

Klamath and Lake Counties

In Klamath and Lake counties, last year's banner winter helped remove the counties from drought, and an average year across much of the area continued those favorable conditions. A dry and hot late spring/early summer removed some of the available surface water, but overall, the counties are in good shape. A lack of spring and early summer rains did curtail early brood size, but second nesting efforts have been noted. Expectations are for another upland hunting year similar to last season.

Forest grouse: The best areas for forest grouse are in the Cascades on Fremont-Winema National Forest or private timberland that are open to public access. Look for blue grouse along ridge tops in more open forest habitats in both Klamath and Lake counties, and ruffed grouse along riparian areas in the Cascade Mountains. Places in Lake County such as the Warner Mountains and Winter Rim can hold blue grouse. There are very few ruffed grouse in Lake County.

Sage-grouse: Seasons for sage-grouse throughout Lake County are offered through a controlled permit draw similar to big game tags. Due to above-average annual precipitation, sage-grouse numbers have increased over the past two years. Warner and Beatys Butte both saw increases in populations this spring during lek counts, with reports of good brood success as well. Locating water sources with sage-grouse signs can be a great way to target birds for those lucky to draw a permit. Remember successful hunters are HIGHLY encouraged to submit wings to assist managers with population data collection. Data obtained from hunter harvested wing samples is critical to understanding population performance. Please contribute!

Quail: In Lake County, California quail appeared to have had a good year. Most birds occur on private lands throughout the valleys, but many riparian zones throughout the county can hold quail. Brood counts are strong in most of the valleys within Lake County. Klamath County brood observations indicate good nesting success. There is a two-bird bag limit for mountain quail in eastern Oregon.

California quail production was fair on Summer Lake Wildlife Area and should provide good hunting opportunities. The northern portions of the wildlife area along Thousand Springs Lane (Lake Co. Road 4-17) up towards Lake View Lane (Lake Co. Road 4-18) and homestead sites such as Turner Place are the best places to find quail.

California quail production within the wildlife area was very good this year, thanks to mild weather during and after peak hatching time.

Dove: Mourning dove appeared to have had decent nesting success with a fair number of juveniles observed during this year's banding efforts and surveys. Hunters should focus around agricultural areas and forest openings where food sources are abundant. Ask permission to hunt private lands. Be sure of identification before you hunt these birds, which are smaller and darker than the Eurasian collared dove. Identify this species and its habitat.

Eurasian collared doves are expanding throughout Lake and Klamath counties. These birds have no protections in Oregon, so there are no closed seasons or limits to their harvest. A hunting license is required on public land. Hunters should focus around agricultural areas and forest openings where food sources are abundant. Be sure of identification before you hunt these birds, which are larger and lighter

than mourning doves with a distinctive band around the back of the neck. Identify this species and its habitat.

Chukar: In Lake County, the best chukar hunting opportunities are along the desert rims such as Abert, Coleman, Diablo Mountain, and Coglan Buttes in the southeast portion of the county. Chukar reproduction is fair this year with above average observation of second effort nesting. In spite of an average or slightly below-average production year, populations remain strong, and hunters should expect similar covey encounter rates to last year. Many places that historically have held chukar in the county are holding water this year, which will help distribution and numbers. Most small canyons throughout the county can hold chukar.

Turkey: Wild turkeys are distributed throughout the southern portion of the Keno Unit. Several transplants and natural production have resulted in an increase of birds on the landscape in recent years available for the spring turkey season. There is no fall turkey season in Klamath or Lake County. In Lake County, turkey numbers are very low and many of the birds are located on private lands.

Pheasant: Wild pheasant numbers remain at extremely low levels. Unlimited Pheasants will be releasing birds at Klamath Wildlife Area and selected private lands open to the public. The Summer Lake Wildlife Area doesn't release pheasants, and wild pheasant populations in the wildlife area, already very low, appear to be down this year with very few broods having been observed this past summer. Summer Lake Wildlife Area ([Summer Lake WA Map](#))