

2006 Quail Season Outlook

By

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Oklahoma Department of Wildlife were expecting a good number of adult birds going into the nesting season, however weather plays a big role in how successful the nesting season is going to be. The heat and dry conditions associated with drought have been known to affect quail production by shortening the reproductive period, egg spoilage and reducing survival of chicks and adults.

This is the 17th year of roadside surveys and the statewide quail index is down 40% from the previous 16-year average (Table 1). The decrease is reflected in all regions with the exception of the North-Central region reporting a slight increase of 8% over the 16-year average.

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

Region	Previous 16-yr. average	2005	2006
Statewide	7.2	9.5	4.3
Northwest	10.9	18.2	3.2
North-central	3.6	4.5	3.9
Northeast	4.3	1.7	1.6
Southwest	15.0	20.2	11.3
South-central	3.0	2.0	0.6
Southeast	7.1	7.9	6.5

The 2006 statewide index decreased 55% from 2005. All regional indices were lower than the 2005 totals (Figure 1). The Northwest region was the hardest hit declining 83% from 2005. The index of 3.2 is the lowest recorded for the Northwest region.

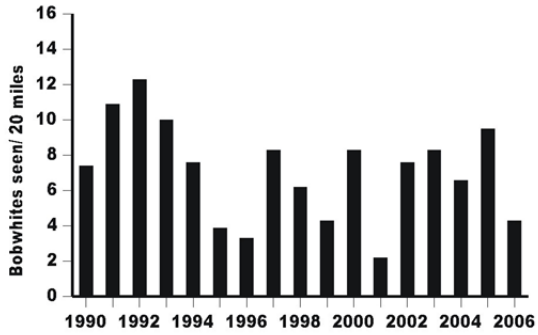
Periods of drought conditions over the past year have undoubtedly affected quail production. Early season production suffered as evidenced by a 33% decrease in the statewide August surveys.

The October survey indicates the late summer rains did not significantly affect late season production as hoped. Only 16% of the birds encountered were not fully grown as compared to 31% of the previous two years.

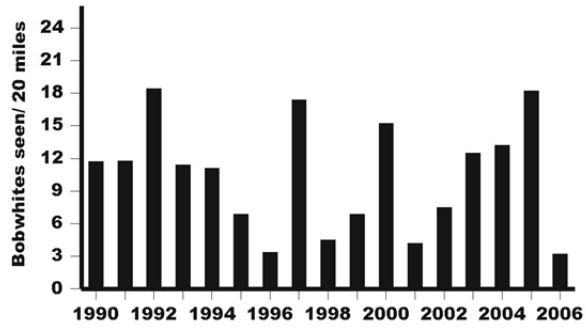
Due to the inherent biases associated with the roadside survey, results are not meant to be predictive. Both biologist and sportsmen have reported seeing quail in some areas that are down, but a smaller number than the previous two years.

So hope for good weather, get out there and hunt to see just how good the quail population is going to be this year.

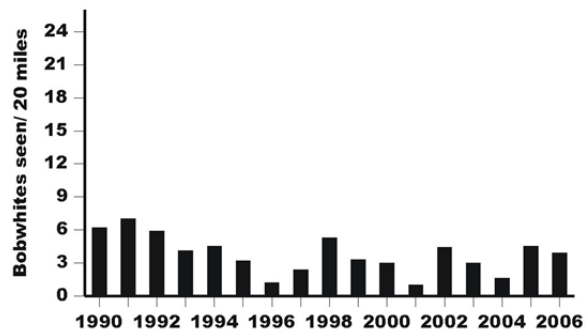
Statewide



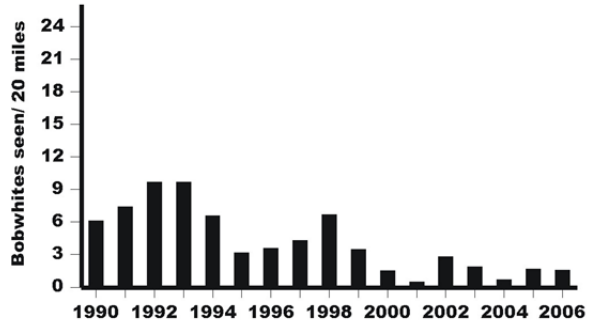
Northwest



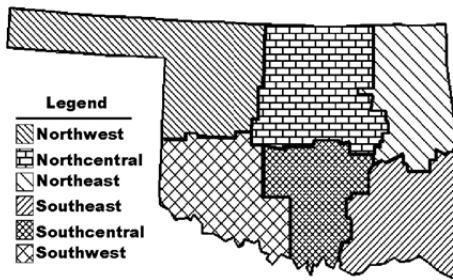
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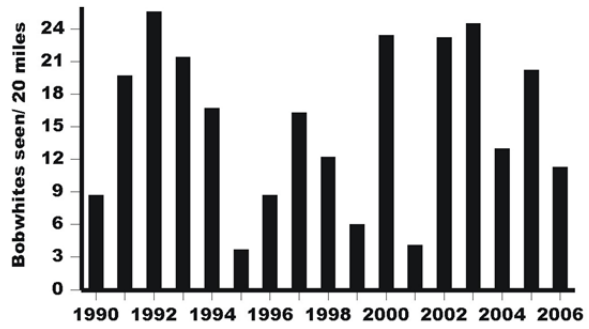
Northeast



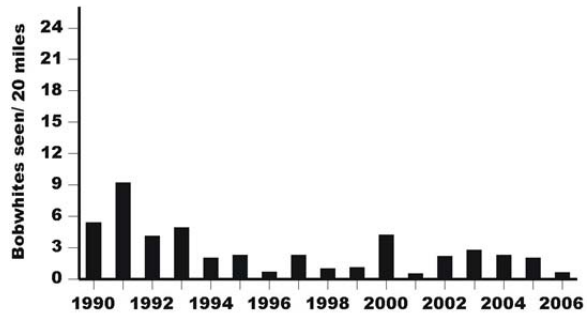
Regional boundaries for Oklahoma used for quail roadside surveys.



Southwest



Southcentral



Southeast

