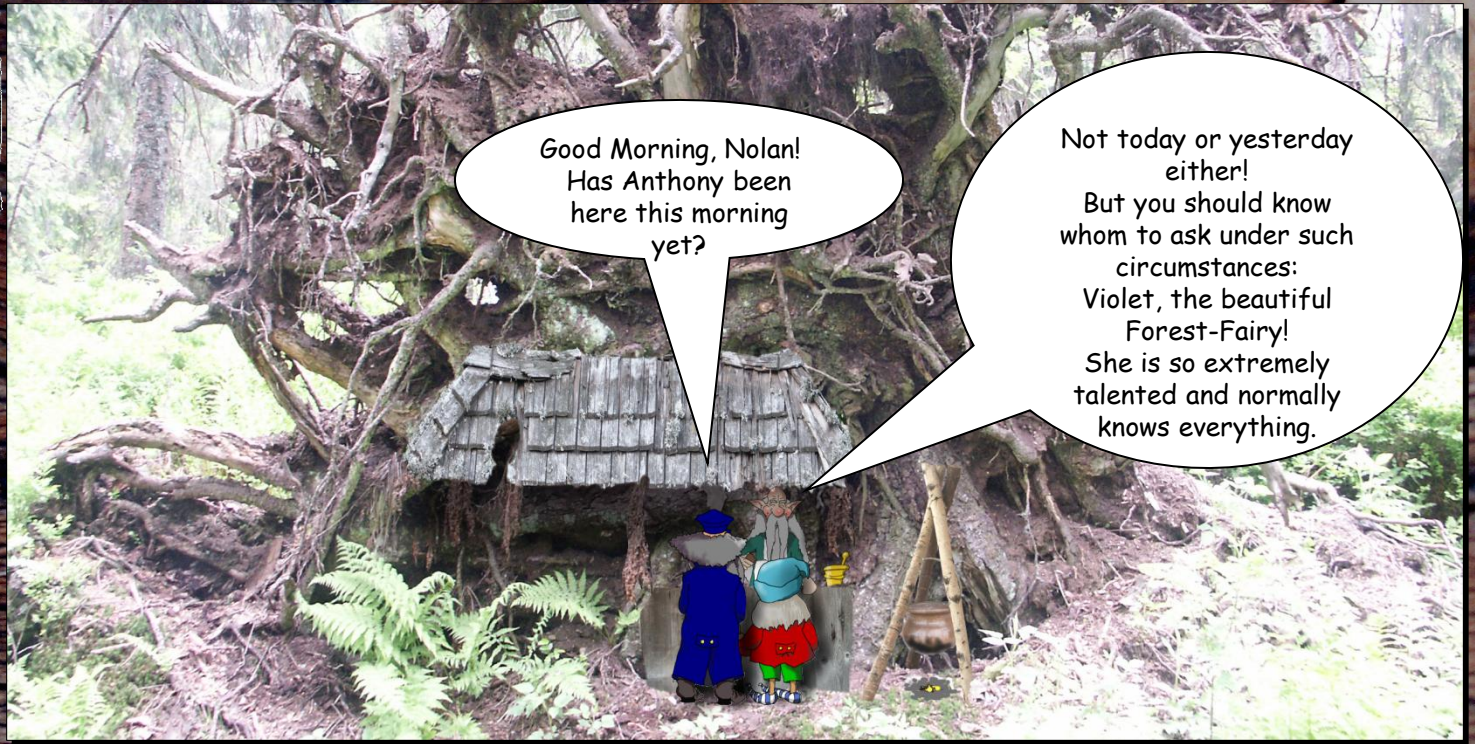


The Sounds of the Forest

Uncountable numbers of animals live in our Capercaillie-Forest. The birds can be heard especially in the months of March through to July. After breeding and hatching their young ones in early summer they fall more and more silent and at the end of the summer the last sounds of the forest are the crow's call or the nutcracker's nagging.

Stomach-ache

Anthony regularly visits Nolan Know-it-all's Fairyland Forest Pharmacy under the roots of a collapsed tree stump. He usually picks up small digestive stones against tummy-ache.



That's right! I should have thought of her, too! Thanks a million, Nolan!

Digestive Stones

Capercaillies have no teeth. That's why food has to be cut into pieces inside the stomach with the help of small little stones picked up and swallowed, so-called digestive stones. Strong muscles around the bird's stomach help with the crushing and grinding. Leaves or fir-needles in particular would otherwise be too hard to digest.

Violet, help us !

Forest Fairies are most curious creatures. They seem to know everything. Almost everything!



Now, watch out for the capercaillie-hen with her chicks! If you go on walking for some 150 m (160 yards) you might be lucky to detect Antonia Capercaillie with her young ones hidden by perfect camouflage among the higher bilberry undergrowth. Not easy to be found!

The Nursery

Antonia is raising her head uneasily above the bilberry shrubs rendering an impression of great concern.



Thanks a lot, Antonia, and good luck!

Small chicks - big worries

The capercaillies always leave the complete business of raising their chicks to the hens. The chicks hatch out in June on forest soil where they are an easy prey for their predators. Capercaillie-chicks must build up their weight from 37 g (1.3 ounces) to 3 kg (6.6 pounds) within 4 months. To compare this to a human baby: the baby would have to put on the weight of a tiger within 4 months!! In the capercaillie-world this is successfully achieved only by a special 'power-food' made up of animal protein, e.g. ant larva.

Horror Stories

Up here of all places, at Robbers' Rock, is Anthony's most favourite tree, from where he has a perfect view all around, which is his best possible protection. But of course, with all his experience, Anthony hardly needs to be afraid of enemies.



Capercaillies don't only have friends

At night, predators such as the fox, the badger, wild boars or martins, or, at daytime, the hawk and other birds of prey can become dangerous to capercaillies. But the more capercaillies roam through our forests the less problematic is the loss of a chick, a cock or a hen to a predator. Therefore, a healthy habitat in a natural environment is so important. It could be home to many individuals of this shy, magnificent wood-hen.



GOSHAWK

The goshawk's main prey are hens or chicks, not so often the capercaillie-cock. He would normally ruffle his feathers on the nape of his neck and lower his throat and would unfold his tail feathers like a peacock in order to appear more prominent. Moreover, he would try to intimidate the aggressor with loud hisses



BOAR

Boars are omnivorous animals, they eat 'everything' and have an exceptional sense of smell. When they plough through the forest soil with their snouts they may incidentally detect a capercaillie's nest. That's why mainly eggs or unfledged chicks fall into the hands of boars.



WINTER SPORTS

Hikers or athletes on skis who stray from their identified courses or tracks cause considerable stress to the shy capercaillies. And when they are often forced to take wing they can even die of starvation, as nutritious food is scarce and consumption of energy is high, especially in winter.

Fridolin Fox

There has always been peace between the Little Folk and the foxes here in the Enchanted Forest. Only Velt's great-grandfather William could remember an incident when a fox attacked a brownie. Still, better be on the safe side!



Can a fox really be dangerous to a capercaillie?

In fact we know for sure that a fox is able to hunt down a capercaillie, especially if the bird is very young, very old or sick. But a fox would scarcely be a real threat to a strong, healthy and experienced bird

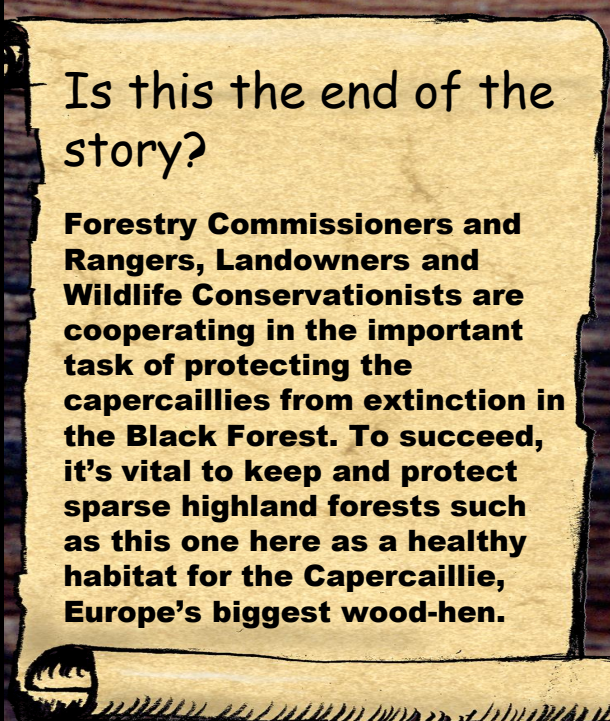
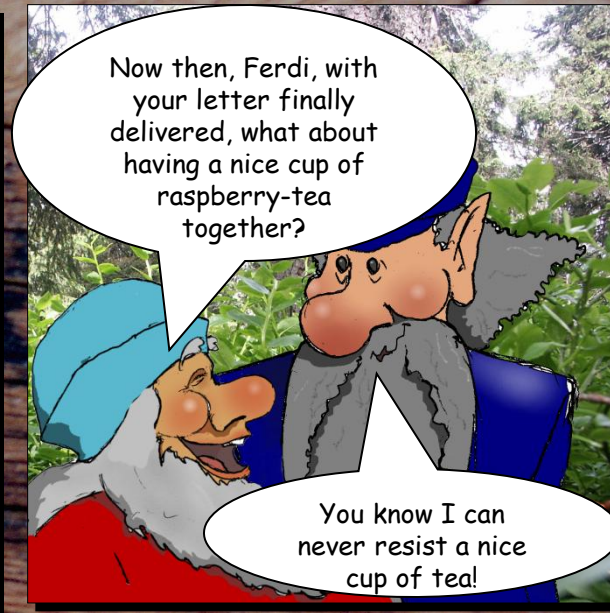
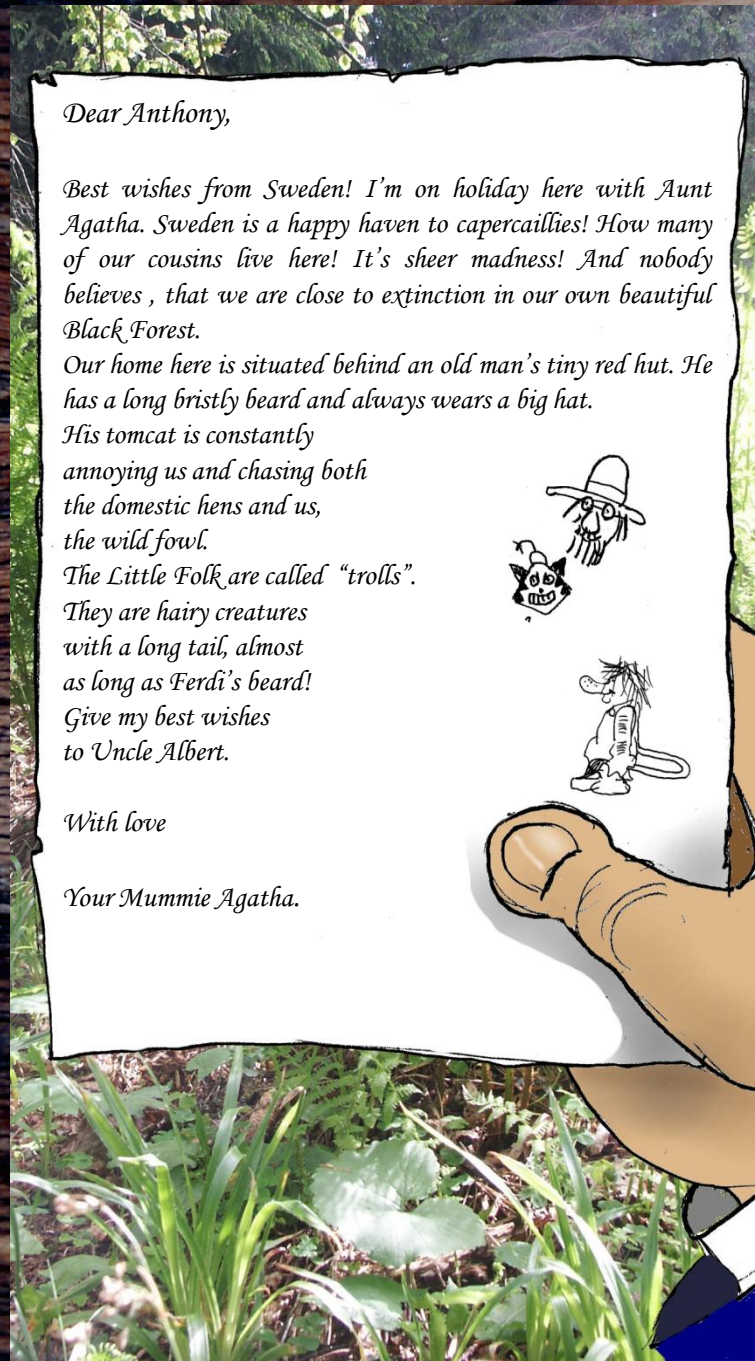
Anthony
cannot be far!

All of a sudden the queer, grinding 'knock-knock-signal', the capercaillie's courtship melody, is distinctly audible. This odd noise does not sound in the least attractive to human ears. But it would melt the heart of an adoring capercaillie-hen!



The Capercaillie is a quiet guy

You won't hear a lot of a capercaillie normally. But when, say, a hiker accidentally chases him away, you can get really frightened by the noisy flapping of his wings. The capercaillie's courtship melody which you can listen to here, is only audible very early in the morning during springtime mating season. Why capercaillies perform their chant still remains a secret. Maybe they mark their territory, or want to attract the attention of the deeply impressed female members of the flock. Quite often the cock repeats the 4 different verses of his 'song', named 'hobble', 'trill', 'beat', 'whet'.





Your donation goes directly into the maintenance, protection and lavish care of the Nature and Adventure Trail in the Capercaillie-Forest.

On behalf of Naturschutzzentrum Südschwarzwald (Wildlife Interpretative Centre Southern Black Forest) all the Little Folk say: "THANKS A MILLION" for all your support!

If you'd like some more detailed information on capercaillies, don't hesitate to contact us. We'd be delighted to answer your questions. Do come in!

"Haus der Natur"
(Wildlife Interpretative Centre),
opposite "Feldberger Hof" Hotel
open Tue – Sun
10 a.m. – 5 p.m.,
(Mon only within school holidays)





Waldophon

Dietwald
Dreizehenspecht

Wichtelsumpf

Nichtelapotheke

Violeta
Waldfee

Zur
süßen
Heidelbeere

Schlummerfichte

Beerenbühl

Haus der
Natur

zur
Feldberg
Bahn

Wichteltanne

Räuber-
fels

Fridolin
Fuchs

Feldberger Hof

Balz

Felsendobel

Start

Cafe
Waldvogel