

MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION
Game Division

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Ten Facts About Ruffed Grouse

by

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1. Ruffed grouse occur in 46 states and Canadian provinces of North America. In 7 of these (California, Illinois, Indiana Iowa, Missouri, South Carolina, and Utah), where there are only small remnant populations or where they are being reintroduced, there is no open season. The other 39 had hunting seasons ranging from 5 to 365 days in the 1961-62 season. The average was 73 days.

2. *The average number of hunting days in the 20 eastern states that had open seasons in 1961-62 was 62. The number of days for each state was as follows:

Ohio	114	New Hampshire	62	MICHIGAN	41
Tennessee	107	Rhode Island	61	(Zones 1 & 2)	
N. Carolina	106	Wisconsin	61	Maine	39
W. Virginia	85	(central zone)		Pennsylvania	38
New York	84	Kentucky	60	Vermont	36
New Jersey	65	Minnesota	58	Massachusetts	35
Virginia	63	Georgia	47	Connecticut	31
		Maryland	45		

3. Twelve of these 20 states do not have a season's bag limit. One of these (Georgia) has a weekly bag limit. Those which have season limits are North Carolina - 30, MICHIGAN - 25, West Virginia - 20, Virginia - 15, New Hampshire - 10, Pennsylvania - 10, Connecticut - 10, and Massachusetts - 10.

4. The average length of seasons in these 20 states has increased considerably in recent years, as shown below. None had a significant decrease:

1940	39 days
1951	44 days
1961	60 days

5. Of the 14 states in the above list that had longer seasons than Michigan's:

Maryland North Carolina, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Tennessee, and Virginia have had longer seasons for at least 22 years.

West Virginia and Georgia have had longer seasons for at least 11 years.

Wisconsin has had longer seasons for the past 9 years.

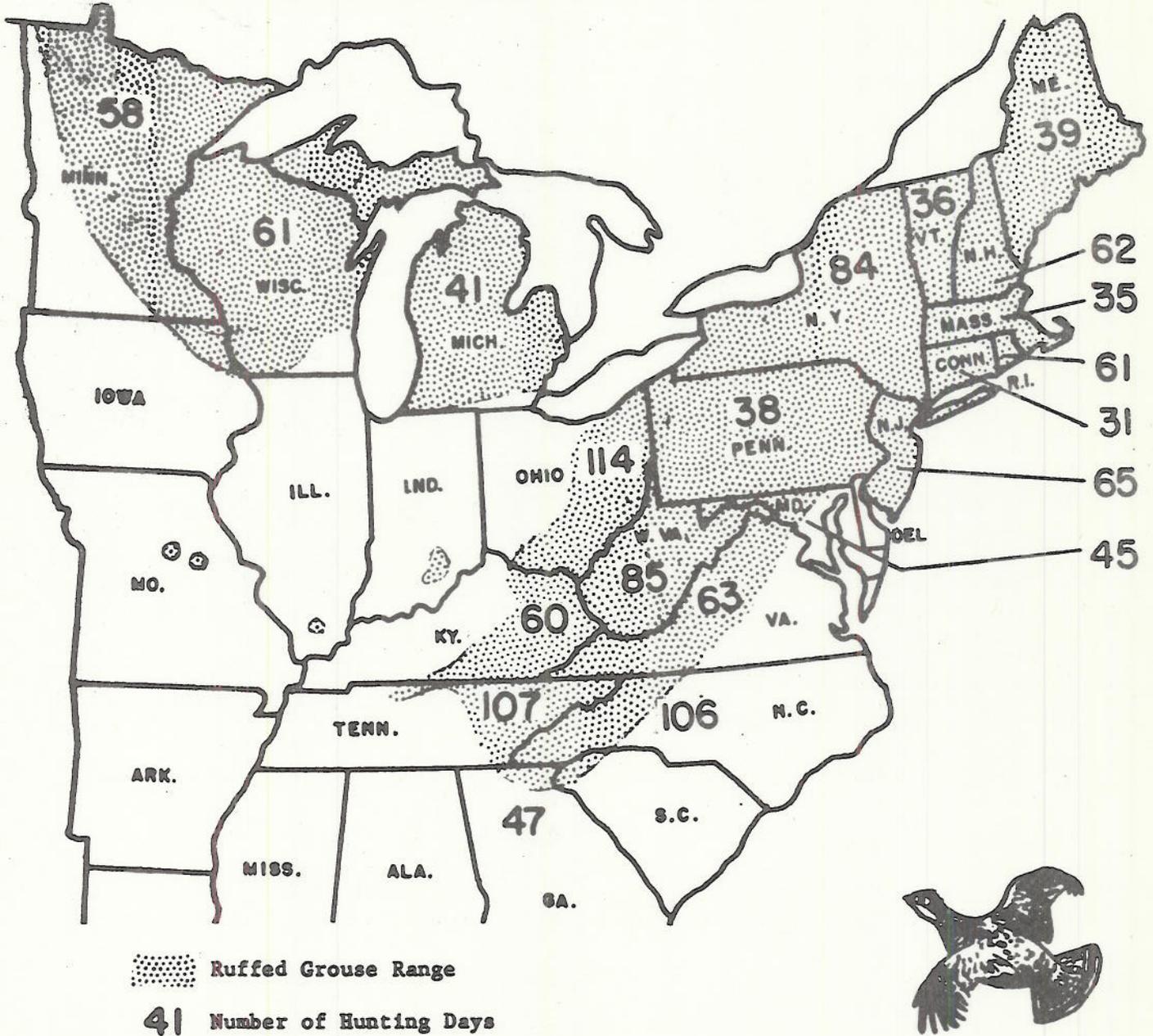
Ohio and Kentucky have had longer seasons for at least 4 years.

New Jersey and New York have had longer seasons for at least 2 years.

Minnesota's season went from 44 days in 1960 to 58 days in 1961, and it will be 65 days this fall.

*These figures differ slightly from a previously prepared map due to a correction for "no Sunday hunting" laws not noted when the map was printed.

10. A fundamental "rule of thumb" is that grouse hunting effort in a given place tends to vary directly with hunting success. As birds become harder to get, through scarcity or increased wariness, most hunters quickly lose interest. This "point of diminishing effort" is usually reached long before hunting has removed enough birds to reduce the surviving brood stock. This behavior makes it unnecessary to curtail seasons and bag limits on grouse during low years of the grouse cycle, or in areas of low populations. It also explains why one state can have a season 2 or 3 times as long as its neighboring state. Those states with long seasons are providing maximum opportunity for recreation--which is good conservation.



NUMBER OF DAYS RUFFED GROUSE WERE HUNTED IN 1961 IN EASTERN UNITED STATES