

Central Area -- UPLAND

Crook and Jefferson counties

Hunting opportunities are limited in central Oregon as most upland bird populations are on private lands. The best opportunities for doves will be at lower elevations, including private agricultural lands, and adjoining BLM and Crooked River National Grasslands. Doves may use public lands for roosting and watering, and scouting these areas lands can help hunters locate these hunting opportunities.

The Eurasian collared dove population is increasing in this district, and hunters can target these birds with no closed season or bag limit.

Forest grouse inhabits the Ochoco National Forest but are less abundant than in other parts of the state. Portions of the western half of Jefferson County can hold decent numbers of sooty grouse, hunters should focus on unburned north facing drainages, or along creeks/rivers with healthy riparian vegetation.

California quail prefer lower elevation brushy habitat, particularly near agricultural and riparian areas. Although most of these habitat types are on private lands, some public opportunity exists on BLM lands and at the Prineville Reservoir Wildlife Area. Few mountain quail exist in central Oregon but remember to ID your birds as they have a smaller bag limit than California quail.

Deschutes County

Upland game bird species are limited by the climate and available habitat in this district. Biologists believe most upland species production was good this year, with favorable conditions this spring for nesting and rearing chicks.

California quail populations are healthy but scattered, with most found on private lands. Remember to ask for permission before entering private lands. Mountain quail numbers are slowly increasing and are legal to harvest. The daily bag limit for mountain quail in eastern Oregon is two birds.

Chukar populations are very limited despite some decent habitat in the area. The best place to find Chukar is in the Deschutes National Grasslands area just to the west of Lake Billy Chinook. If hunting this area, be mindful of the Metolius winter range cooperative road closure after Dec. 1.

Public and private landownership is fragmented in the area, so it is important to know where you are and that you have permission to access private property.

Good forest grouse habitat is limited in the district, but populations are stable, albeit at low numbers in the Cascade portion of the district. Sage grouse numbers were stable this spring in the North Wagontire hunt area. Those permits were allocated through a draw in early August. If you are lucky enough to draw a permit, the edge of the unit along Dickerson Well Rd can be a good place to start, just make sure you are east of the road within the unit.