



# August 2025 Quail Roadside Survey

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September - 2025

*Drought: Cancelled!*

*Roadside Counts Show Quail Holding Above 10-Year Average*

The Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation (ODWC) has conducted annual roadside surveys in August and October since 1990 to provide an index of annual population fluctuations. The number of quail observed are reported to provide an index of quail abundance and reproductive success. Currently, ODWC employees survey 81 routes in 75 of Oklahoma's 77 counties. Oklahoma and Tulsa counties, both comprised of almost exclusively urban landscapes, are excluded from the survey.

The state is divided into either geographic regions (Figure 1) or ecoregions (Figure 11) to compare the index year-to-year. By looking at both divisions we can get a more precise view of on-the-ground conditions in each county and can get a better glimpse into the area you may intend to hunt.

The 2025 August roadside quail survey shows statewide quail numbers holding strong, well above the 10-year average and near the long-term average! Specifically, the statewide quail index at 4.98 quail per route (q/r), only 1.6% below the 36-year average of 5.06q/r (Table 1 & Figure 2), and 40.7% above the 10-year average of 3.54q/r. While this figure is lower than the 2024 August Survey, it is still markedly higher than the figures from October of 2024. Age structure of observed quail shows 50% full grown, 42.6%  $\frac{3}{4}$  grown, 5.4%  $\frac{1}{2}$  grown, and 2%  $\frac{1}{4}$  grown birds. This age structure indicates successful early broods with additional nesting success throughout the summer. A cooler and wetter summer than average should allow for continued nesting success into October. ODWC biologists are currently monitoring fall weather patterns and are excited to see the numbers on the October Survey.

Additionally, ODWC biologists have received several reports of broods of varying ages throughout the summer. All regions of the state except the Northeast and Southcentral regions have remained above their respective 10-year and 36-year averages. (Figures 3-8). Oklahoma's climate over the past year has been driven by an ENSO-Neutral pattern, which has helped keep temperatures cooler and increased rainfalls – both of which have led to excellent habitat conditions across much of the state. Current climate models forecast a continuation of the more neutral weather pattern, transitioning into a more classic El Niño

pattern in early 2026. We are currently seeing drought effect about 15.4% of the state with only 1% in the D1 (Moderate Drought) category. Rainfall throughout the growing season has been fairly regular across much of the state, with some storm systems delivering several inches locally at a time, contributing to above-normal totals. Precipitation in the spring had on-the-ground conditions looking pretty good; in fact, June 3<sup>rd</sup>, Oklahoma was 100% drought free for the first time in nearly 6 years! Below, figures 9 & 10 show the drought and rainfall conditions across the state.

Over the last 180 days most of Oklahoma has seen above normal rainfall, with some areas receiving up to 180% of the average rainfall totals. The last 180-day period is recorded as the 4<sup>th</sup> wettest in Oklahoma's history! While the numbers this August may be slightly lower than last year's report, keep in mind that better habitat means better escape cover along roadsides which can contribute to fewer observations along survey routes. We can also look at roadside survey numbers on an ecoregion basis; Figure 11 shows the 9 major ecoregions of Oklahoma while Table 2 gives a comparison of 2024 and 2025 survey results by ecoregion.

One pair of scaled quail was observed during the 2025 August survey. There are only a few routes in Oklahoma with the opportunity to observe scaled quail. Therefore, this is not a prediction of scaled quail abundance, strictly an observation. ODWC has received several reports of scaled quail broods in the Oklahoma panhandle this summer, which is encouraging.

ODWC Biologists have received numerous brood reports throughout August. Over the past 35 years the August Roadside Surveys have shown us that they are not always the most reliable when it comes to forecasting the upcoming season. Stay tuned for the October roadside surveys and 2025 Season Outlook, which will provide a better indication of what the upcoming quail season could have in store.

Oklahoma's quail season is right around the corner opening on November 8<sup>th</sup> and closing on February 15<sup>th</sup>, 2026. The bag-limit remains 10 quail daily. Non-residents hunting wildlife management areas (WMAs) for quail will need to attain a Game Bird Permit as well as check-in and out of the WMA they access via the Go Outdoors Oklahoma App or at [GoOutdoorsOklahoma.com](https://GoOutdoorsOklahoma.com). For regulations and more information consult the Oklahoma Hunting and Fishing Guide online at: [wildlifedepartment.com/hunting/regs](https://wildlifedepartment.com/hunting/regs) or in print wherever hunting and fishing licenses are sold.

Figure 1. Oklahoma Roadside Survey Regions

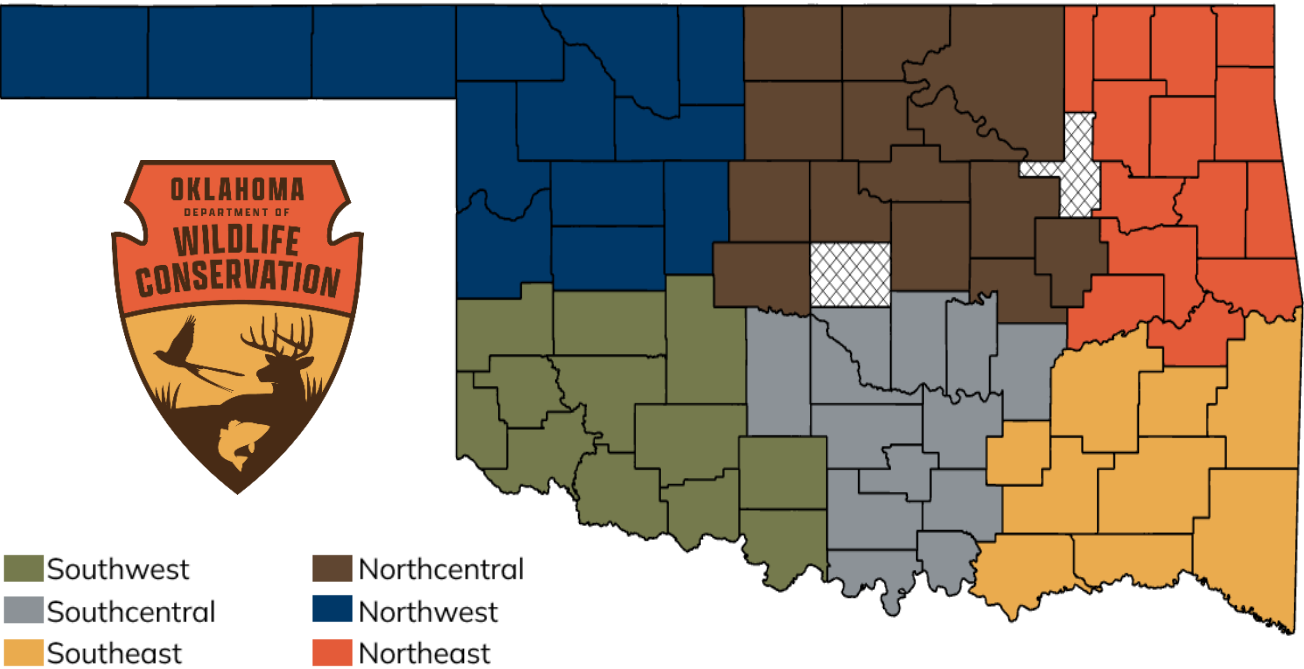


Table 1. Bobwhite quail observations/20-mile route by geographic region in Oklahoma.

Region	36-year Average	10-year Average	2023 Average	2024 Average	2025 Average
<b>Statewide</b>	<b>5.06</b>	<b>3.55</b>	<b>2.23</b>	<b>6.52</b>	<b>4.98</b>
Northwest	7.29	6.28	4.88	13.31	7.38
Northeast	2.76	1.49	3.5	4.71	0.29
Northcentral	3.21	3.01	1.07	4.13	4.93
Southwest	11.96	7.74	2.67	13.42	12.38
Southeast	3.57	1.73	0.45	0.18	4.63
Southcentral	1.77	0.24	0.08	1.85	0

Figure 2. Long-term average of bobwhite observations in Oklahoma

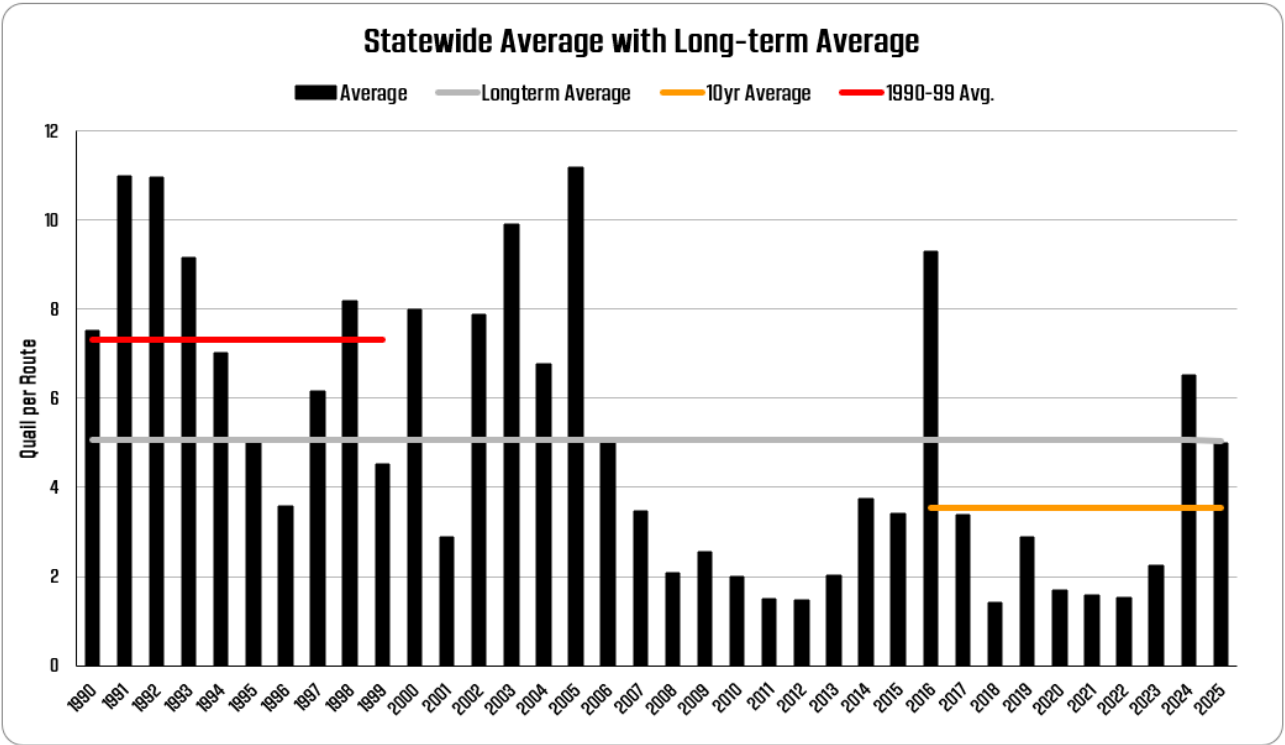


Figure 3. Long-term average of bobwhite observations in northwest Oklahoma.

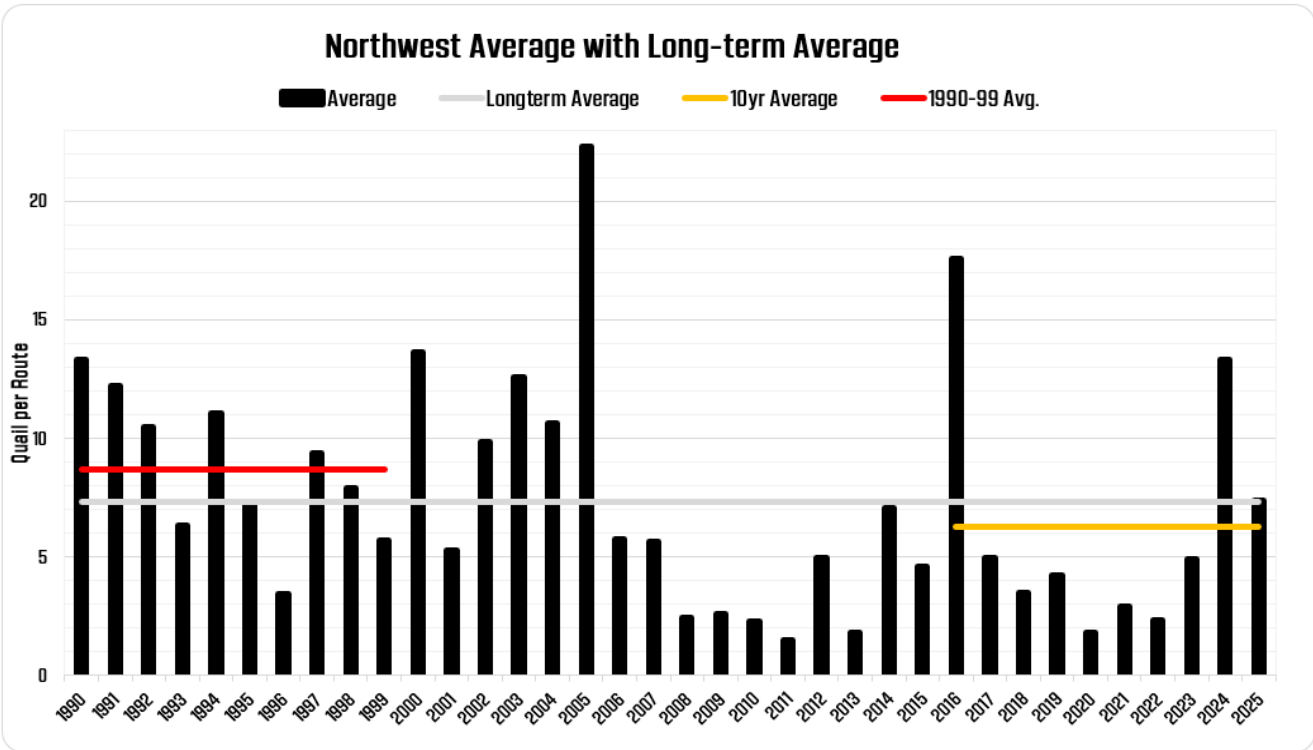


Figure 4. Long-term average of bobwhite observations in northeast Oklahoma.

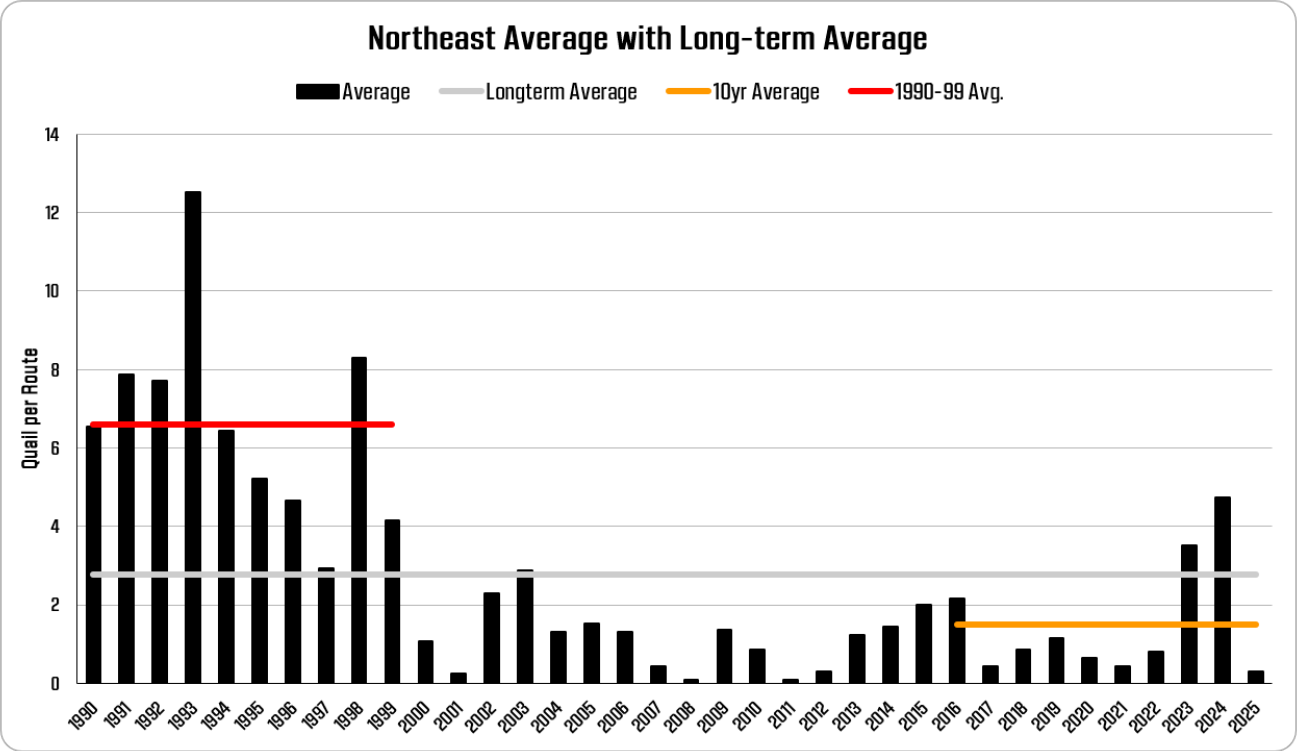


Figure 5. Long-term average of bobwhite observations in northcentral Oklahoma.

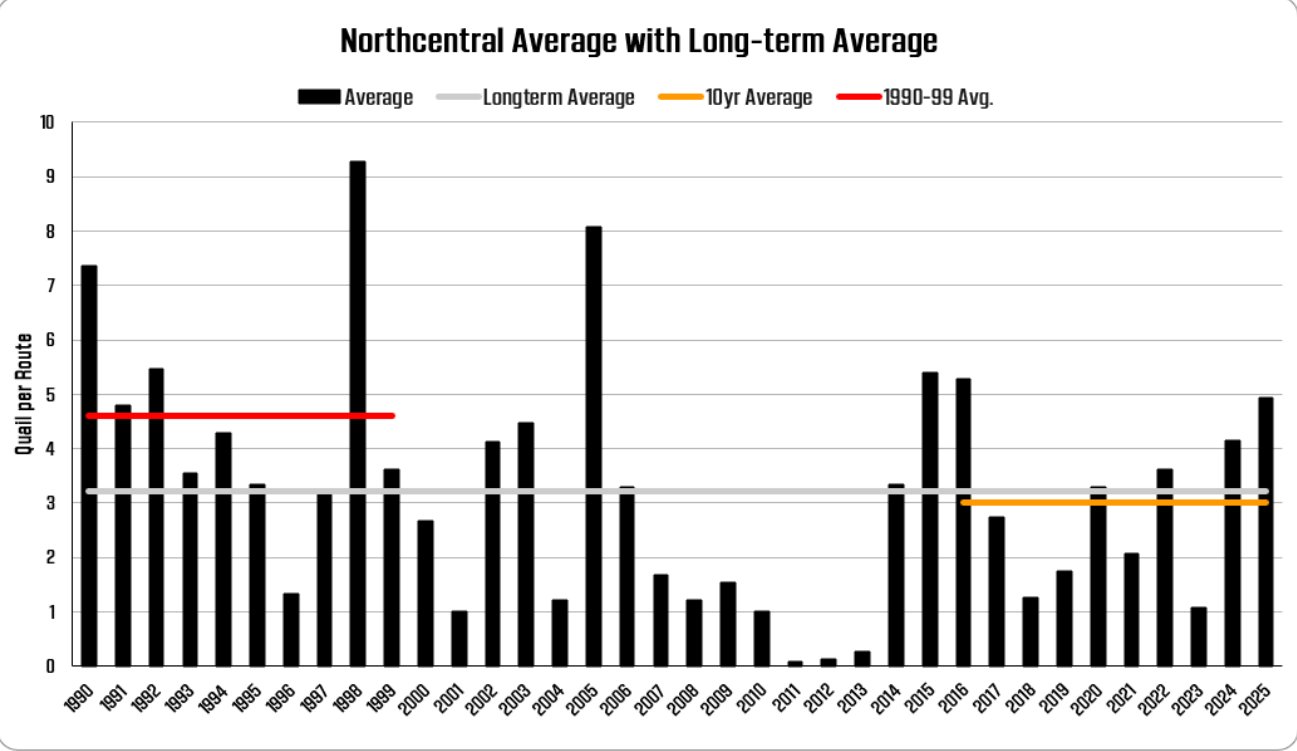


Figure 6. Long-term average of bobwhite observations in southwest Oklahoma.

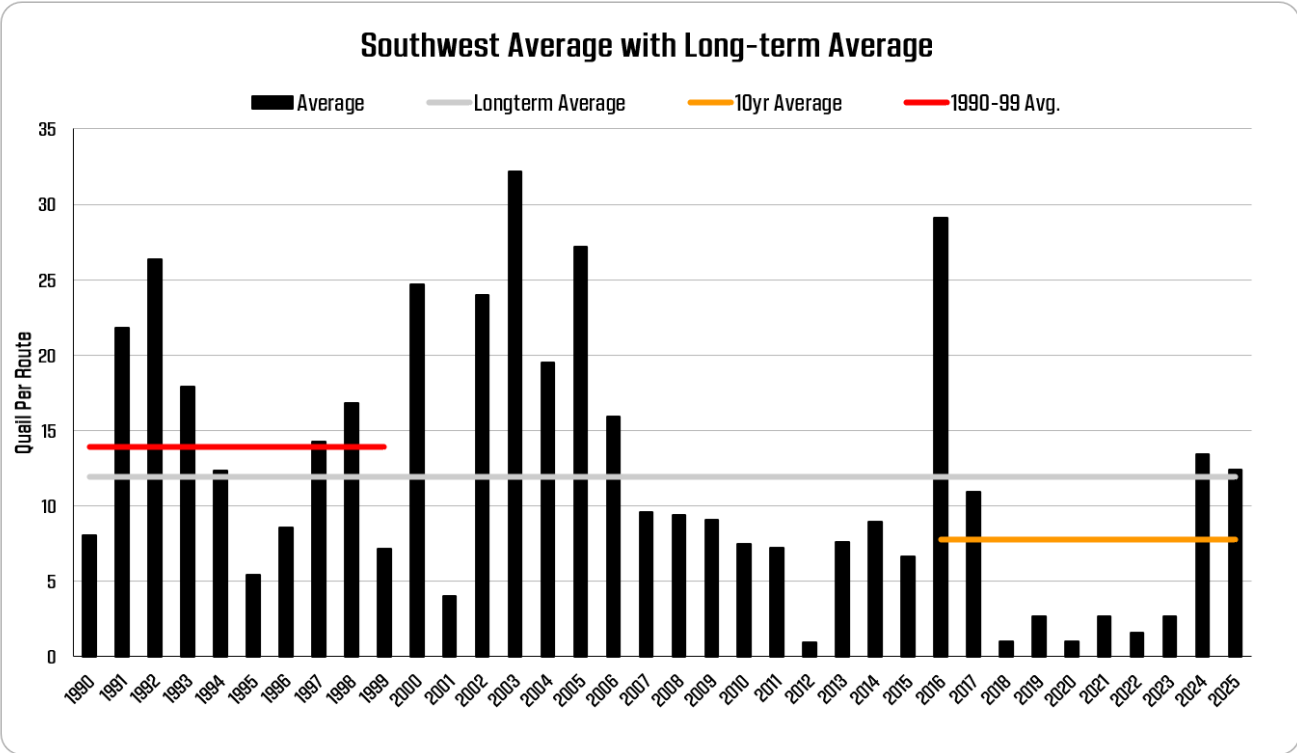


Figure 7. Long-term average of bobwhite observations in southeast Oklahoma.

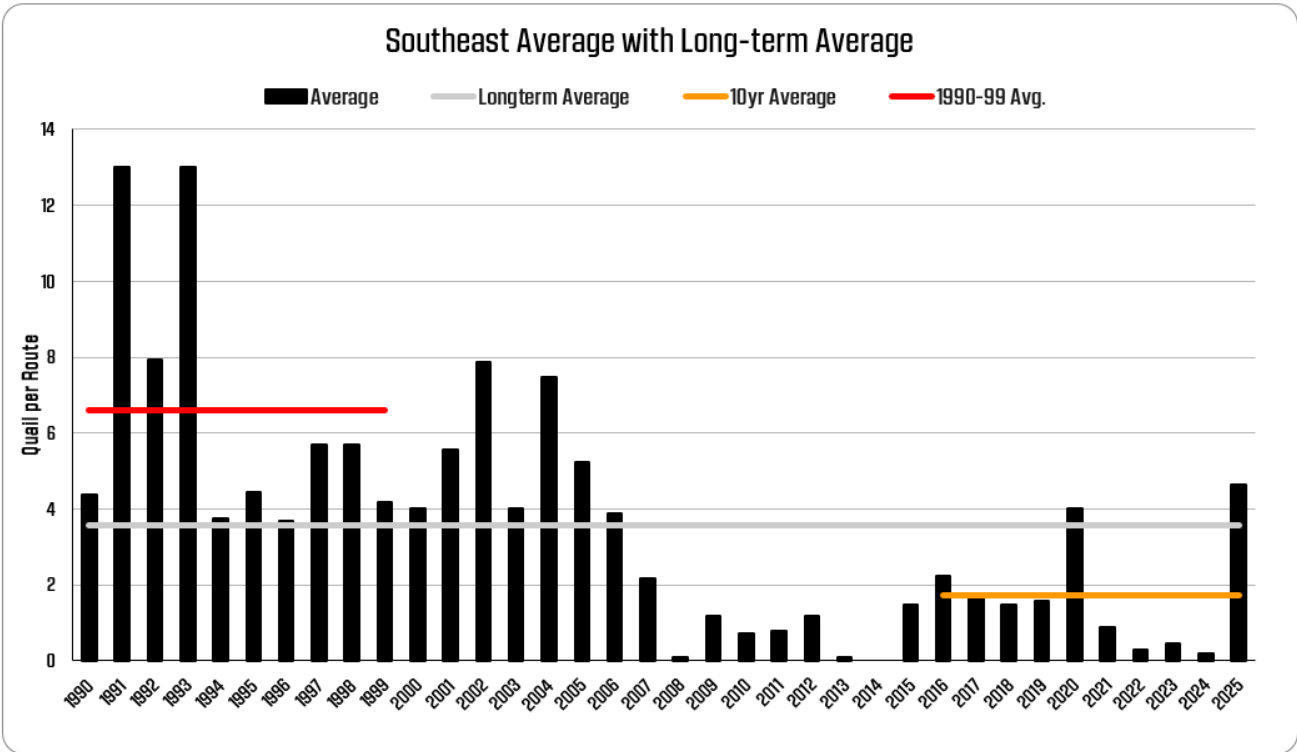


Figure 8. Long-term average of bobwhite observations in southcentral Oklahoma.

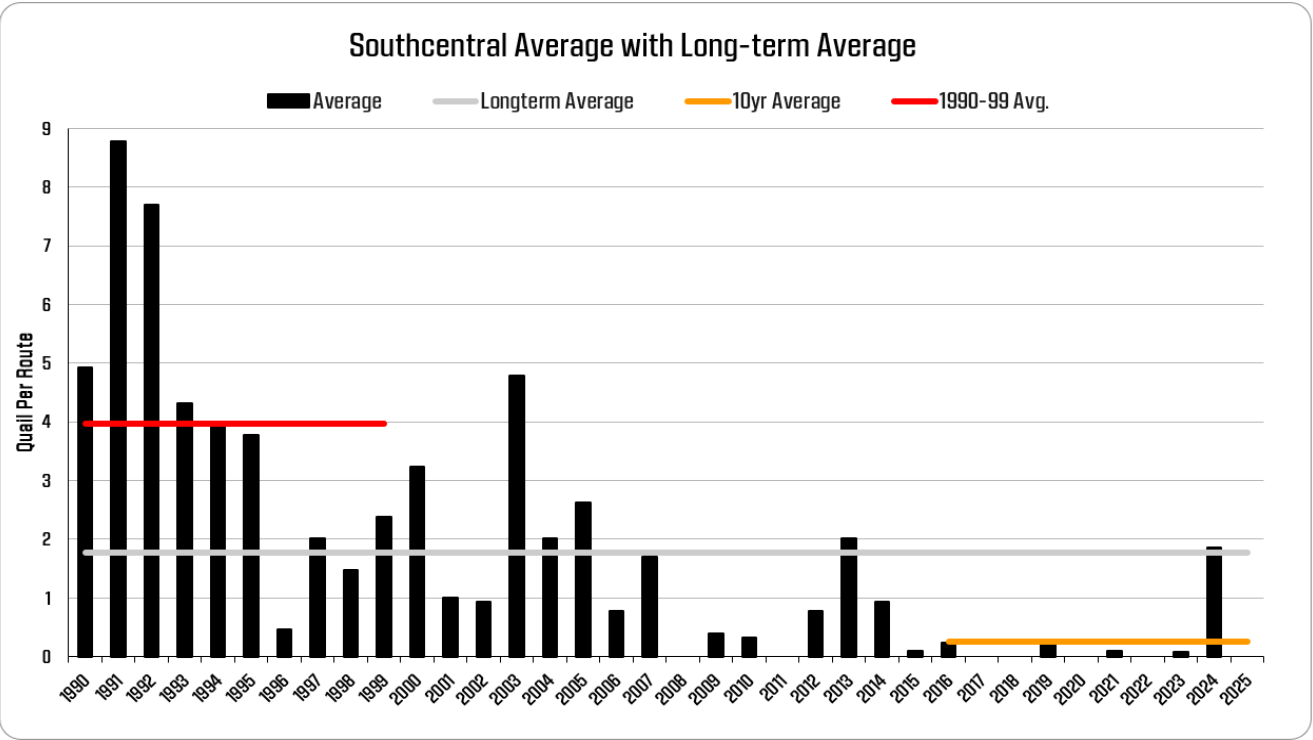


Figure 9. Drought Comparison from March 18<sup>th</sup>, 2025, to August 28<sup>th</sup>, 2025 (Source: [droughtmonitor.unl.edu/](http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/))

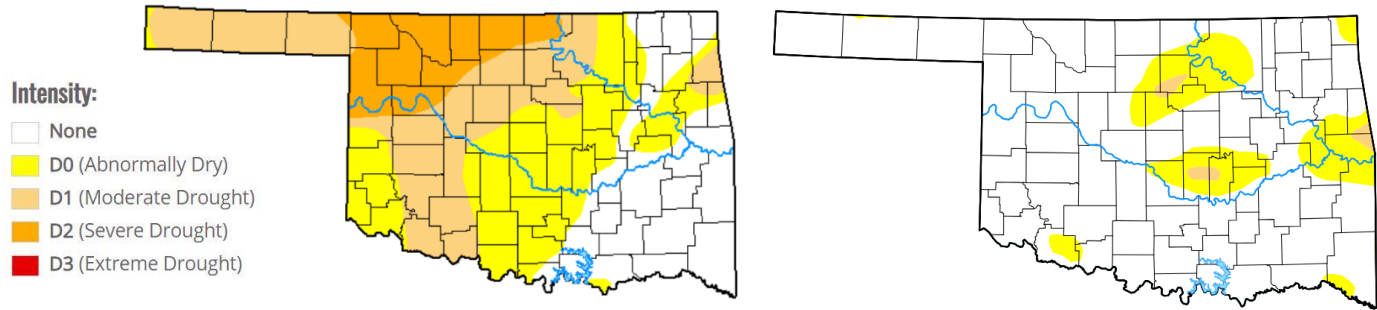


Figure 10. Departure from normal rainfall in inches: March 6 – Sept. 2, 2025 (Source: mesonet.org)

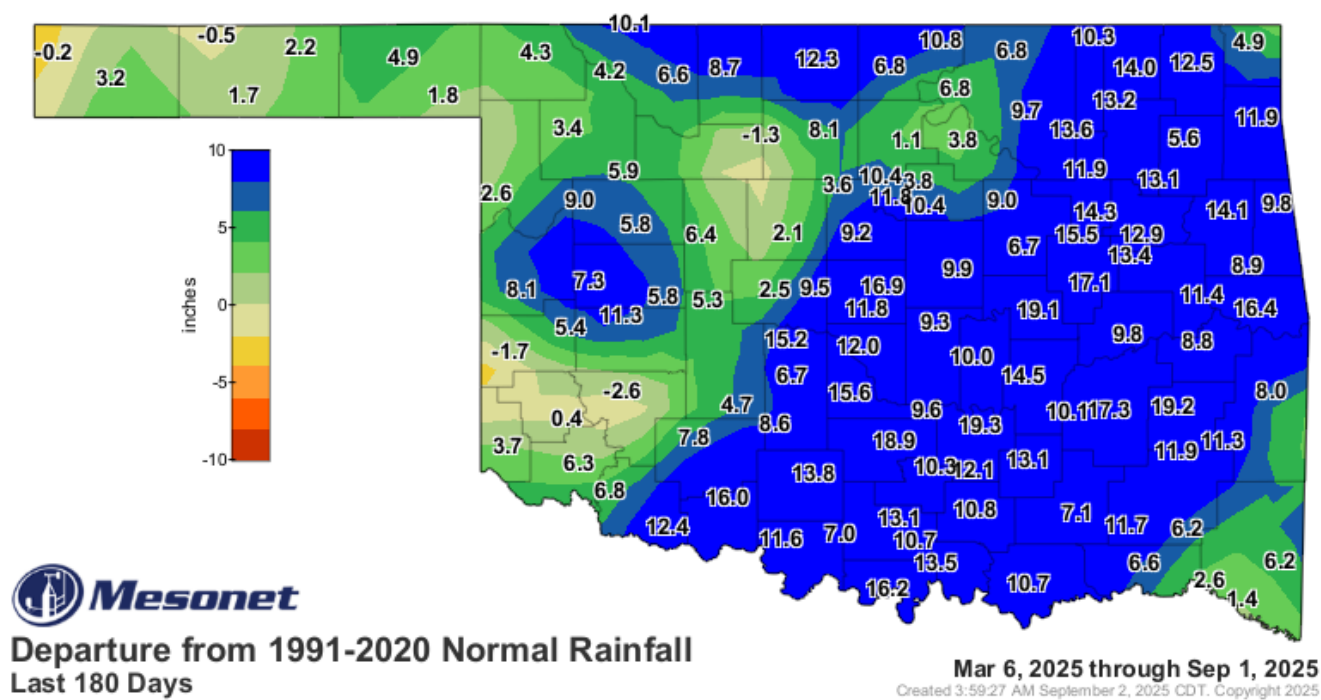


Figure 11. Ecoregions of Oklahoma

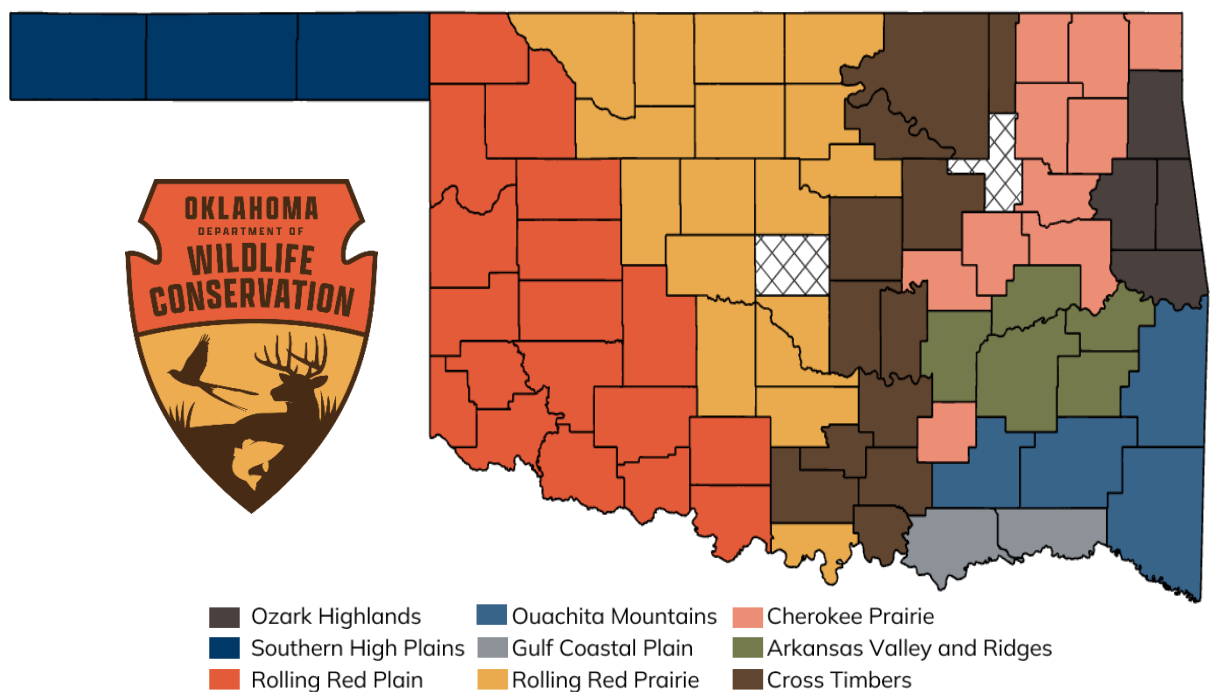




Table 2. Bobwhite quail numbers/20-mile route in the 9 geographic ecoregions of Oklahoma

Ecoregion	August		
	2024	2025	
Arkansas Valley & Ridges	3.83	0.83	↓
Cherokee Prairie	4.4	0.2	↓
Cross Timbers	0.85	1.08	↑
Ozark Highlands	0	0.5	↑
Gulf Coastal Plain	0	5	↑
Ouachita Mountains	0.4	7.2	↑
Rolling Red Prairie	6.06	4.71	↓
Rolling Red Plain	14.8	10.62	↓
Southern High Plain	12.25	9	↓
<b>Statewide</b>	<b>6.52</b>	<b>4.98</b>	↓