



2018 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 2018. 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 chukars. 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. Last year's winter weather was mild and dry, resulting in good overwinter survival. Spring brought much-needed precipitation throughout the state, followed by a very dry summer. Spring rain can result in chick mortality when it coincides with hatch. Dry summers limit insect production and escape cover for vulnerable broods. As a result, overall production was below the 5-year average. However, abundance was generally above average, likely due to an exceptional production year in 2017 coupled with the mild winter.

Chukar abundance was up noticeably in eastern Oregon, though northern Harney and Malheur counties are still struggling to recover from the winter of 2016-17. Statewide pheasant numbers were at the strongest levels in the Mid-Columbia and Columbia Basin in over 10 years, but these trends did not extend to the Malheur County population. Difficult to survey, forest grouse and mountain quail numbers appear to be down in their eastern range, but strong in western Oregon. California quail abundance exceeded the 5-year average, driven primarily by Grant, Malheur, and Harney counties.

2018 Statewide Upland Game Bird Indices for Oregon.

Species	Year	Production Index (chicks/ad*)	Abundance Index (birds/10mi)
Gray Partridge	2018	2.5	1.8
	2017	3.4	0.5
	5yr Avg (2013-17)	2.2	0.7
Chukar	2018	2.6	24.8
	2017	3.6	12.0
	5yr Avg	2.9	19.3
California Quail	2018	1.9	16.2
	2017	2.0	11.3
	5yr Avg	1.9	15.2
Mountain Quail	2018	2.0	0.4
	2017	0.9	0.9
	5yr Avg	3.9	0.9
Pheasant	2018	2.4	7.2
	2017	3.4	3.2
	5yr Avg	3.1	3.3
Ruffed Grouse	2018	2.5	0.6
	2017	2.4	0.7
	5yr Avg	2.6	1.1
Blue Grouse	2018	0.9	1.1
	2017	1.9	1.4
	5yr Avg	1.8	1.8
Turkey	2018	2.3	4.3
	2017	3.4	2.7
	5yr Avg	2.3	4.0
Mourning Dove	2018	na	13.3
	2017	na	12.0
	5yr Avg	na	12.1

* per hen for pheasants and turkeys