

Harney County

Upland game bird hunting in Harney County is expected to be not as good as last year. In February the county experienced an above-average snowpack which quickly melted in late March and was followed by dry spring months. Some birds were lost to winterkill, and the lack of grasshoppers was compounded by dry conditions and some nest failure.

Chukar: Trend surveys found a 58 percent decrease compared to last year but a 30.3 percent increase from the 10-year average. Production was lower than last year with 0.5 chicks/adult. Production across the county was similar in the North as it was in the South end of the county.

California quail: Trend surveys found a 30.5 percent decrease from last year, which keeps this year 33.7 percent above the 10- year average. Production was fair with 1.3 chicks/adult, which is above the 10- year average.

Pheasants: Most pheasant hunting opportunity is found on the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge. No formal surveys are conducted, but observations suggest some pheasant production occurred on the refuge. Hunting opportunities will likely be similar to last year.

Malheur County

Last winter the county received above-average precipitation at higher elevations while mid-elevations stayed fairly open which was good for adult upland bird survival. Unfortunately, this spring was dry which is not good for pre nesting hen nutrition and few grasshoppers an important source of protein for chicks. These factors contributed to reduced production of upland birds in rangeland areas. Despite low production hunters should expect to find a good number of birds due to carryover from last year across the county. The Cow Valley and Durkee fires in the northeast portion of Malheur County/south portion of Baker County burned a combined 427,755 acres. This includes significant portions of Cottonwood

Mountain and Brogan Canyon are both popular chukar hunting spots. Habitat loss in these areas negatively impacts chukar, Hungarian partridge and quail populations. While this summer fire season was very minimal with very few fires.

Chukar: Surveys on established routes yielded an 11 percent decrease from last year and 75 percent above the 10-year average. Brood production was poor with 9.1 chicks per brood, total number of broods classified decreased last year and chicks per brood was .8 which is very low.

Pheasant: Surveys along established routes yielded a 19-percent decrease in birds observed last year and 11 percent above the 10-year average. Chick production was good at 3.8 chicks per brood. Hunting prospects will vary depending on the farming practices in the area where you have permission to hunt. The outlying areas around Willow Creek and Vale have higher bird numbers than areas closer to Ontario and Nyssa.

California quail: Surveys on established routes yielded a 64-percent decrease from last year and 15 percent below the 10-year average. Production was poor at 7.8 chicks per brood. Despite poor production, quail were well distributed across range and provided good hunting opportunities.

Mourning dove: Surveys on established routes yielded a 30 percent decrease from last year and 3 percent below the 10-year average. These surveys are conducted on both pheasant and chukar routes. Learn more about hunting these fast-flying birds.