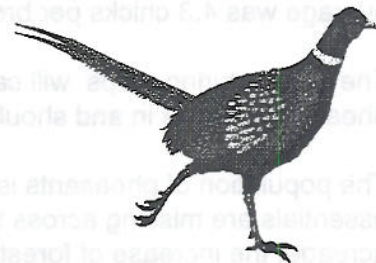




Michigan Department of Natural Resources  
Wildlife Division

Wildlife Division Report 3253  
October, 1996



## REVIEW OF THE 1995 PHEASANT SEASON WITH PROSPECTS FOR 1996

by

John W. Urbain and Joseph D. Robison

### 1995 SEASON IN REVIEW

The 1995 small game hunter mail survey is not complete at this time. Special license drawings are requiring the attention of the survey staff. The small game survey information is expected to be available later in the month of October.

Based on rural mail carrier summer brood survey results from 1995, the harvest is expected to show about a 10% decrease from the 1994 harvest of 190,000 birds.

In 1995, there were 511 pheasant cooperators that completed special hunter report cards to gather additional information about the opening four days of the pheasant season. Cooperators flushed 1.72 pheasants per hour of hunting the first four days of the season compared to 1.46 pheasants per hour in 1994. The average pheasant cooperator spent 9.14 hours afield. The opening day reports of pheasant cooperators were in general agreement that the opening day conditions were wet and windy. Cooperators felt that there were less hunters than in past years. About 59% of the cooperators thought the population was down, and 18% thought it was up. Cooperators generally felt that predators were limiting bird numbers even in areas of good habitat. It will be interesting to see the mail survey results of the actual harvest of pheasants from last fall compared to what the cooperators found.

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## 1996 SEASON FORECAST

In 1996, the standard pheasant crowing routes were not conducted due to travel restrictions. Some additional routes were completed in Jackson, Hillsdale and Lenawee counties by volunteers and showed a 25% decrease from 1995.

The 1996 Mail Carrier Pheasant Brood Survey showed a 10% increase in the number of chicks per brood and a 15% decrease in the number of broods seen per 10 carrier days. In 1996, the average was 4.3 chicks per brood compared to 3.9 chicks per brood in 1995.

The late maturing crops will cause a delay in harvest, thus leaving more cover for the pheasants to hide in and should make hunting a little more challenging this fall.

The population of pheasants is at a low level across the state. Many of the necessary habitat essentials are missing across the farmland. Surely the steady drop in the total farmland acreage, the increase of forested acreage and the increase of average farm size are important factors. The pheasant harvest is expected to be about 10% down from 1995.

## SICHUAN PHEASANT PROGRAM

This year marked the end of the Sichuan Pheasant release program. All pheasant facilities have been shutdown. Since 1985, when the Sichuan Pheasant program was first introduced, there have been approximately 148,000 Sichuan Pheasants released across Michigan. The program's success has yet to be determined. Research is still ongoing to determine if the Sichuan Pheasants have had an influence on Michigan's pheasant population.

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## 1937-1996

MICHIGAN PHEASANT DATA							
1937-1996							
YEAR	HUNTERS	HARVEST	EFFORT	STATE AV. CROW/INDEX	STATE AV. BRD/INDEX	STATE AV. CHX/BRD	TOTAL NO. CARRIERS
1937	487,653	812,930					
1938	516,447	921,018					
1939	537,972	907,848					
1940	537,655	990,419					
1941	612,667	1,254,725					
1942	572,874	1,200,595					
1943	509,024	1,368,039					
1944	550,097	1,401,076					
1945	549,908	1,055,350					
1946	685,500	904,367		5.0	6.4		28
1947	535,927	452,934		2.2	6.3		293
1948	582,000	632,698		2.5	6.2		507
1949	626,941	863,959	7.0	3.6	5.9		447
1950	620,192	797,543	9.7	3.6	6.3		515
1951	640,010	943,657	11.8	5.7	6.2		509
1952	354,570	947,855	12.7	5.5	5.9		471
1953	430,406	1,126,968	11.2	7.3	6.1		586
1954	523,610	1,102,590	11.4	7.7	6.1		589
1955*	542,930	1,182,730	12.5	7.9	5.9		572
1956	549,550	1,125,680	13.3	6.7	5.8		587
1957*	513,960	1,257,570	11.1	7.6	5.9		552
1958	528,780	1,181,340	13.7	7.1	5.9		537
1959	454,080	914,600	7.1	5.2	5.9		547
1960	469,370	974,490	6.9	6.0	6.0		573
1961	453,260	846,470	2,085,180	6.8	5.3		587
1962	486,810	956,660	2,168,540	6.6	5.7		573
1963	421,480	720,150	2,018,450	7.3	4.8		574
1964	444,070	837,590	2,066,600	6.4	4.4		484
1965	433,440	683,770	2,133,420	8.2	4.1		588
1966	430,340	658,520	2,067,850	6.2	3.7		HH



# MICHIGAN PHEASANT DATA (Continued)

YEAR	HUNTERS	HARVEST	EFFORT CROW/INDEX	STATE AV. BRD/INDEX	STATE AV. CHX/BRD	TOTAL NO. CARRIERS
1967	384,590	413,780	1,822,670	5.2	2.1	573
1968	342,910	407,350	1,679,970	3.3	2.0	550
1969	328,660	415,900	1,623,520	5.5	1.9	545
1970	360,220	480,670	1,819,420	5.8	1.9	552
1971	302,860	436,370	1,554,110	6.6	2.1	556
1972	294,760	416,560	1,498,140	7.8	2.6	545
1973	377,520	841,170	2,285,910	8.8	3.5	560
1974	401,340	780,460	2,332,190	6.1	3.8	547
1975	390,370	837,010	2,326,990	7.4	3.8	553
1976	368,970	767,820	2,315,910	7.0	3.5	575
1977	329,280	658,290	1,987,080	8.8	2.7	563
1978	287,520	475,690	1,690,600	7.6	1.6	574
1979	261,110	421,180	1,619,920	5.4	1.2	569
1980	230,440	433,110	1,387,690	6.3	1.5	541
1981	202,190	347,120	1,141,020	5.6	1.9	546
1982	168,810	250,500	963,990	4.0	1.1	546
1983	135,150	189,590	747,510	5.1	1.2	546
1984**	121,000	151,000	645,000	4.6	0.7	545
1985	106,850	112,240	543,160	2.9	0.4	565
1986	86,050	84,460	446,290	2.8	0.9	552
1987	88,220	113,150	471,100	3.7	1.0	616
1988	86,180	101,460	547,870	5.6	0.6	608
1989	100,820	151,790	450,140	4.4	0.9	602
1990	107,960	162,830	508,920	6.5	1.7	590
1991	114,980	187,130	497,070	7.3	1.1	859
1992	116,350	143,150	512,360	7.6	1.3	852
1993	119,891	193,058	574,192	7.8	1.2	785
1994	116,800	190,000	NA	6.7	1.2	803
1995	NA	NA	NA	4.6	1.0	576
1996	NA	NA	NA	NA	0.9	447

\* Values obtained from the original data

\*\*Note: Harvest, Hunters and Days (X 1000)"

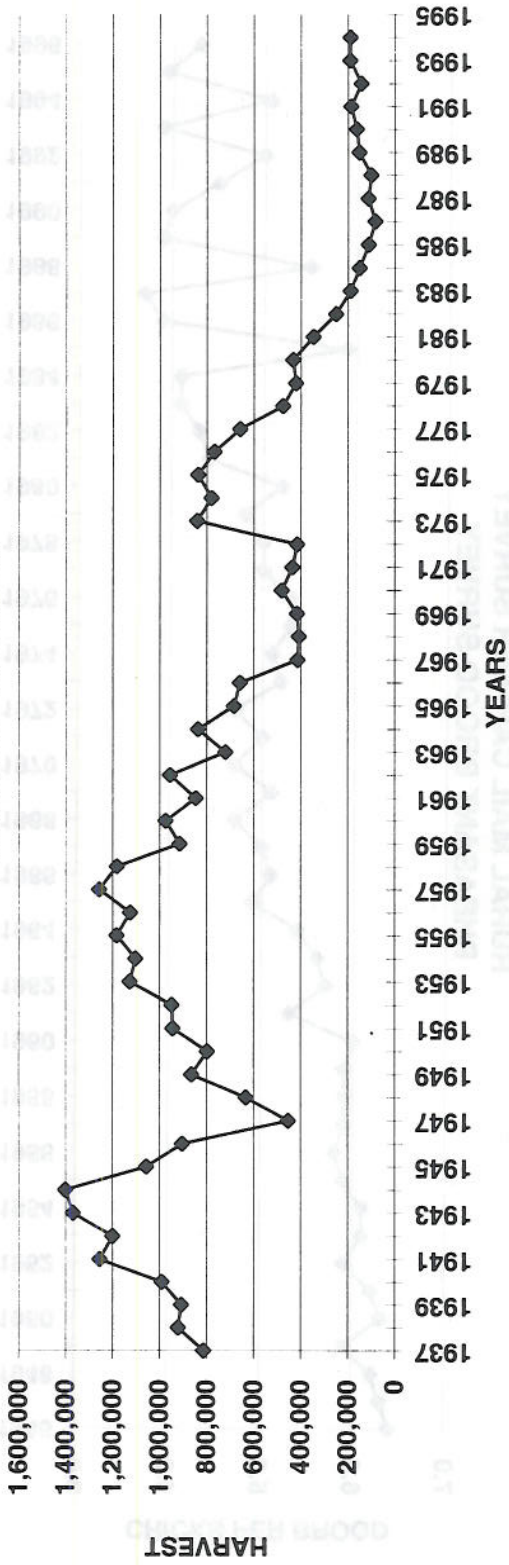
\*\* No surveys were conducted in 1984

Pre 1954 harvest data from voluntary hunter reports Brood Index = Average # of

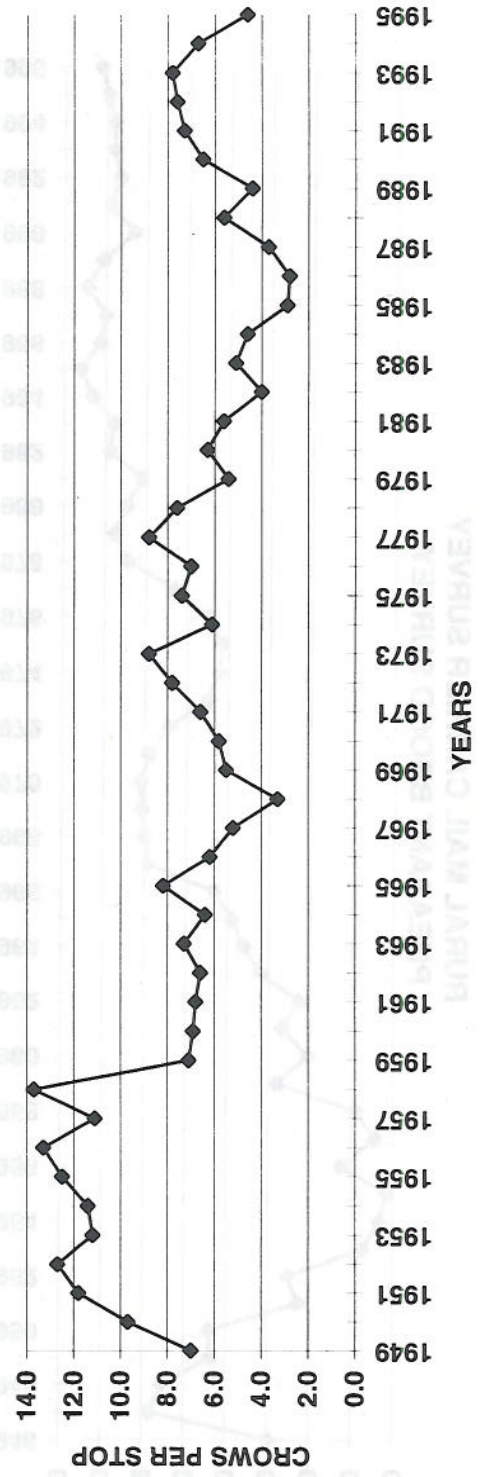
Crowing Index = Average crows per stop broods per 10 carrier days

Post 1954 from random survey of license buyers NA- No information available

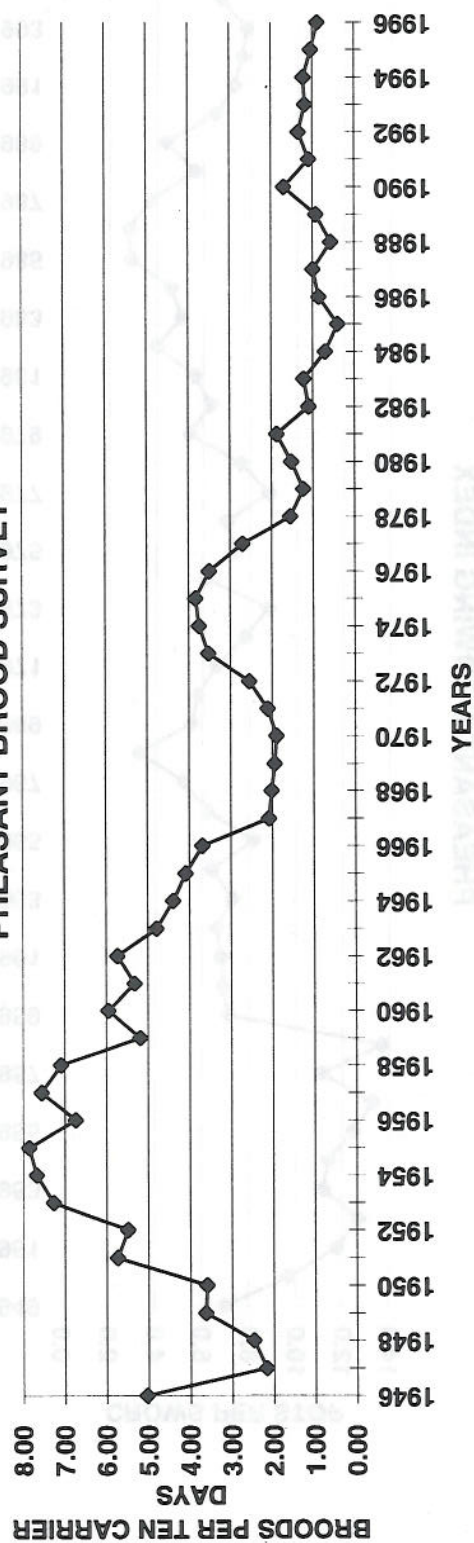
# PHEASANT HARVEST



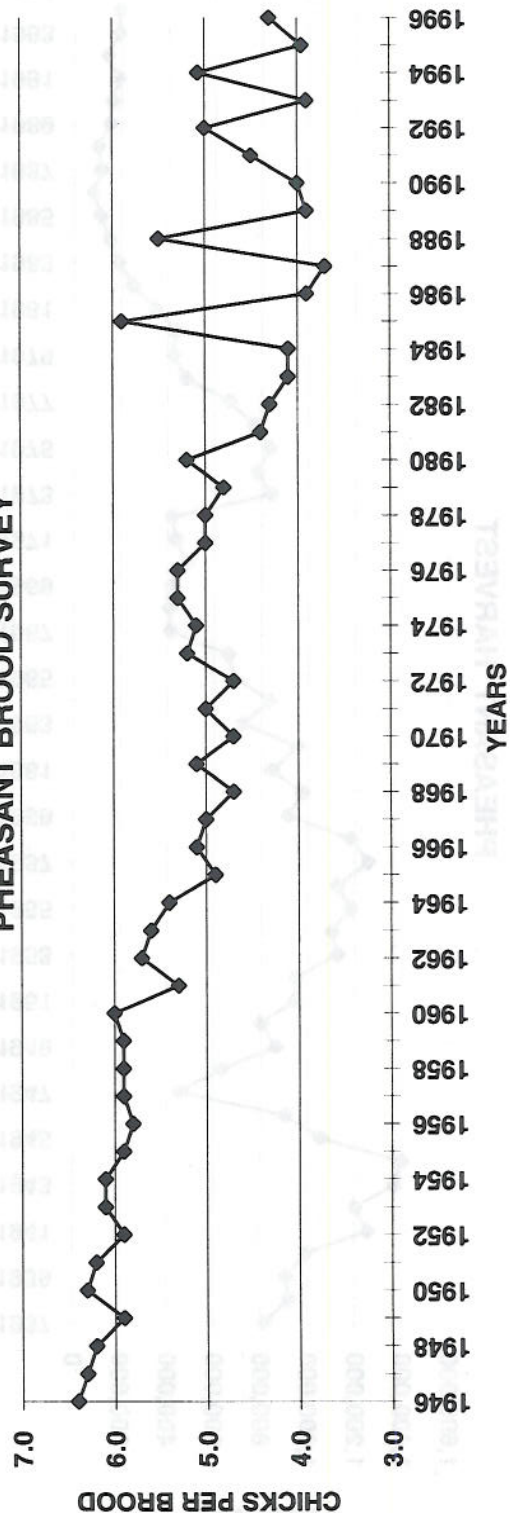
# PHEASANT CROWING INDEX



# RURAL MAIL CARRIER SURVEY PHEASANT BROOD SURVEY



# RURAL MAIL CARRIER SURVEY PHEASANT BROOD SURVEY





# PHEASANTS FLUSHED PER GUN HOUR BY COOPERATORS 1995

PHEASANTS FLUSHED PER GUN HOUR  
AVERAGE - 2.03

100 or more hours of hunting per county

10-99 hours of hunting per county

Less than 10 hours of hunting  
per county or no figures

