

# 2008 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 have two routes. The survey provides an index of annual population fluctuations. Observers count the number of quail seen to provide an index of quail abundance (number seen/20 mile route) and reproductive success.

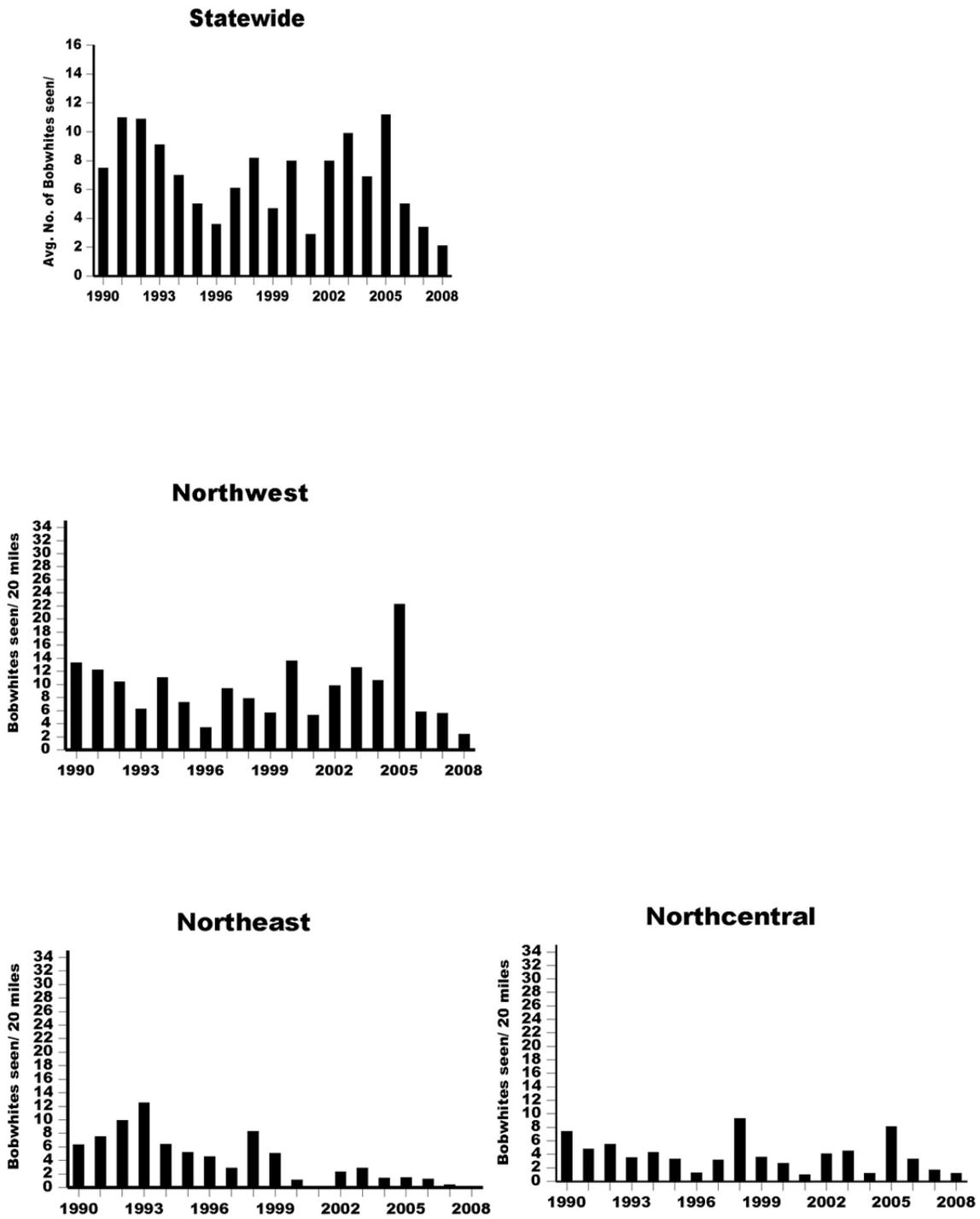
This is the 19<sup>th</sup> year of the survey and the statewide quail index is down 70% from the previous 18-year average (Table 1). The statewide index is down 38% from the 2007 August survey, but the southwest region index decreased 2%. The largest decreases were observed in the southeast and south central regional indices. Quail numbers in the northwest, north central and southwest (Figure 1) were the closest to the 18-year average. The number of broods observed during the August survey decreased from 26 in 2007 to 13 in 2008. Of the broods observed during the August survey 95% were either full or  $\frac{3}{4}$  grown.

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

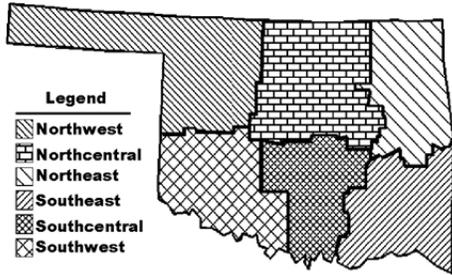
Region	Previous 18-yr. average	2007	2008
Statewide	7.2	3.4	2.1
Northwest	9.6	5.6	2.4
North Central	4.2	1.7	1.2
Northeast	4.5	0.4	0.1
Southwest	16.4	9.6	9.4
South Central	3.1	1.6	0
Southeast	6.3	2.3	0.1

The drought in 2006 and record amounts of rainfall in 2007 resulted in low quail reproductive success in most areas of the state. In 2008, the weather has been favorable in most areas, except in the panhandle, which has been in a drought for most of the summer. The panhandle however, has recently received rain, which should improve chances for a late hatch. With carryover of good cover from 2007 rainfall, and normal to above-normal amounts of rain received in 2008, survey results were expected to reflect an increased population. However, abundant cover during the August survey period may have contributed to difficulty in observing adult quail and broods. Abundant insects and weeds that are important for quail and brood survival were apparent during the August roadside survey period. The likelihood for late hatch broods remains good with recent reports from the field being positive. October surveys will hopefully account for late nesting attempts and show an increase in the population and provide some clarity about the fall quail population and season outlook.

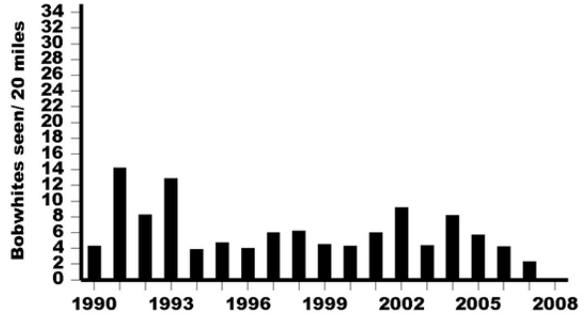
Figure 1



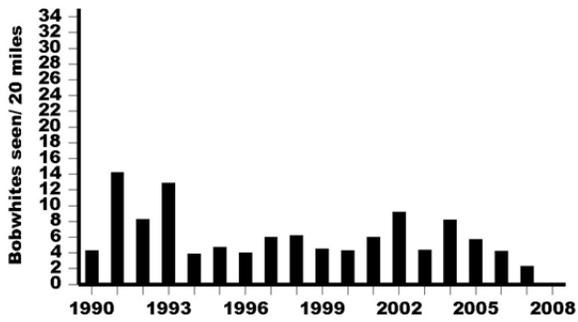
Regional boundaries for Oklahoma used for quail roadside surveys.



### Southeast



### Southeast



### Southwest

