

## A Gambel's Quail Family

*Story by Bob and Maxine Tinney, The Ranch at Prescott*

During the courtship period in April, the male Gambel's Quail will strut and bow to the female to 'court' her. The female then builds a shallow depression formed in the ground lined with dead leaves, twigs, and grass. Gambel's Quail are monogamous, meaning that once a pair is formed the two birds will stay with each other for the rest of the breeding season. Over the next 21-24 days the female Gambel's Quail incubates her eggs in the nest which may be concealed by vegetation. The newborn chicks are precocial, born with their eyes open and are covered with down.



Young Gambel's Quail follow the parents for a few days to learn how to find food. On the morning of May 29 about 9:30 a.m., this monogamous pair of Gambel's Quail appears in the Tinneys' yard accompanied with their 10-12 camouflaged chicks. This morning is mayhem for a few minutes as they scatter themselves, and proceed to devour seeds from the ground. Both parents take part in caring for the young and guard them as they eat. The young will be able to fly when they are ten days old and will need that skill to escape from predators. Hopefully the dense shrub coverage will help protect them from the snakes, bobcats, coyotes, raptors, and human hunters.

