

2007-'08 Quail Forecast Given By Parks Dept.

Statewide surveys were initiated in 1978 to monitor quail populations. This index uses randomly selected, 20-mile roadside survey lines to determine annual quail population trends by ecological region.

This trend information helps determine relative quail populations among the regions of Texas. Comparisons can be made between the mean (average) number of quail observed per route this year and the long term mean (LTM) for quail seen within an ecological region. The quail survey was not designed to predict relative abundance for any area smaller than the ecological region.

Rolling Plains

An unusually cool and wet spring and summer resulted in an extended breeding season for bobwhites in the Rolling Plains.

This is evidenced by field reports of differing size classes of chicks observed throughout the

summer. Although they were impacted by dry conditions last year, much of the region seemed to carry over enough birds to make a decent rebound.

Survey results and field staff observations predict a slightly below average to average year.

The average number of bobwhites observed per route was 21 compared to 14 last year. This is slightly below the LTM of 22.5.

Despite low carry over from last year's drought, enough young birds have been produced to offer good bobwhite hunter opportunity, especially in areas under proper range management.

Public hunting opportunities can be found at the Matador and the Gene Howe Wildlife Management Areas.

South Texas Plains

This region also experienced an extended breeding season but seems to have had even fewer breeders available in the spring than the Rolling Plains.

Flooding was also an issue in some counties. Pairs will re-nest if chicks or eggs are lost to exposure or flooding, but it's just one more hurdle for the birds to overcome. Habitat conditions are extremely lush, by south Texas standards, and roadside visibility was poor during our quail surveys.

As a consequence, our results are likely an underestimate of the quail population. Field staff reported good production and confirmed that certain areas, especially in the eastern half (more coastal) were

holding fair to good numbers of birds. These areas will offer good hunter opportunity.

The average number of bobwhites observed per route was 7 compared to 3 last year. This is well below the LTM of 19.8 and is predictive of a below average hunting season. However, as mentioned, this is likely an underestimate. The Chaparral and the Daughtrey Wildlife Management Areas provide public quail hunting opportunities.

Trans-Pecos

The Trans-Pecos ecological region of Texas has experienced above average populations of scale quail for the past four years.

Favorable weather conditions during the summer set up good nesting conditions over much of the region. Reports from the western edge of the Edwards Plateau (the Stockton Plateau) also indicate average to above average populations of scaled quail.

The average number of scaled quail observed per route was 28 compared to 19 last year. This is well above the LTM of 18 and for those hunters willing to chase these birds it should be a very good season.

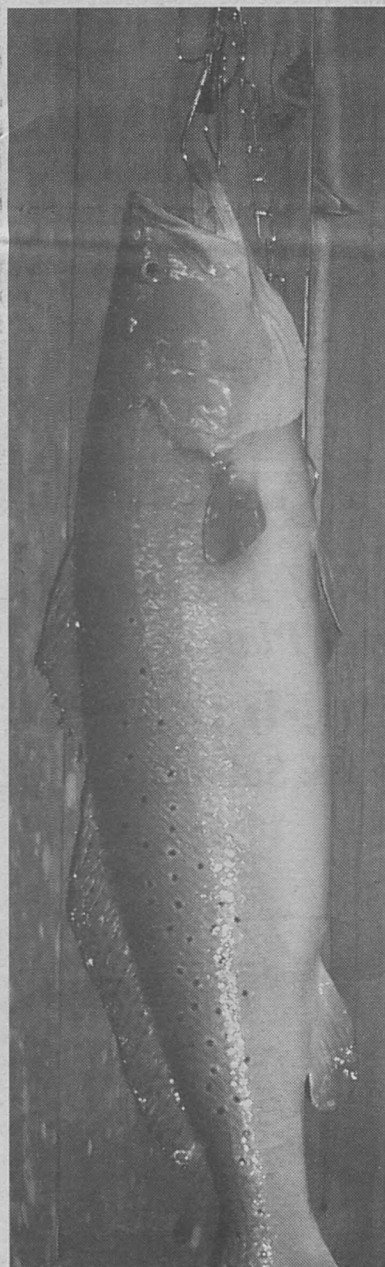
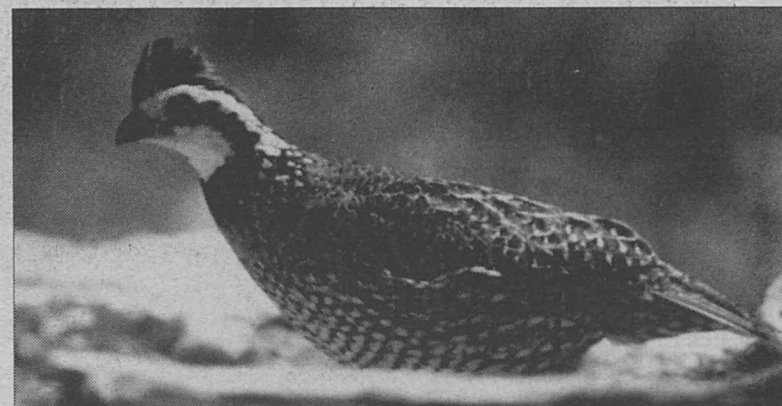
Public hunter opportunities can be found at Elephant Mountain and Black Gap Wildlife Management Areas.

Other Areas

Our surveys indicate that bobwhite numbers in Gulf Prairies, Cross Timbers, and Edwards Plateau are all below their respective LTM's. Although there are certainly

areas within each region where some quail hunting opportunity remains, this survey is not designed

to detect changes in localized populations, especially in fragmented landscapes.



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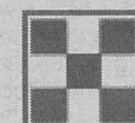
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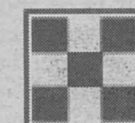


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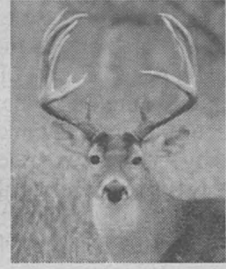
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