

# 2007 Quail Season Outlook

By

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With the drought in 2006 and the record amounts of rainfall we had in most of the state this year, there has been a big improvement in the amount of habitat. This improvement in habitat usually correlates with high reproductive output and an increase in quail populations.

Herein lies the limitation of the roadside counts. When cover is abundant, quail aren't forced to the bar-ditches and therefore not readily observed during the surveys this makes the quail counts appear low during these periods of increased rainfall.

Given last season's record low in quail numbers, a rebound to the 17-year average was not expected. A rebound of that magnitude will likely require several years of favorable weather. All regional numbers are lower than the previous 17-year average with the statewide average being 51% lower than the long-term average (Table 1).

Despite incidental reports from biologists and sportsmen seeing more quail this year compared to last year, the 2007 statewide index decreased 21% from 2006. All regional indices were lower than the 2006 totals except for the northwest and south-central regions (Figure 1). The Northwest region had the largest increase from last year with a 37% increase from 2006.

**Table 1. Average quail seen/20 mile route during the August & October roadside surveys.**

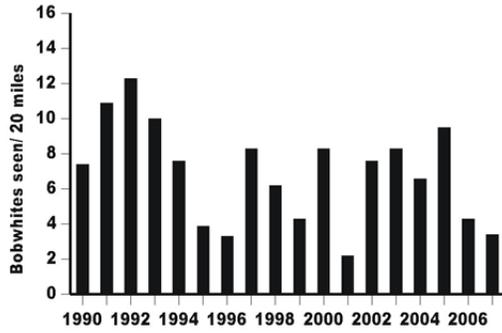
In the western portion of the State where quail populations remain robust, improvements toward the average are possible in the future. For the eastern 2/3 of the state, issues of habitat fragmentation will continue to slow the recovery of quail populations.

Data from the October survey indicates the quail had an extended nesting season, since 30% of the birds encountered were not full grown; which is up from 16% last year

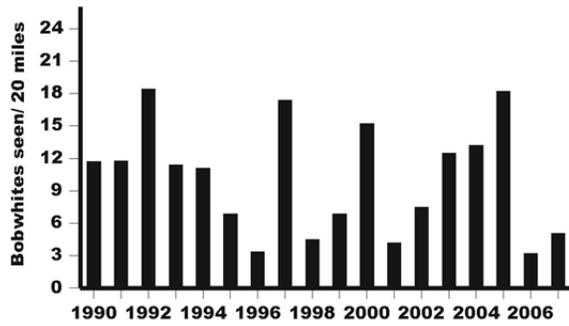
Region	Previous 17-yr. average	2006	2007
Statewide	7.0	4.3	3.4
Northwest	10.4	3.2	5.1
Northcentral	3.6	3.9	1.2
Northeast	4.1	1.6	0.3
Southwest	14.8	11.3	10.0
Southcentral	2.9	0.6	0.8
Southeast	7.1	6.5	3.9

So let's get out there and enjoy the outdoors -- take a child or friend hunting and just see how the quail population has responded to the increased rainfall.

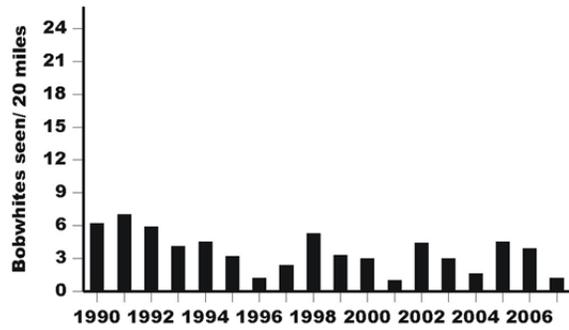
### Statewide



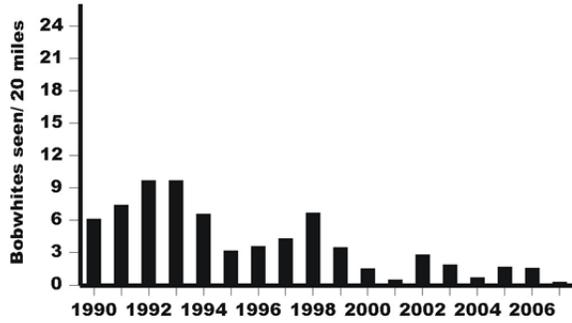
### Northwest



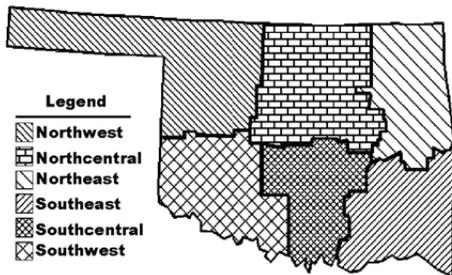
### Northcentral



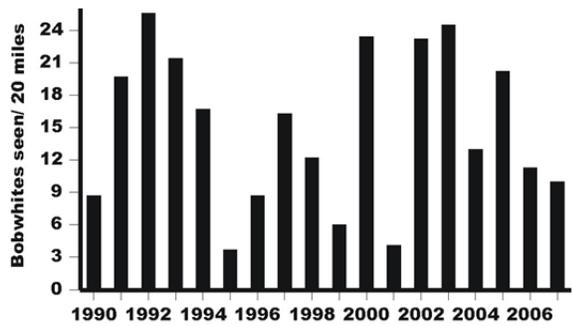
### Northeast



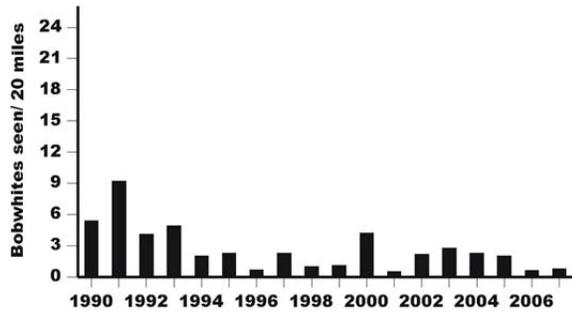
Regional boundaries for Oklahoma used for quail roadside surveys.



### Southwest



### Southcentral



### Southeast

