

## **Baker County**

Upland game bird hunters should see a better than average year in Baker County. Favorable spring conditions and good numbers of birds last year has led to good chick production this year. Chicks were of good size, and broods were generally large. Hunters that hunted last season in Baker County should see a very similar season this year. A&H properties offer good upland hunting and access to public land.

## **Grant County**

Turkey and chukar provide the best opportunities for upland hunters this season, with turkeys widely distributed throughout Grant County. During the winter months, turkeys often congregate in large numbers in the John Day Valley, Ritter area, and Monument. However, many of these birds are found on private land, so hunters must obtain permission before hunting. Turkey season in Grant County opens September 1, giving hunters a chance to harvest turkeys on public lands before the birds migrate to private property.

Grant County also offers a Beardless Turkey Permit, which allows hunters to harvest up to three hens or beardless turkeys per day. Each hunter may purchase up to three permits per season. This permit is valid only on private lands, so be sure to secure landowner permission before hunting. The permit runs Oct. 1- Feb. 28.

The Philip W. Schneider Wildlife Area is open to the public and provides good bird hunting opportunities. Quail—both California and mountain—can be found in brushy and riparian areas across the county, though hunters will need to work to flush them from cover.

Grouse are distributed throughout the national forest. Blue grouse are typically found on ridge tops, such as Strawberry Mountain or Vinegar Hill, while ruffed grouse are more common along brushy creek bottoms, such as Murderers Creek or Camp Creek.

Overall, bird numbers appear to be at or slightly below the 10-year average.

## **Umatilla County**

Most upland hunting is on private land, so be sure to ask permission prior to hunting. Hunters looking for public land can access the Columbia Basin Wildlife Areas, including Power City, Irrigon, Coyote Springs and Willow Creek. We are seeing good numbers of quail at Irrigon and Coyote Springs.

Cold Springs National Wildlife Refuge is also an option for upland hunting. Use the following link: <https://www.fws.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2025-04/cold-springs.pdf> for refuge regulations. Hunters can also access the Umatilla Indian Reservation to hunt upland birds. Follow this link for information on hunting the reservation.

Summer brood surveys indicate that pheasant, chukar, and quail populations all had decent production this year. Brood route counts for chukar were very good, up 77% from the ten-year average. Pheasants fared well over the last year, only down 8% of the ten-year average. Quail have declined since the two great years in 2023 and 2024. They were down 18 percent from the ten-year average.

## **Union County**

The best hunting opportunities are for pheasant on the Ladd Marsh Wildlife Area and forest grouse on national forests. Hunters should work ridge tops above 5,000 feet for blue grouse and stream corridors with heavy cover and water for ruffed grouse.

## **Ladd Marsh Wildlife Area**

Open Wednesday, Saturday, Sunday and federal holidays Aug. 1 through Jan. 31.

Pheasant: Pheasant production is about average this year. The early warm spring helped with chick production, but insect production seems to be down. We are seeing a few broods, and the chicks are good size but overall numbers seem to be average.

Quail: This summer saw several broods at varying ages. Birds are scattered across the area. Covey size seems strong with groups spending most of their time in brush rows. With pressure the birds will retreat to the edges of safety zones but for now they are spread across the entire area.

Hunters can find upland game birds throughout Ladd Marsh providing ample hunting opportunity for all. Grassland, fencerows, brush and areas adjacent to agricultural fields are good locations--but don't overlook dry and receding wetlands. The wetland habitat provides more opportunities for pheasants than all the other areas combined.

All visitors, including hunters, must have in their possession a free daily permit to access the wildlife area. Permits will be available at several self-check-in stations at entry points and parking lots. All visitors are required to have an ODFW Wildlife Area Parking Permit to park in the wildlife area. Hunters receive a free parking permit with their hunting license. Parking permits are to be displayed on the vehicle dash. Learn more about ODFW's Wildlife Area Parking Permit Program.

Please call the Ladd Marsh Wildlife Area with any questions (541) 963-4954.

## **Wallowa County**

Fairly mild winter and spring conditions were likely good for production. Summer brood surveys suggest production for most upland birds was up from the 10-year average.

Blue and ruffed grouse should provide good hunting opportunities this fall, especially in more heavily forested areas throughout Wallowa County.

Forest grouse hunters should be aware that there are restrictions on Manulife forestlands during fire season, please call the Manulife Information Line at (541) 962-2184 for updated closures and restrictions.

Chukar remain abundant in more arid areas, specifically in patches of cheatgrass above the Imnaha River and on vegetated slopes along the Wenaha and Grande Ronde rivers.

Surveys also suggest an increase in California quail, especially in the Wallowa valley.