

20024 August Quail Roadside Survey Summary

One of the state's most popular game bird species, the bobwhite quail, appears to be in good shape going into this fall. August roadside surveys conducted by the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation show a statewide increase of 14 percent over the 12 year average.

Running Nov. 9 - Feb.15, quail season is one of the most popular events in the state, drawing hunters from all over the nation to enjoy some of America's finest bird hunting. Oklahoma regularly ranks among the top three quail hunting states in terms of both quail populations and hunter success, and Oklahoma promises to be a major destination for bird hunters again this year.

Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation biologists have conducted the roadside surveys during both August and October for the past 13 years. The surveys, which consist of 20-mile routes, give biologists an estimate of quail abundance. Observers count the number of quail seen to provide an index of quail abundance and reproductive success. There are 83 routes with at least one route in every county except for Tulsa and Oklahoma counties.

"The surveys don't necessarily predict what quail season is going to be like, but they do give us an idea of how productive the spring breeding season was for quail," said Mike Sams, upland bird biologist for the Department. "The mild temperatures and periodic rains experienced this summer are conducive to late season production. Since a successful second hatch often determines the difference between an average and good quail season, the October counts should provide important information about this fall's quail population."

The August surveys showed increases in quail over last year in every region with the exception of the southcentral Oklahoma. The largest increases were observed in the southwest and southeast surveys which increased 73 and 53 percent respectively from 2001. Quail sighted in the southwestern, southeastern, and northwestern regions exceeded the previous 12 year averages. The southcentral and northeastern regional survey numbers remain well below their 12 year averages.

The surveys suggest early production was good, despite drought conditions over portions of the state prior to the reproductive season. Results of the August survey generally don't include quail produced from the second hatch which occurs in late August. But according to Sams a few landowners have reported seeing young broods in late August.

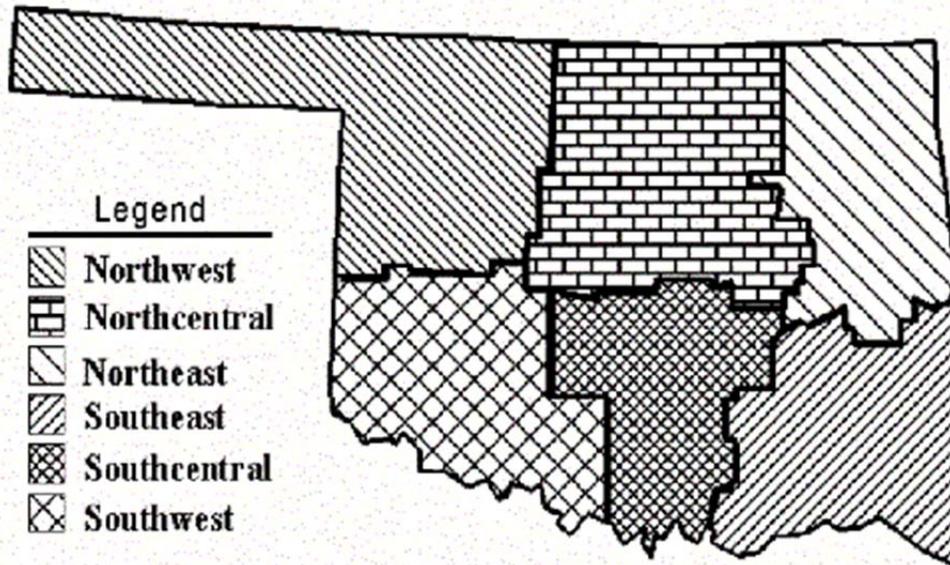


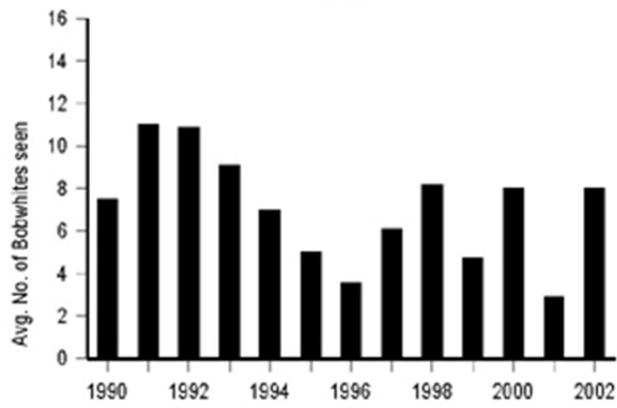
Figure 1. Regional boundaries for Oklahoma used for quail roadside survey.

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

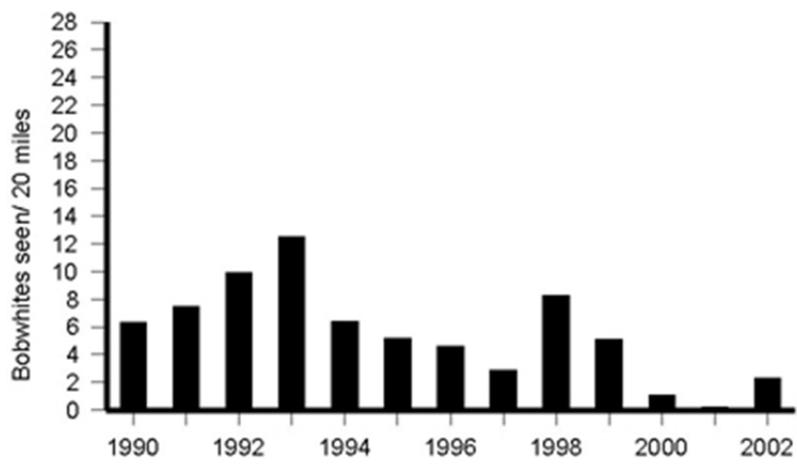
Region	Previous 12 yr. average	2001	2002
Statewide	7.0	2.9	8.0
Northwest	8.8	5.3	9.8
Northcentral	4.2	1.0	4.1
Northeast	5.8	0.2	2.3
southwest	13.9	4.0	24.0
Southcentral	3.6	0.9	0.9
Southeast	6.6	6.0	9.2

2002 August Quail Roadside Survey
 Click on image to enlarge

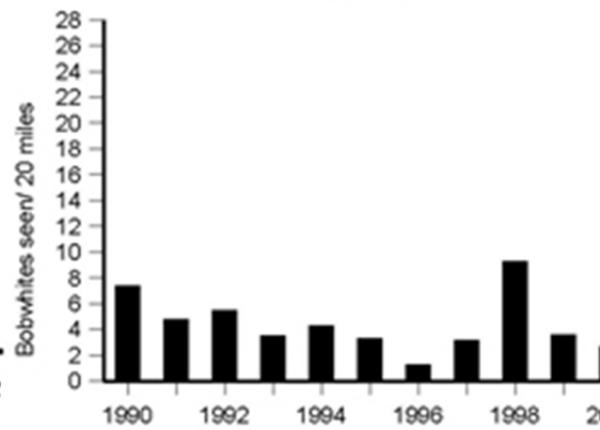
Statewide



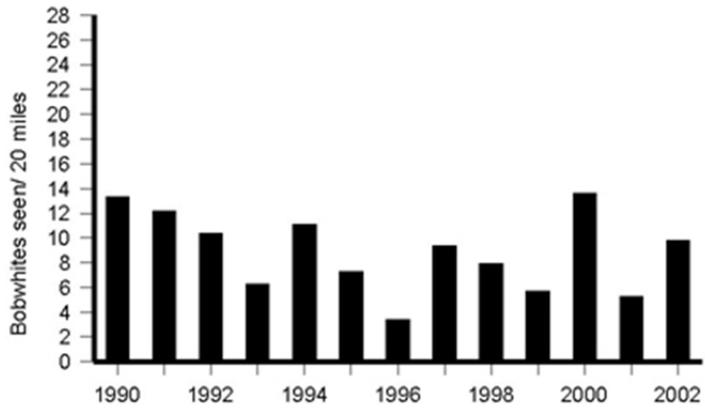
Northeast



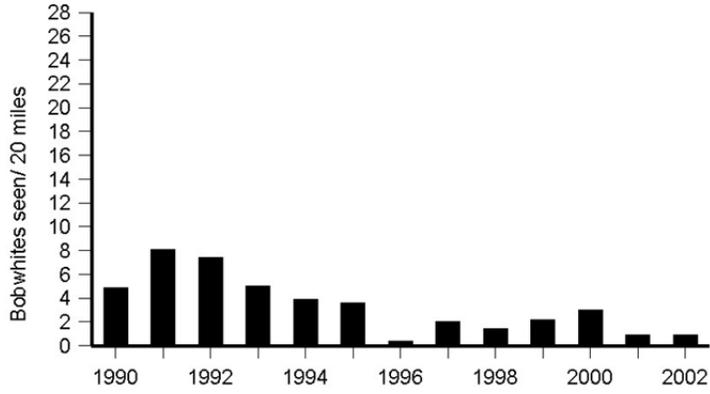
Northcentral



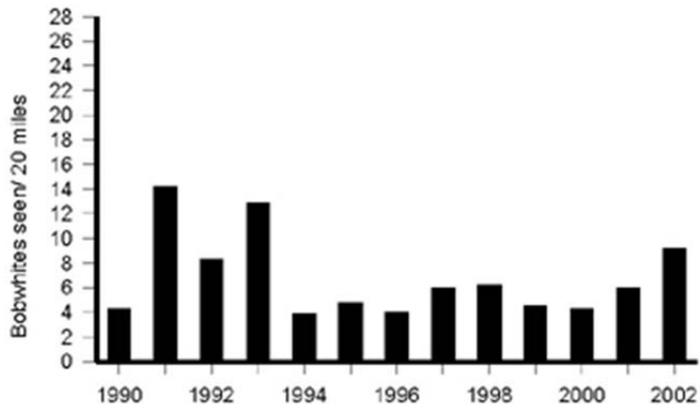
Northwest



Southcentral



Southeast



Southwest

