

2017-18 Bird Hunting Forecast

North American duck populations are looking good and still above their long-term average. Spring habitat conditions were similar to improved in most parts of the U.S. and Canada compared to last year. For locally produced birds, habitat conditions were much improved in Oregon this spring with water in some areas for the first time in a decade or more. Oregon just needs weather and habitat conditions to cooperate this fall and winter for a good waterfowl hunting season.

Upland game bird hunting is going to be a mixed bag this year. Upland game bird populations can vary greatly from year to year. Generally, hunting has little influence over the annual population fluctuation of upland game birds and weather conditions have everything to do with it. Persistent snow cover and cold caused above average mortality in parts of eastern and northeastern Oregon. However, all of the precipitation over the past year also resulted in favorable habitat conditions. Some areas received late season snow or rain near the peak of hatch which also caused some chick mortality, but overall the proportion of young in the population for most species was above average due to good habitat conditions.

Here's what our surveys found for upland bird species:

Pheasants – Overall pheasant abundance will likely be similar to last year, but populations remain depressed. Despite the winter weather, Malheur County saw some improvement in pheasant numbers while the Columbia Basin counties saw some decline. These two regions account for the majority of pheasant harvest in the state.

California quail – Statewide California (valley) quail populations have been on an upward trend over the last several years. In 2016 the population was at the most recent 15-yr average. Winter weather caused higher than average mortality in some areas, but surviving quail appeared to have good nesting success with some very large broods observed. California quail likely did better near agricultural and suburban areas in the southern half of the state than the northern half.

Chukar – Chukar abundance saw sharp declines in some areas such as northern Harney and Malheur counties and into NE Oregon and held their own or increased in the Columbia Basin. Persistent deep snow resulted in high winter mortality in some areas for these ground feeding birds. However, chukars are known for their large annual population fluctuations. As with the quail, surviving chukars appear to have had good reproductive success with a higher proportion of juveniles observed on the survey routes than in recent years. Overall, expect to encounter fewer chukars in NE Oregon and the northern parts of Harney and Malheur counties. Chukars in the Columbia Basin, such as in the Deschutes and John Day River basins fared better, and hunters should expect find numbers similar to or above last year.

Forest Grouse – Blue grouse populations remain below average but will be similar to last year. Though difficult to survey, forest grouse and mountain quail numbers appear to have improved in western Oregon. Prospects for forest grouse also remain mixed. The deep snow of last winter likely did not affect these birds as much since they can forage above ground in the trees. East of the Cascades, ruffed grouse populations are expected to remain above the recent 10-year average, while eastern Oregon "blue" grouse counts were mixed and may remain below the recent 10-year average. Forest grouse are difficult to survey in western Oregon, but anecdotal reports suggest production was good in some parts of western Oregon as compared to 2016. Spring surveys in 2017 detected more hooting male Sooty (blue) grouse in western Oregon than in 2016.

What's New

New structure for NE Oregon fall turkey hunting The Blue Mtn general fall turkey hunt was expanded to include the Grizzly, Ochoco, and Maury units and the number of available tags was increased to 600.

Both the Northeast and Blue Mountain general season turkey tags can now be used in the Mt Emily Unit.

The pintail bag limit is reduced to one daily.

Adjusted shooting hours in NW goose permit zone (sunrise to sunset).

Edible portion for retrieval and waste regulations is defined on page 13.

Take a Friend Hunting – Win a Prize

New this year, ODFW launched the Take a Friend Hunting Contest to encourage experienced hunters to take out new and lapsed hunters. Prizes will be awarded in early January 2018 and include a statewide deer tag, Leupold rifle scope, Weatherby rifle and many more. To be eligible, the experienced and new or lapsed hunter must each have a 2017 hunting license and register online by Dec. 31, 2017 with their Hunter/Angler ID#. New or lapsed hunters are those who have never purchased an Oregon hunting license, purchased for the first time in 2016, or have not purchased since 2012. More details at the contest website, <http://www.oregonhunter.info/take-a-friend/>

Statewide youth waterfowl season Sept. 23-24. Hunters age 17 and under eligible, must be hunter education certified and be accompanied by a non-hunting adult 21 years of age or older.

Wildlife area/refuge youth waterfowl days: See regulations for more details. Some require advance application and registration. Fern Ridge WA Nov. 5 and Dec. 23, Klamath WA Oct. 21, Sauvie Island WA Oct. 22, Nov. 11, Dec. 3, Dec. 26 and Jan. 15. Tualatin River NWR Oct. 29, Nov. 11, Nov. 19, Nov. 25, Dec. 10, Dec. 16 and Dec. 24. Umatilla NWR Nov. 11.

Youth chukar hunt, Oct. 14-15, Lower Klamath Hills Regulated Hunt Area. Advance registration required, see regulations for details.

Free youth pheasant hunts around the state. ODFW and partners stock pheasants at these special events. Youth age 17 and under, hunter education certified are eligible to participate. Details in the regulations or [see the news release](#). Pre-registration required for most events.

- Baker City area, [Sept. 23](#) and [Sept. 24](#). Note this event is not near the Baldock Slough Wetlands Project (regulations are in error). People who register for the event will be notified of its location via email.
- Central Point, Denman Wildlife Area, [Sept. 16](#) and [Sept. 17](#).
- Corvallis (near Camp Adair), EE Wilson Wildlife Area, [Sept. 23](#) and [Sept. 24](#).
- Eugene, Fern Ridge Wildlife Area, [Sept. 9](#) and [Sept. 10](#). Registration not necessary but appreciated.
- Irrigon Wildlife Area (between Irrigon and Umatilla), Sept. 23 and Sept. 24, sign up for morning or evening hunt (morning only on Sunday), see event listings at www.odfwcalendar.com

- Klamath Falls, Klamath Wildlife Area, Sept. 16 and Sept. 17. Additional hunt on Oct. 21 when Miller Island Unit open to youth hunters only from 10 a.m. on a first-come, first-serve basis.
- John Day Valley, Sept. 16 and Sept. 17
- La Grande, Ladd Marsh Wildlife Area, Sept. 16 and Sept. 17. No advance registration required.
- Madras, Gateway Canyon Preserve, Sept. 9 and Sept. 10, sign up for one of several three-hour hunting shifts.
- Portland, Sauvie Island Wildlife Area, Sept. 16 and Sept. 17.
- Tygh Valley/The Dalles, White River Wildlife Area, Sept. 16 and Sept. 17.

Return wings and tails

Please return wings and tails of mountain quail and forest grouse; they provide important information about populations. Remove one entire wing and whole tail including small feathers. Place in paper collecting bags (your own or those provided at ODFW offices), one bird per bag. Mark the bag with the species, date taken, county where taken and general location taken. Drop it off at a designated collection sites (ODFW offices or collection barrels). Freeze the bag if you will be delayed in dropping it off.

East Region Upland Game Bird

BAKER COUNTY

Upland game bird production was lower than last year's due to the harsh winter conditions. California Quail and chukar counts were much lower than last year. The surviving birds did have good reproduction and chicks were of good size, and broods were generally large. Chukar numbers dropped from about 60 birds per 10 miles to about 20 birds this year. Quail had it a little tougher and they dropped from 13 birds per mile to 1 bird this year. Sportsmen should expect to see quite a few less birds than the last two years in the Baker District with birds more scattered than past years. A&H properties offer good upland hunting and access to public land.

CROOK AND JEFFERSON COUNTIES

Hunting opportunities are limited in central Oregon as a majority of upland bird populations occur 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 lands can help in locating such 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 inhabit the Ochoco National Forest, but are less abundant than in other parts of the state. California quail can be found at lower elevations in brushy habitat, particularly near agricultural and riparian areas. Although most of these habitat types are found on private lands, some public opportunity exists on BLM lands and at Prineville Reservoir Wildlife Area.

DESCHUTES COUNTY

Most upland game bird species are limited by available habitat and climate in this district. Biologists believe most upland species nested successfully this year. California quail populations are healthy with most found on private lands (so access is difficult). Good forest grouse habitat is limited in the district but populations are stable, albeit at low numbers in the Cascade portion of the District. ODFW re-

introduced mountain quail into the Metolius unit a few years ago but the population remains too low to hunt at this time, so mountain quail hunting is closed in the county. Dove hunters are encouraged to take advantage of the expanding (and invasive) Eurasian collared dove population.

GRANT COUNTY

Trend counts for quail and chukar are down for the 2017 season while grouse and turkey numbers remain stable. Turkey and chukar offer the best opportunities this season for upland hunters with turkey widely distributed through the county. The Philip W. Schneider Wildlife Area is open to the public and offers good bird hunting. Most South Fork Complex Fire restoration projects on the Wildlife Area have been completed and the area is responding well. However, hunters may encounter staff conducting additional/follow-up projects within burned areas and should plan accordingly.

KLAMATH AND LAKE COUNTIES

In Lake County, hunting prospects are much better than last year due to good water conditions in nearly all wetland basins and favorable local production.

The best areas for forest grouse are in the Cascades on Winema National Forest or private timber land which is open to access. Blue grouse can be found along ridge tops in more open forest habitats in both Klamath and Lake counties, while ruffed grouse are generally found along riparian areas in the Cascade Mountains. There are very few ruffed grouse in Lake County.

Hunters are reminded of the two-bird bag limit for mountain quail in Klamath County. Lake County is closed to mountain quail hunting. Most valley quail hunting opportunities are on private land, and hunters are reminded to ask for permission.

Wild pheasant numbers remain at extremely low levels. Unlimited Pheasants will be releasing pheasants at Klamath Wildlife Area and selected private lands open to the public. No pheasants are released at Summer Lake Wildlife Area, and wild pheasant numbers are at very low levels on the area.

HARNEY COUNTY

Due to the above average snow pack and prolonged cold temperatures, last winter upland bird population trends are down compared to last year and well below the 10-year average. Chukar populations seem to have taken the hardest hit with a 98% decrease from last year's count. Sage-grouse offer the best hunting opportunities in the district. Quail hunting opportunities can be found throughout Harney County around both agricultural and rangelands in the Steens, Pueblos and Trout Creeks. Focus on basins and creek bottoms. Most pheasant hunting in the county occurs on and around Malheur National Wildlife Refuge.

MALHEUR COUNTY

The northern half of Malheur County experience record snow fall in excess of 3 feet during the past winter. Snow began accumulating in early December and remained snow covered through the end of February. The harsh winter conditions had a significant negative impact on adult survival of upland birds outside of agricultural areas. Spring nesting conditions were good with favorable spring moisture in March and April while May and June experienced very little rain resulting in good early brood production and very few late broods observed.

Chukar

Chukar surveys on established routes yielded 32 chukar per 10 miles and good production with 12.7 chicks per brood. This is a 73% decrease from last year when 115.7 birds per 10 miles were measured and is 22% below the 10-year average of 40.7 birds per 10 miles. On established routes overall adult population was down significantly due to harsh winter conditions and is the primary factor in the drastic drop in bird population's across the northern portion of the county. Fortunately this spring was good for chick production as indicated by 12.7 chicks per brood which is above average. The most productive routes were near the Owyhee Reservoir and Cottonwood Canyon southwest of Harper.

Pheasant

Surveys along established routes yielded 8.3 birds per 10 miles which is a 110% increase in number of birds observed from last year's survey and 18% above the 10-year average. Chick production was below average at 3.6 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.

There is very little public land pheasant hunting opportunity in the area and the few parcels that are available tend to get hunted daily. One option for private lands access is the Cow Hollow fundraiser <https://www.facebook.com/CowHollowPark/> to benefit the Cow Hollow Park.

California quail

Surveys on established routes yielded 33 quail per 10 miles, down 17% over last year and 14% below the 10-year average. Production was good at 9.2 chicks per brood with similar production observed in agricultural and rangelands. Overall quail populations were negatively impacted by harsh winter condition in rangelands.

MID-COLUMBIA COUNTIES (HOOD, WASCO, SHERMAN)

Upland counts for the district were mixed, with chukars and doves being higher than the past few years, but pheasant and quail being much lower. Forest Grouse and mountain quail are more commonly found in the forested portions of the Hood and White River units, with Forest Grouse most concentrated in the Hood unit and western portion of the White River unit.

MORROW, GILLIAM AND WHEELER COUNTIES

Most upland bird species counts were down from last year with pheasants, Hungarian partridges and doves showing the largest decreases. Overall production was down slightly from last year for all species but production numbers were still good. Hunters can access lands in the [Upland Cooperative Access Program](#), the Heppner Regulated Hunt Area in this district for upland bird hunting. Also see ODFW's [Columbia Basin Bird Hunting Guide](#) for maps and other good information on the 250K acres open to public hunting.

UNION COUNTY

Quail and pheasant counts are down, likely due to the challenging winter of 2016-17. Hunters can expect to work a little harder to fill game bags this season. The best hunting opportunities are 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

2017 hunting season looks promising on Ladd Marsh. Pheasant and quail populations appear to be doing well after the tough winter. Over-winter survival of adult birds is below average. With fewer adults, less broods were observed overall, but brood size is above average for all species. Hunters should still be able to find birds.

Upland game birds can be located throughout Ladd Marsh providing ample hunting opportunity for all. Grassland, fence rows, brush, and areas adjacent to agricultural fields are good locations to key on.

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 a permit to park on the wildlife area. Hunters receive a free parking permit with their hunting license. The \$10 daily or \$30 annual permit can be purchased at an ODFW office that sells licenses or at a license sales agent. Learn more about ODFW's Wildlife Area Parking Permit Program. Parking permits are to be displayed on the vehicle dash. [More information](#)

WALLOWA COUNTY

Surveys for blue and ruffed grouse are stable over the past five years and these species should provide fair opportunity during September and early October. Forest grouse hunters should be aware that there are vehicle restrictions and no camping allowed on Hancock forestlands during fire season. Chukar numbers are up slightly over the past five-year average and hunting should be a bit better this fall.

UPLAND BIRD HUNTING LOCATIONS

See ODFW's [Columbia Basin Bird Hunting Guide](#) for how to hunt the 250K acres open to hunters in the area. Also see ODFW's [Oregon Hunting Access Map](#) and wildlife areas [Summer Lake](#), [Klamath](#), [Lower Deschutes](#), [Prineville Reservoir](#), [Riverside](#) and [White River](#) (Tygh Valley). Some private lands are accessible through the [Access and Habitat program](#). Through ODFW's [Upland Cooperative Access Program](#), hunters can access private land in Gilliam and Morrow counties in the Columbia Basin to hunt.

East Region Waterfowl

BAKER COUNTY

Duck and goose hunting is expected to be similar to past years with a few resident birds available early in the season. More migrant birds will arrive later in the season and hunting should improve, especially in the Baker and Keating Valleys. Almost all hunting is on private property, so be sure to ask permission before hunting. The Powder River from Baker City to Brownlee Reservoir offers the best waterfowl hunting.

DESCHUTES COUNTY

Duck and geese hunting should be average or above average for local birds prior to freeze up. Canada geese numbers have increased over past survey years. Due to low water levels, some previously built hunting blinds may be high and dry for hunting season and access to waterfowl will be difficult in some areas. Hunters hunting the upper Deschutes River area, remember that by Deschutes County Ordinance

portions of the river between Sunriver and Fall River are closed to the discharge of firearms (contact the Deschutes County Sheriff for more information).

CROOK AND JEFFERSON COUNTIES

Mallards and Canada geese are the most common waterfowl species in these counties. Hunting opportunities are limited due to the lack of wetlands, marshes, and access, especially on public lands. Most of the better hunting is associated with private agricultural lands where gaining access can be difficult.

GRANT COUNTY

Grant County offers very limited waterfowl hunting opportunities due to lack of habitat; it's mostly jump shooting on private land along the John Day River.

HARNEY COUNTY

Typically hunting is best in late fall and early winter and on agricultural lands, be sure to get permission from the landowner.

KLAMATH COUNTY

Early season usually is best for local and early migrant birds. Hunting prospects will depend on Pacific Northwest weather systems moving birds into and around Klamath and Lake Counties before freeze-up.

Most goose hunting opportunities are for resident Canada geese, however there are some white-fronted geese, snow, and Ross's geese staging in the Klamath Basin prior to continuing south. Goose hunting should improve later into the season with freezing conditions, which tend to concentrate geese near open water areas. Ample public land opportunities exist with area refuges and state managed wildlife areas in addition to private lands.

The late goose season (Jan. 16-March 10, 2018) will again be open on public waters/lands with the exception of Klamath Basin Refuges and Miller Island Unit at KWA. The hunt helps alleviate agricultural damage from large numbers of white-fronted geese, lesser snow, and Ross' geese. The September Canada Goose season will also again take place this year in Klamath County.

Contact ODFW's Klamath Falls office at (541) 883-5732 for more information.

KLAMATH WILDLIFE AREA

Bird hunting is open on Oct. 7 (reservation only) and Oct. 8 and every following Monday, Wednesday and Saturday from October-December and open every day in January during authorized gamebird seasons. Upland bird hunting opens at 10 a.m. during waterfowl season. See regulations for details.

Early season is usually best for local and early migrant birds, and hunters can expect to find abundant gadwalls and mallards in the Klamath Basin.

Favorable weather conditions will be necessary to encourage large numbers of ducks and geese to stage in the basin, reduce overflights to wintering areas further south, and create favorable hunting conditions. Goose hunting should improve later in the season with geese using frozen ponds for loafing and the small grain fields for forage.

Pheasants are released throughout the season thanks to donations by Pheasants Unlimited. After Oct. 13, pheasants will be released in subunits A and C of the Miller Island Unit.

Management programs on the Klamath WA-Miller Island Unit could impact waterfowl hunter access during the 2017-18 waterfowl seasons. Efforts to rehabilitate portions of the marshlands around the Miller Island Unit, which will improve habitat for a multitude of waterfowl species, will require dewatering certain wetlands and actively controlling overgrown vegetation. While efforts will try to bring water back to all areas as soon as possible, some portions of the unit may be dry and will not provide good hunting opportunities throughout the season. These rehabilitated marshes will provide important food sources for birds in coming years and will greatly benefit hunters in the long term.

There is a special youth waterfowl and upland bird hunt on Oct. 21. Klamath WA Miller Island Unit is open only to hunters age 17 and younger with hunter education. Reservations are not required for this hunt. See page 27 of the Oregon Game Bird Regulations.

LAKE COUNTY

SUMMER LAKE WILDLIFE AREA

Over 60 percent of this almost 19,000-acre area is open for waterfowl hunting during authorized seasons. Hunting is permitted 7 days per week and a free daily hunting permit is required. Hunting permits are available at Headquarters.

Early season is usually best for local and early migrant birds, and hunters can expect to find abundant dabbling ducks such as green-winged teal, gadwall, shoveler, wigeon, pintail and mallards in Summer Lake Basin. By mid to late-November, freezing conditions occur and most waterfowl will have migrated south to wintering areas.

CLOSURE: Access to hunting areas south of Thousand Springs Lane (Lake Co. Rd 4-17, except the Foster Place) will be prohibited from Sept. 30 until 4:00 am on opening day. This seven-day closure will reduce disturbance to staging waterfowl and improve hunter success. Campgrounds and open roads will remain available for use.

Summer Lake is closed during the September Canada goose season but regular season goose hunting should be fair for locally produced Canada geese. Canada goose hunting should improve later in the season with freezing conditions, which tend to concentrate geese near open water. In an attempt to reduce harvest pressure on the rarer Tule white-fronted goose, the daily bag limit is one.

Most snow geese staging at Summer Lake Wildlife Area are from Wrangel Island, Russia. Production this year is predicted to be good. Typically, good production results in favorable hunting success due to the large number of juveniles. When production is low, hunting for the more wary adults is difficult. A large portion of this population is now wintering in NW Washington/SW British Columbia and not migrating through Oregon. Recently, staging numbers have been declining and peak staging populations have been less than 10,000 birds. However, other light goose populations (which migrate through Summer Lake Basin to some degree) have been increasing at significant rates, which allowed an increase in the white goose bag limit from 4 to 6 a few years ago. Favorable weather conditions will be necessary to encourage large numbers of geese to stage in the basin, reduce overflights to wintering areas further south, and create favorable hunting conditions.

MALHEUR COUNTY

Many of the desert ponds held water through the summer resulting in good duck and goose production. Desert ponds are also a good opportunity for early season jump shooting. Jordan Valley provides an excellent opportunity for September Canada goose hunting. Hunters need to acquire permission to hunt private lands.

Treasure Valley

Fair waterfowl hunting is available in the area most of the season, and improves significantly during cold weather events. Cold weather events reduce open water, concentrating birds and increasing the time spent foraging. Field hunting for both geese and ducks can be good for hunters willing to spend the time and effort to secure private land access.

MID-COLUMBIA DISTRICT (WASCO, SHERMAN AND HOOD COUNTIES)

Duck hunting is mostly jump shooting on private lands and should offer good opportunity where available. Goose hunting opportunity in wheat fields should be good with most access via private land. Some private land access can be found through [Upland Cooperative Access Program](#) lands in Sherman County. See regulations for details.

The Columbia River Refuge is open for hunting and provides some opportunities for hunters from the Celilo train bridge to Arlington. Access will primarily be by boat. For more information contact ODFW The Dalles at 541-296-4628. Note that hunting is not allowed on most Corps of Engineers property.

UMATILLA AND MORROW COUNTIES

Habitat conditions in the Columbia Basin still support large numbers of wintering Canada geese. Try hunting the Columbia Basin Wildlife Areas ([Power City](#), [Irrigon](#), [Coyote Springs](#), [Willow Creek](#)). Food crops are being planted, ponds are being enhanced, all of which will make conditions better for waterfowl hunting on these lands.

Hunting prospects depend on weather conditions. If the region does not experience a real winter, many of the northern migrants will stay in Washington. The best hunting is usually later in the season (late November) after some cold weather pushes birds down out of Washington. The Columbia River is usually the best opportunity for hunters on public land, but those who can access irrigated circles in northern Morrow County usually get good goose hunting.

UMATILLA COUNTY

Upland game bird brood routes revealed little change from last year despite an increase in over winter moisture during a harsh winter. Following are the species specific outlooks:

Pheasant: Numbers were up a small amount compared to the previous year. Hunters should expect similar hunting to last year with concentrations of birds existing in areas with surface water and adjacent cover.

California Quail: Continue to exist and reproduce above the long term average in the Umatilla County portion of the Columbia Basin. Hunters should expect bird numbers to be similar to last year or a bit better with good hunting conditions to work with. Quail are most common around riparian or upland shrubs such as wild rose, chokecherry, and elderberry.

Chukar and Hungarian Partridge: Habitats for both are limited in Umatilla County, but good numbers of birds exist in the few areas where habitat exists. Rolling hills of grass and Conservation Reserve Program lands are good for Hungarian partridge and large canyon country is best for chukar hunting.

Mourning Doves: Mourning doves are distributed widely in the lower, non-forest areas of Umatilla County. Dead snags near water will be good spots to focus hunting activity.

UNION COUNTY

Duck and goose hunting is expected to be similar to last year. Ladd Marsh Wildlife Area is a great destination for waterfowl hunters though water levels are expected to be low for October.

Ladd Marsh Wildlife Area

Waterfowl numbers are below average but this is not a sign of poor hunting. Above average winter snow fall and cooler conditions throughout the spring has helped maintain higher than average water levels throughout the Grande Ronde valley. These conditions have allowed waterfowl to stay dispersed making them harder to census, but should allow for more areas available to waterfowl hunters.

Note: all visitors including hunters must have in their possession a free daily permit to access the wildlife area. Permits are available at several self-check-in stations at entry points and parking lots. Wildlife hunters, viewers and anglers also need a parking permit to park on the wildlife area. Hunters receive a free parking permit with their hunting license or the annual permit can be purchased online or at an ODFW office that sells licenses or at a license sales agent. Parking permits are to be displayed on the vehicle dash Learn more about ODFW's [Wildlife Area Parking Permit Program](#).

WALLOWA COUNTY

Waterfowl hunting should be similar to previous few years. Expect good hunting opportunities later in the fall and early winter when migrating birds arrive. The few resident geese Canada geese in the district have fared well, too. Most hunting is decoy hunting in agricultural fields, and jump shooting irrigation ditches.

WATERFOWL HUNTING LOCATIONS

Explore bird hunting locations using ODFW's [Oregon Hunting Access Map](#). ODFW's [Summer Lake](#) and [Klamath](#) wildlife areas are major winter staging areas for waterfowl and provide great hunting opportunities. [Ladd Marsh Wildlife Area](#) provides opportunities in northeast Oregon. Some private lands are accessible through the [Access and Habitat program](#). Remember to ask permission before hunting on private lands.

West Region Upland Birds

Fee pheasant hunting at wildlife areas: ODFW stocks pheasants at these western Oregon wildlife areas as there are few natural pheasants in the region. To hunt, you need a license, upland bird validation, HIP validation and \$17 fee pheasant tag; bag limit two roosters. See regulations for more details.

E.E. Wilson, Monmouth: Oct. 1-31

Fern Ridge, Eugene: Sept. 11-Oct. 8 (East and West Coyote, Fisher Butte and Royal Amazon Units)

Sauvie Island, Portland: Sept. 18-Oct. 1 (Eastside Unit)

Denman, Central Point: Sept. 18-Oct. 6

COOS COUNTY

Cool, moist conditions late into the spring this year may not have been optimal for upland bird brood survival. Young birds that are still covered with down are very susceptible to hypothermia when wet weather strikes, even if the weather is warm. However, good vegetative growth may make up for that to some degree because good growth from plants can result in production of better hiding cover to evade predators and it can result in better insect production. Insects tend to be a primary food resource for young upland birds that are growing plumage. Those interested in hunting grouse will find them on closed forest roads or near creek bottoms. Quail will be found around clear cuts and exposed ridges. Wild turkeys can be found around agricultural areas in the county. Hunters are reminded to scout early and obtain permission to hunt private land prior to hunting.

DOUGLAS COUNTY

Hunters should expect an average year for hunting forest grouse and mountain quail. Brood count results are mixed in the district as some early game bird broods were negatively affected by the long cold spring weather while later nesting birds were able to pull-off some large broods. Blue grouse success is best in mid to high elevations of the Cascades in partly open conifer stands. Ruffed grouse can be found near creeks mostly at mid elevations of both the Cascades and Coast Range. Nesting season production was average for California quail and Mountain quail, so hunting opportunity should be good. Success is best in the lower elevation agricultural lands for California quail and mid-elevations of the Cascades and Coast Range near brushy clear cuts on secondary forest roads for Mountain quail. Check local fire restrictions for current fire danger before going hunting.

JACKSON, JOSEPHINE AND CURRY COUNTIES

Trend surveys suggest mountain quail, ruffed grouse and sooty grouse are near the five-year average and turkeys are up slightly. Mountain quail had good reproduction in some areas, but the total numbers of birds was below average. Ruffed grouse did not have good survival of young birds this year, but some adult birds are present. A few sooty grouse broods were observed at higher elevations. Overall, hunting for mountain quail and forest grouse should be fair. Turkeys had another good hatch and should be very abundant. Dove and band-tailed pigeon numbers should be about the same as last year.

Mountain quail are widely distributed throughout this district, and are usually found near brush fields and old clear-cuts. Ruffed grouse are found in middle elevation forests near water. Sooty grouse prefer higher elevation habitat consisting of a mix of large conifer trees and meadows. Some dove hunting is available on the Denman Wildlife Area in agricultural fields or in dry brushy areas, however harvest success drops quickly after the first few days of the season. Band-tailed pigeons are usually found at high elevations feeding on elderberries or acorns.

Hunters should be aware of fire season closures on private timber lands in Jackson, Josephine and Curry Counties. Check the latest fire closure information before heading out into the field. The Denman Wildlife Area will host a Youth Pheasant Hunt on Sept. 16 and 17, and a Fee Pheasant Hunt from Sept. 18-Oct. 6. Birds will be stocked during this period. Hunters new to hunting the Denman WA are encouraged to call 541-826-8774.

MID-COAST (LINCOLN, WESTERN LANE COUNTIES)

Ruffed grouse and mountain quail numbers appear to be similar to last year. Their populations are relatively low and scattered throughout the district but pockets of productive areas can be found. Hunt for mountain quail in brushy clear-cuts and near gravel roads, but realize they become difficult to find once the fall rains begin. Ruffed grouse are usually observed along streams or closed forest roads. They can also be found in well-developed or older forest areas. Blue (sooty) grouse are rare and are found only at the highest elevations.

NORTH COAST (CLATSOP, TILLAMOOK COUNTIES)

Ruffed grouse, blue grouse and mountain quail are present in the northern coast range but at lower densities than most other forested habitats in the state. This season is likely to be fair as the weather this spring was wetter than average, likely leading to poor survival for early broods – particularly for grouse. Later broods and especially those of mountain quail experienced improved conditions and likely better survival. Ruffed grouse are usually found along riparian areas and mid-slopes, while blue grouse prefer high-elevation ridges. Mountain quail frequent brushy clearcuts, especially those along south- and west-facing slopes.

NORTH WILLAMETTE (MULTNOMAH, WASHINGTON, CLACKAMAS, COLUMBIA, YAMHILL, MARION COUNTIES)

Staff observations of late spring broods and average chick numbers indicate an average production year for forest grouse, California and mountain quail this year. Rainy and wet conditions this spring were not favorable for forest grouse and quail chick survival and staff noted that some birds appeared to be re-nesting in the late spring based upon some of the small chicks observed this summer. Hunters should expect juvenile birds to be smaller when the season opens this fall.

Mountain quail are commonly found in or around 2-5 year-old clearcuts in the coastal mountains. Covering lots of ground in newer clearcuts with a well-trained dog should help hunters find a few scattered coveys of mountain quail. Most hunting for California quail occurs on private agricultural lands and hunters are reminded to obtain permission before entering private land.

Grouse hunting is likely to be similar to the past few seasons and should offer average hunting opportunities this fall. Hunters looking to harvest both ruffed and sooty (blue) grouse should concentrate their efforts in the Cascade Mountains for the best chance of success. Ruffed grouse prefer the brushy cover along riparian areas and sooty grouse can be found on the higher elevation ridgelines.

Turkey production was average this year and populations in the southwest portion of the district continue to slowly increase; most turkey hunting opportunities are on private land and hunters will need to secure permission to hunt well before the season opens.

SOUTH WILLAMETTE (MARION, POLK, LINN, LANE, BENTON COUNTIES)

Blue grouse and ruffed grouse are relatively common in forest habitat however biologist report fewer forest grouse heard during spring calling surveys and also report seeing fewer broods than usual this summer. California quail are common on the valley floor but most hunting occurs on private lands and hunters will need to obtain access from landowners. The north and central Cascades are generally not

great mountain quail areas but birds can be found in some of the brushy areas created by clear cut logging or wildfires.

Upland game bird hunting locations

Explore Oregon's [Hunting Access Map](#) for bird hunting locations; use the upland bird range map. ODFW's wildlife areas [Sauvie Island](#) (Portland), [EE Wilson](#) (Monmouth), [Fern Ridge](#) (Eugene) and [Denman](#) (Central Point) offer bird hunting; see regulations for details. Some industrial private forest lands are accessible through the [Access and Habitat Program](#); the [Jackson TMA](#) has grouse and quail. [National forestland](#) and [some state forests](#) also offer bird hunting opportunities. Much opportunity in the region is on private properties; hunters will need to gain permission.

West Region Waterfowl

COOS COUNTY

Ducks will begin moving into the county early in the fall and initially concentrate in coastal bays and other large water bodies. A large portion of Coos Bay is open to hunting even though some of it is within the city limits of Coos Bay. Other areas within the city limits of Coos Bay and all areas within city limits of North Bend are closed to hunting. There is also an area near the Southwest Oregon Regional Airport in North Bend that is closed to hunting. Hunters are encouraged to contact the ODFW Charleston Field Office (541) 888-5515 to obtain the latest information on areas open for hunting.

The Coquille Valley Wildlife Area (CVWA) is closed to public access due to construction of infrastructure on CVWA and in its vicinity. ODFW anticipates opening CVWA Oct. 1, 2017. If all goes as planned the entire ownership, including the Winter Lake Tract will be opened for public access at that time and available for bird hunting. Please contact the ODFW Charleston Field Office (541) 888-5515 to obtain the latest information on access to CVWA.

Also, the Ni'Les-tun Unit of the Bandon Marsh National Wildlife Refuge near Bandon will have an area within it open for waterfowl hunting. Other portions of Bandon Marsh National Wildlife Refuge that have been open for hunting in the past continue to be open this year as well. As winter comes on and the rainy season starts, waterfowl will disperse inland to flooded river valleys like the Coquille.

Geese will concentrate on private pastures around river valleys. Canada goose populations have been growing over the past few years. Good goose hunting can be found in most of the county. The key to a successful hunt is scouting before the hunt for areas where geese are going to feed or rest.

DOUGLAS COUNTY

Nearly all waterfowl hunting in the Umpqua Valley is on private property and hunters are reminded to obtain landowner permission before hunting. Plat-I Reservoir in Sutherlin, the Umpqua River and its tributaries offer the best waterfowl hunting in the Umpqua Valley.

JACKSON, JOSEPHINE AND CURRY COUNTIES

Waterfowl production was good this year, but hunting success will depend on local weather and water conditions, and on weather conditions to the north. Storm systems in northern Oregon and Washington push birds south to our area. Local reservoirs and fields on the Denman Wildlife Area are at very low levels and rain is needed to fill water bodies. If rain comes in at the time and in the quantity needed,

hunting should be excellent. Waterfowl hunting on the Denman Wildlife Area is usually best during December and January.

Local Canada goose production was extremely good and birds should be very abundant for the September goose season and throughout the general season. The Rogue River is a good place to hunt during the September goose season as well as on the Hall Tract of the Denman Wildlife Area.

The Denman Wildlife Area is dependent on rain to flood fields, and hunters can call 541-826-8774 to check on the status of flooding. Hunters should remember that after Nov. 1 the Hall Tract of the DWA is only open on Saturdays, Sundays, Wednesdays, Thanksgiving Day and Christmas Day. The Military Slough and Modoc Units are open all days of the general season.

NORTH and MID-COAST (CLATSOP, TILLAMOOK, LINCOLN COUNTIES)

On the north and mid-coast, expect very good hunting as excellent production of ducks up north should result in high numbers of birds there this year. With the onset of storms comes the best waterfowl hunting on the coast. Stormy weather moves birds off the bays and into more sheltered waters where they can be hunted more effectively. However, when there is too much rain, birds move into agricultural areas where hunting cover tends to be limited or nonexistent.

Early duck hunting should be fair to good on coastal bays. A mix of ducks (mainly wigeon, pintails, mallards and divers) should be available in larger north and mid-coast estuaries, such as the lower Columbia River and Tillamook, Nestucca, Nehalem, Siletz, Alsea, and Siuslaw Bays. In recent years, the numbers of ducks on these estuaries tends to be greater earlier in the season, with numbers diminishing by December. However, numbers and distribution can change on a yearly basis and success can be good in these areas into January. The best hunting generally occurs during storms before heavy rains flood fields and disperse birds, making them harder to hunt. Another excellent time to hunt the coast is during cold spells when some inland waters are ice-covered.

Goose hunters, do not forget to purchase your annual NW goose permit. Goose hunting should be good all along the north coast during the September goose season as production of local geese (westerns) appeared to be robust. Migratory geese coming in from the north should also be available in high numbers for hunters during the traditional NW Permit Goose seasons. On the mid-coast, opportunities for goose hunting are limited to the estuaries or private agricultural land. Hunters are reminded that during the 2017-18 season there is a closure on the taking of dusky Canada geese. See the 2017-18 Oregon Game Birds Regulations for details.

NORTH WILLAMETTE (MULTNOMAH, WASHINGTON, CLACKAMAS, COLUMBIA, YAMHILL, MARION COUNTIES)

Waterfowl hunters should expect a good hunting season this year. Resident mallards will continue to provide the majority of the early-season hunting opportunities along the Willamette River and in local ponds, wetlands and lakes. Late-season hunting is expected to be good for ducks and geese when cold winter weather brings northern migrants into the state.

Goose hunting opportunities in the northern Willamette Valley and lower Columbia River should also be good this season. Hunters can expect good numbers of local Canada geese to be present during the early September goose season. For a successful September season, hunters need to be out scouting for feeding and loafing areas that concentrate geese. Hunters will also need to secure permission to hunt on

private lands where most of the geese can be found. Hunters participating in the Northwest Permit Zone hunt should also find very good numbers of geese available as migrating birds move into the area.

Finding locations to hunt is difficult without access to private lands. Hunters without this access should explore opportunities to hunt waterfowl along the Willamette and Columbia River. Multiple hunting opportunities along the Willamette River can be located in the Oregon State Parks and Oregon State Marine Board's Willamette River Recreation Guide. The majority of these sites are only accessible by boat but there are several locations that can be reached from local roadways. Hunters are reminded to review the [Oregon Department of State Lands website](#) for information concerning the use of Oregon's waterways and the land underlying and adjacent to them. Additional information concerning waterfowl hunting can be found in the State and Federal Refuge Areas Regulations in the Oregon Game Bird Regulations.

SAUVIE ISLAND WILDLIFE AREA

Waterfowl hunting on Sauvie Island Wildlife Area should be above average this year with waterfowl populations at a relatively high level. The best hunting is usually during colder weather when birds are pushed south from Alaska and Canada. The wildlife area's crop production will be good. A few areas were not planted this summer due to high river levels. All hunt units will have some flooded areas opening day of general waterfowl season. Ongoing work on wetland and food resources on the wildlife area will continue to improve hunting in future years. The Northwest Permit Goose Zone will be open this year on the Wildlife Area, but only for white geese (Ross and snow). Dark goose hunting will remain closed on Sauvie Island Wildlife Area except for the September early season.

If you are new to waterfowl hunting on Sauvie Island, see our [Beginners Guide](#).

Special youth waterfowl hunts for hunters age 17 and younger Oct. 22, Nov. 11, Dec. 3 and 26 and Jan. 15. See page 26 of the Game Bird Regulations for details.

ALL VISITORS are reminded that a Wildlife Area Parking Permit is required to for each vehicle to park on the wildlife area. A free annual permit will be included with the purchase of annual hunting, Combination, Pioneer, and Sports Pac licenses. All other Wildlife Area users will be required to purchase a permit; daily permits (\$10) and annual permits (\$30) will be available where fishing and hunting licenses are sold and on the ODFW's website, www.dfw.state.or.us.

SOUTH WILLAMETTE (MARION, POLK, LINN, LANE, BENTON COUNTIES)

Prospects for waterfowl hunting will be good if the district sees some rain to flood feeding areas when the birds come down from the north. Canada goose populations are high so there should be good goose hunting opportunities. The Willamette River offers good hunting for those with the proper boat. Goose hunting occurs throughout the valley but hunters will want to obtain permission to hunt private lands.

Hunting in the Willamette Valley can vary greatly by fall and winter weather conditions (temperature and precipitation). It is too early to predict what we will see this winter.

Fern Ridge Wildlife Area (more below) offers public hunting opportunities in this area but it often has low water levels early in the season. Water levels will improve after the fall rains begin to fill the reservoir and impoundments.

FERN RIDGE WILDLIFE AREA

Hunters accessing the East Coyote unit from the Cantrell and Neilson road parking lots will experience a decrease in available parking space within each lot. Construction materials have been stockpiled in the parking lots in conjunction with a cooperative infrastructure / habitat improvement project with Ducks Unlimited scheduled for completion in summer 2018. Hunters participating in the reservation hunt are asked to leave the area in front of the red gate at the rear of the Neilson road parking lot free to accommodate ODFW check station. Hunters may have to park along the county road to check in for the reservation hunts or participate in the drawing for available stand-by blinds unfilled by permit holders.

All FRWA pump stations are directly related to the water levels in Fern Ridge Lake and could be adversely affected by the end of summer and into the fall. Early season field flooding may be limited and hunters should expect dry hunting areas at the beginning of duck season, specifically in the reservation hunt area on the East and West Coyote units. With the expectation of pump stations being dry by late September, the reliance on fall/winter rains will be critical. Later season hunting is expected to be more productive as fields naturally flood. Royal Amazon unit and the Northwest end of the Fisher Butte unit might be a productive hunting area early in the season.

Please contact FRWA headquarters at 541-935-2591 for more details and other information.

ALL VISITORS are reminded that a Wildlife Area Parking Permit is required for each vehicle to park on the wildlife area. A free annual permit will be included with the purchase of annual hunting, Combination, Pioneer, and Sports Pac licenses and the Habitat Conservation Stamp. All other Wildlife Area users will be required to purchase a permit; daily permits (\$7) and annual permits (\$22) will be available where fishing and hunting licenses are sold and on the ODFW's website, www.dfw.state.or.us.

EE Wilson Wildlife Area

Dove hunting is permitted Sept. 1-22 and Sept. 25-Oct. 30. Quail hunting is permitted Sept. 1-22 and Sept. 25 Jan. 31. The area's fee pheasant hunt is Oct. 1-31. ALL VISITORS are reminded that a Wildlife Area Parking Permit is required to for each vehicle to park on the wildlife area. A free annual permit will be included with the purchase of annual hunting, Combination, Pioneer, and Sports Pac licenses and the Habitat Conservation Stamp. All other Wildlife Area users will be required to purchase a permit; daily permits (\$10) and annual permits (\$30) will be available where fishing and hunting licenses are sold and on the ODFW website, www.dfw.state.or.us.

Waterfowl Hunting locations

ODFW's [Sauvie Island](#) (Portland), [EE Wilson](#) (Monmouth), [Denman Wildlife Area](#) (near Central Point) and [Fern Ridge](#) (Eugene) wildlife areas offer bird hunting. On the North Coast you can hunt around estuaries on the coast and in the lower Columbia River; call ODFW's Tillamook Office for more information or try ODF for a map that shows public and private lands. The Willamette River has some decoy and drifting opportunities; see the [Oregon Department of State Lands website](#).