

2012 August Roadside Quail Survey Summary

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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. The survey provides an index of annual population fluctuations. Observers report the number of quail seen, to provide an index of quail abundance (number seen/20 mile route) and reproductive success. Currently, Department employees run 83, 20-mile routes in all counties except Oklahoma and Tulsa. Larger counties like Beaver, Ellis, Le Flore, McCurtain, Osage, Pittsburg, Pushmataha, and Roger Mills, have two routes.

The results of the 2012 August roadside quail survey show that the statewide quail index is down 78 percent from the 22 year average, which is an all time low (Table 1). The statewide index is down 7% from the 2011 August survey, however the number of quail observed in Northwest, Northeast, South central, and Southeast were all up from the 2011 survey and North central region remained the same. The Southwest region was the only region to see a decline compared to 2011 numbers, going from 7.3 to 0.8 (Figure 1). The number of broods observed during the August survey decreased from 14 in 2011 to 11 in 2012. Of the broods observed during the August survey, nearly 100% were either full or $\frac{3}{4}$ grown compared to 64% during last year's survey.

Weather is a critical factor in determining the productivity of quail and other ground nesting birds. For the most part, Oklahoma had favorable weather during the winter and early spring that provided improved nesting cover and better insect availability when compared to 2011. It appears there was habitat provided for a favorable first nesting attempt since all the quail observed were either $\frac{3}{4}$ or full grown. With the increase in vegetation from early moisture also increases cover along the roads which can restrict the visibility of quail during the survey period.

The weather during later nesting attempts turned hot and dry similar to the 2011 nesting season. These weather patterns are known to negatively affect quail production by shortening the reproductive period, inhibiting nest initiation and egg laying. The October roadside quail survey will provide important information in determining any second or third nesting attempts and additional clarity about this fall's population and season outlook.

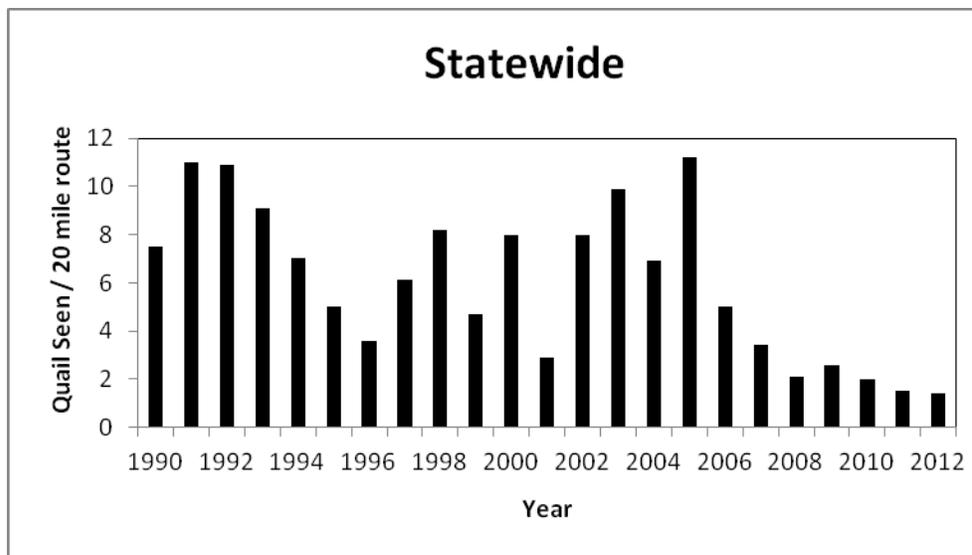
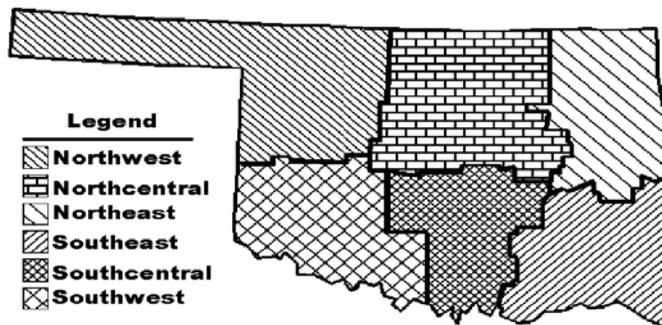
The Quail Season Outlook is posted on www.wildlifedepartment.com during the last week of October.

Table 1. Quail seen per 20 mile route during the August 2012 roadside surveys

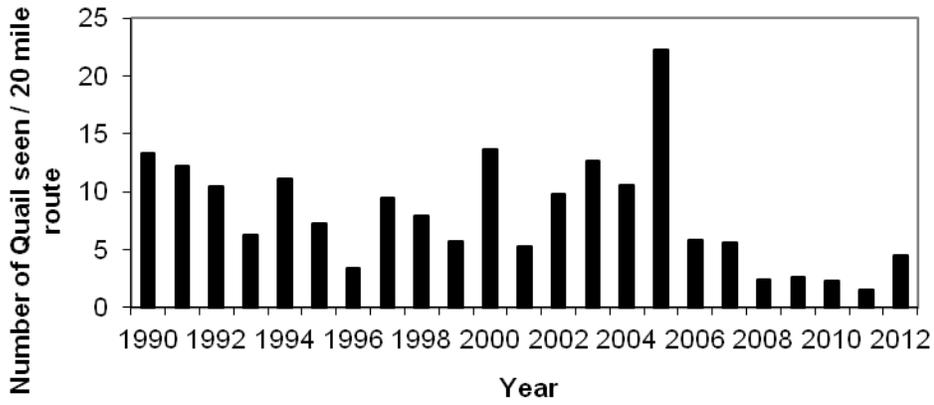
Region	Previous 22-yr. Average	2011	2012
Statewide	6.4	1.5	1.4
Northwest	8.5	1.5	4.5
North Central	3.7	0.1	0.1
Northeast	4.0	0.1	0.3
Southwest	14.9	7.3	0.8
South Central	2.7	0	0.7
Southeast	5.5	0.8	1.3

Figure 1

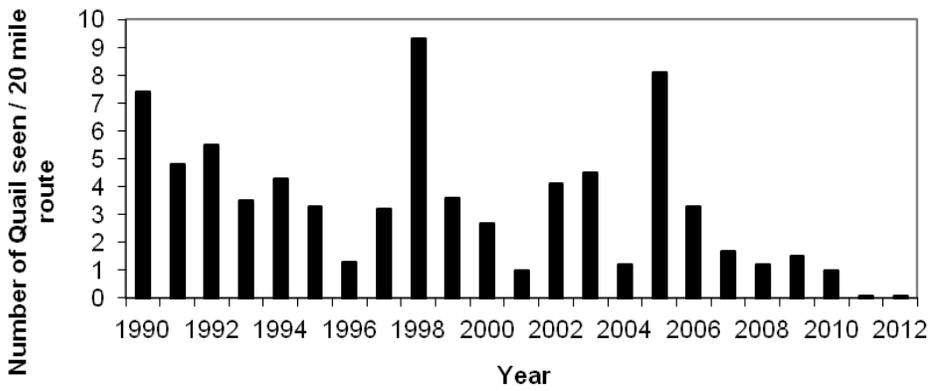
Regional boundaries for Oklahoma used for quail roadside surveys.



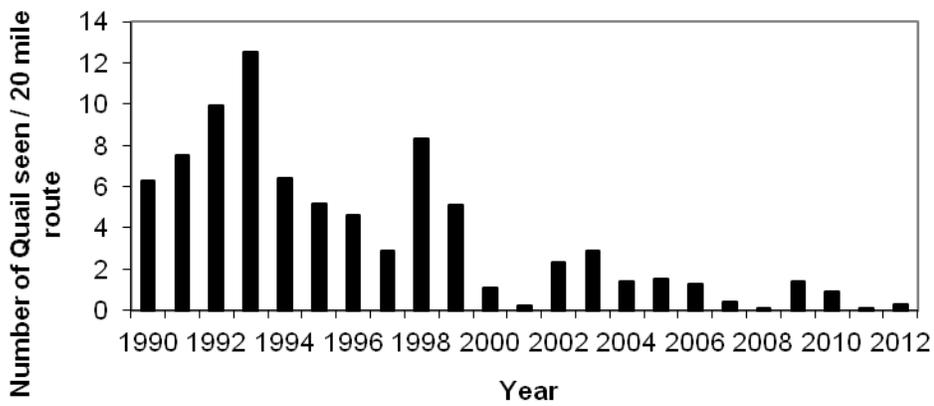
Northwest



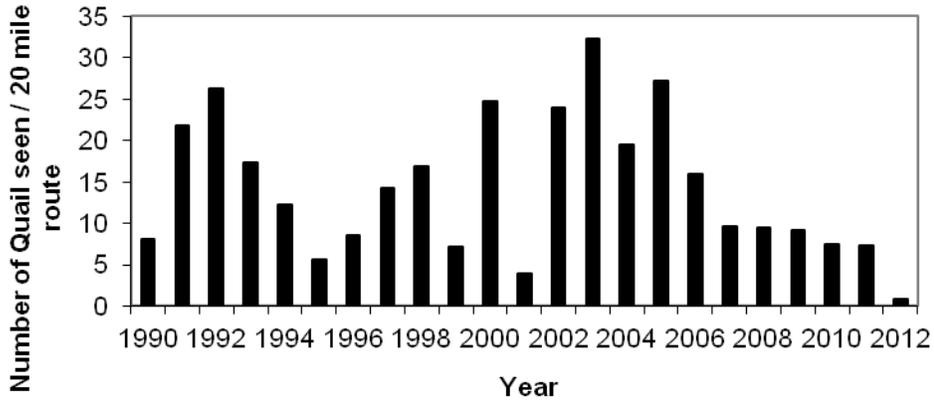
North Central



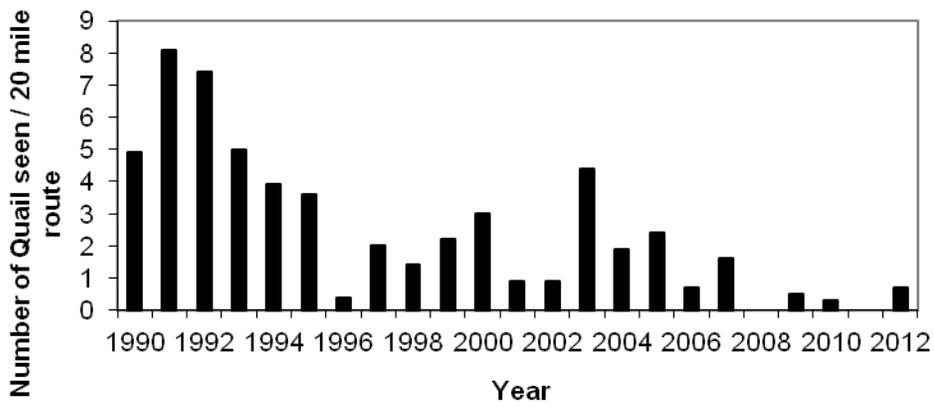
Northeast



Southwest



South Central



Southeast

