

2007 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 like Beaver, Ellis, Le Flore, McCurtain, Osage, Pittsburg, Pushmataha, and Roger Mills 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.

This is the 18th year of this survey and the statewide quail index is down 54% from the previous 17-year average (Table 1). The south-central region was the only region to increase, which increased by 56%. The statewide index is down 32% from the 2006 August survey. The largest decreases were observed in the northeast and north-central regional indices. Quail sighted in the northwest, south-central, and southwest (Figure 1) was the closest to the 17-year average less than 50% lower. All other regions were more than 60% lower than the 17-year average. The number of broods observed during the August survey decreased from 36 in 2006 to 23 in 2007. Of the broods observed during the August survey 84% were either full or $\frac{3}{4}$ grown.

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

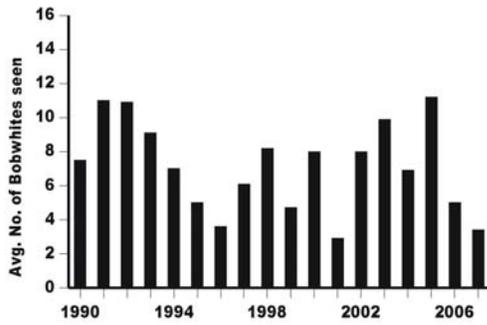
Region	Previous 17-yr. average	2006	2007
Statewide	7.4	5.0	3.4
Northwest	9.8	5.8	5.6
North-central	4.3	3.3	1.7
Northeast	4.7	1.3	0.4
Southwest	16.8	15.9	9.6
South-central	3.2	0.7	1.6
Southeast	6.5	4.2	2.3

During the summer of 2007 we had record amounts of rainfall across most of the state. Compounded by 2006 drought, which caused reproductive success to be low there were fewer adult birds going into nesting season. However, the spring and summer rains have provided the quail with an abundance of cover, which has led to more bugs and weeds this year for raising young. Unfortunately, it may have kept the chicks wet during the critical drying period after hatching reducing their survival. Additionally, during the August roadside surveys the quail were away from the roads utilizing the extra cover, which was not available last year and may have lowered the number of quail that were seen. There are still chances of late nesting attempts that will not be shown in the August surveys. The October counts will hopefully account for these late nesting attempts, and should provide some clarity about this fall's quail population and season outlook.

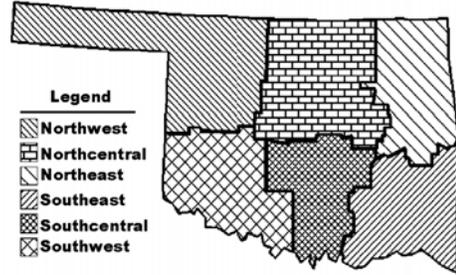
The Quail Season Outlook is posted on www.wildlifedepartment.com during the last week of October.



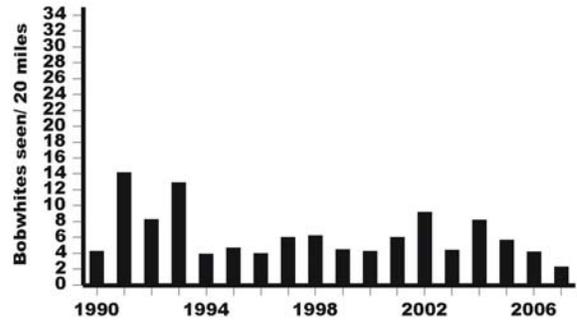
Statewide



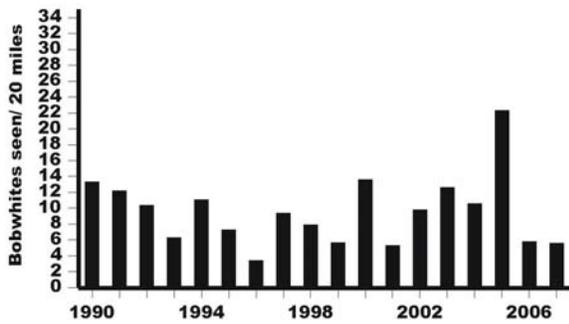
Regional boundaries for Oklahoma used for quail roadside surveys.



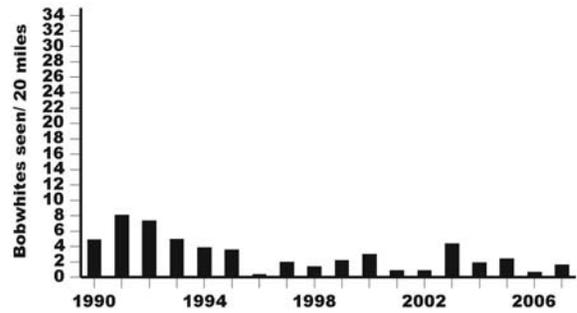
Southeast



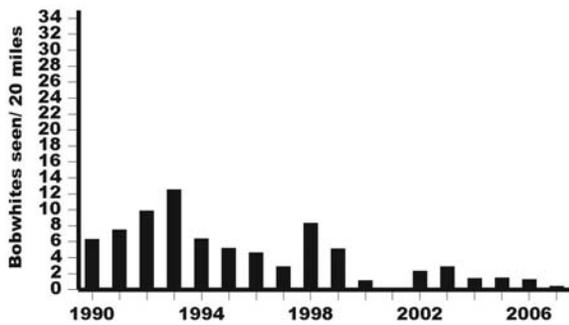
Northwest



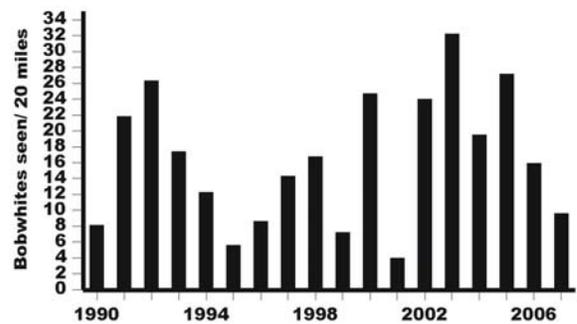
Southcentral



Northeast



Southwest



Northcentral

