

2005 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 16th year of the survey and the statewide quail index is up 53% from the previous 15-year average (Table 1). Only the southeast region reported decreases in quail over last year. The statewide index is up 72% over the 2004 August survey. The largest increases were observed in the north-central, northwest and southwest regions. Quail sightings in the northwestern, southwest and north-central exceeded their previous 15-year averages (Figure 1). Conversely, the south-central, southeast and northeastern regional indices remain well below their 15-year averages.

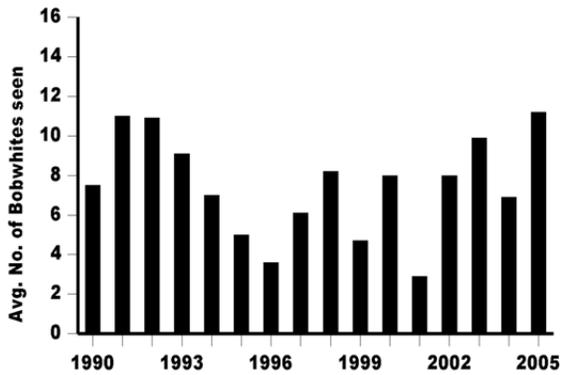
Table 1. Quail seen/20 mile route during the August roadside surveys.

Region	Previous 15-year average	2004	2005
Statewide	7.3	6.9	11.2
Northwest	9.3	10.6	22.3
North-central	4.0	1.2	8.1
Northeast	5.1	1.4	1.5
Southwest	16.2	19.5	27.2

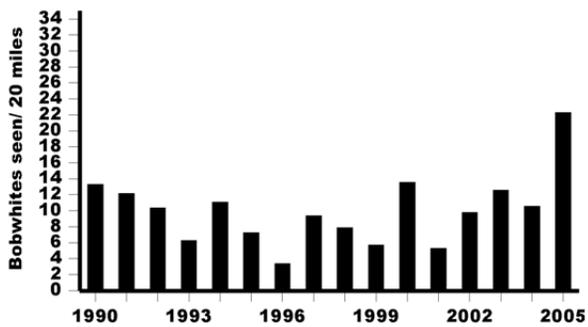
South-central	3.4	1.9	2.4
Southeast	6.7	8.2	5.7

August survey results suggest the 2005 quail hunting season will be a good one. Despite periods of drought this spring and mid summer, rains and mild temperatures have been timely and early reproductive efforts appear largely successful. The number of broods observed during the survey increased from 44 in 2004 to 73 in 2005. Of the birds observed during the survey 77% were either full or $\frac{3}{4}$ grown. Results of the August survey generally don't include quail produced from late nesting attempts, which typically peaks in late August. Temperatures and periodic rains experienced during the summer often dictate reproductive effort. It is unknown if the rains and mild temperatures experienced in early August will aid in extending the reproductive effort. Since late nesting attempts often determines the difference between an average and good quail season the October counts should provide important information about this falls quail population.

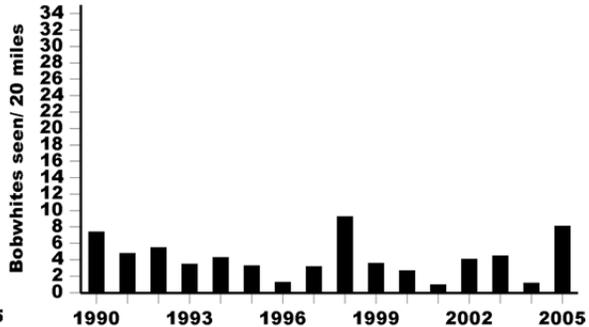
Statewide



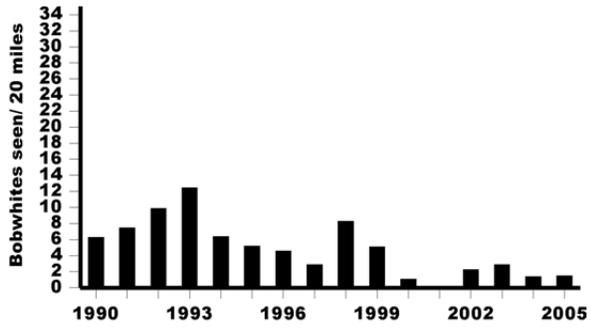
Northwest



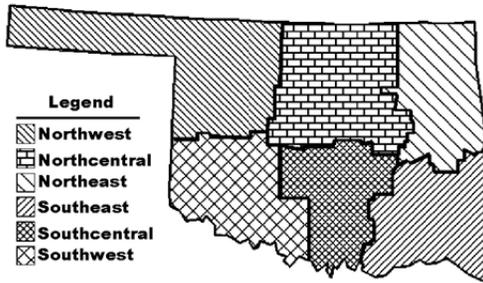
Northcentral



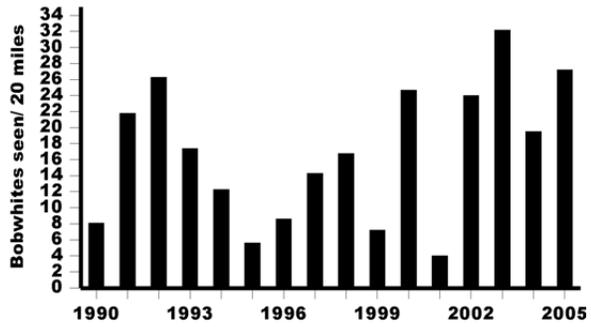
Northeast



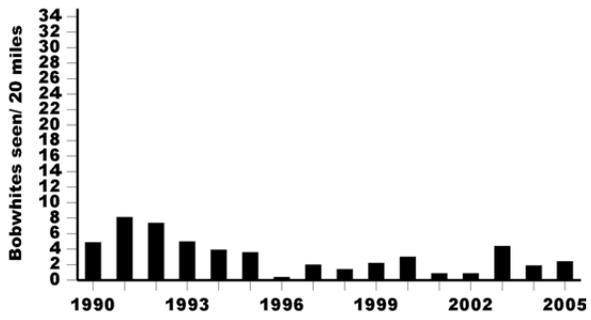
Regional boundaries for Oklahoma used for quail roadside surveys.



Southwest



Southcentral



Southeast

