



2020 Oregon Upland Game Bird Production Inventories

Following are the statewide results of the upland game bird production inventories collected by ODFW biologists during the summer of 2020. When considered collectively, these indices are generally a good predictor of fall populations and harvest for some of the popularly hunted species such as pheasant, California quail, and chukar. These indices are not as reliable for forest species such as mountain quail, ruffed grouse, and blue grouse.

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 whereas weather and habitat conditions drive population trends. Winter weather was slow in arriving and snowpack was average or below average in most drainages. Overwinter survival was likely very good in 2019-20. Spring brought numerous long-lasting precipitation events during spring hatch, giving some concern with young chick survival. The extra moisture resulted in good cover, forage, and insect production, despite a very dry summer in eastern Oregon. Widespread forest fires in September are having an impact on forest grouse, but the scale and severity remains to be seen.

Chukar abundance is up throughout the Deschutes, John Day, and Columbia basins. Pheasant numbers were up after a poor showing in 2019. Difficult to survey, forest grouse appear to be down, though early hunt reports show promise in both eastern and western Oregon. Mountain quail numbers appear to be strong in southwestern Oregon. California quail are having another excellent year throughout the high desert.

2020 Statewide Upland Game Bird Indices for Oregon.

Species	Year	Production Index (chicks/ad*)	Abundance Index (birds/10mi)
Gray Partridge	2020	5.0	0.4
	2019	4.7	0.4
	5yr Avg (2015-19)	3.1	0.8
Chukar	2020	2.9	27.6
	2019	3.2	15.6
	5yr Avg	3.1	21.7
California Quail	2020	2.3	16.4
	2019	2.5	11.7
	5yr Avg	2.1	16.4
Mountain Quail	2020	3.9	1.0
	2019	3.7	0.8
	5yr Avg	3.8	0.8
Pheasant	2020	4.3	3.4
	2019	3.8	2.1
	5yr Avg	3.4	4.4
Ruffed Grouse	2020	2.5	0.2
	2019	4.0	0.1
	5yr Avg	2.7	0.8
Blue Grouse	2020	3.1	0.4
	2019	2.2	1.0
	5yr Avg	1.6	1.4
Turkey	2020	2.1	3.2
	2019	2.0	1.6
	5yr Avg	2.3	3.2
Mourning Dove	2020	na	17.6
	2019	na	13.4
	5yr Avg	na	13.7

* per hen for pheasants and turkeys