

# 2006 August Quail Roadside Survey Summary

by

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The Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation has conducted annual roadside surveys in August and October since 1990 to index quail populations across Oklahoma. Currently, department employees run 83, 20 mile routes in all counties except Oklahoma and Tulsa; some larger counties have two routes. Observers count the number of quail seen to provide an index of quail abundance (number seen/20 mile route) and reproductive success. The survey provides a crude index of annual population fluctuations. Due to inherent biases associated with the survey results are not meant to be predictive, however, the August survey has shown a positive correlation to quail harvest.

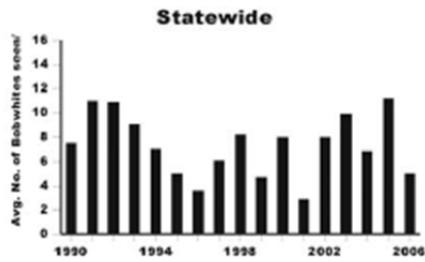
This is the 17-year of this survey and the statewide quail index is down 33% from the previous 16-year average (Table 1). No region reported increases in quail sightings over last year. The statewide index is down 55% from the 2005 August survey. The largest decreases were observed in the northwest and south-central regional indices. Quail sighted in the southwest and north-central (Figure 1) were within 25% of the 16-yr average. All other regions were below 65% of the 16-year average. The number of broods observed during the August survey decreased from 73 in 2005 to 36 in 2006. Of the broods observed during the August survey 88% were either full or  $\frac{3}{4}$  grown.

Periods of drought conditions over the past year have undoubtedly negatively affected quail production. The heat and dry conditions associated with drought have been known to affect quail production by shortening the reproductive period, egg spoilage and reducing survival of chicks and adults. August rains have provided some temporary relief from the drought in the northern portion of the State but its influence on quail production is yet to be determined. Results of the August survey generally don't include quail produced from late nesting attempts. Since late nesting attempts will likely determine the difference between a low or average quail season the October counts should provide important information and some clarity about this falls quail population and season outlook

**Table 1. Quail seen/20 mile route during the August roadside surveys.**

Region	Previous 16-yr. average	2005	2006
Statewide	7.5	11.2	5.0

Northwest	10.1	22.3	5.8
Northcentral	4.3	8.1	3.3
Northeast	4.9	1.5	1.3
Southwest	16.9	27.2	15.9
Southcentral	3.3	2.4	0.7
Southeast	6.6	5.7	4.2



Regional boundaries for Oklahoma used for quail roadside surveys.

