

R. Heat

MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION
Game Division

Report No. 2304
August 3, 1960

1960 Farmer Cooperator Survey
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ABSTRACT

Returns from 398 farmer cooperators located throughout Michigan's pheasant range indicate that the 1960 pheasant nesting success is about equal to that of 1959. However, this was not a random type survey and some areas such as the Thumb were not equally represented. Therefore, results of this survey should be regarded only as a general indication to the success of the nesting season.

There was a prolonged plowing period this spring which may have been destructive to pheasant nesting efforts. The first cutting of hay was later than last year with the peak coming about June 23 compared with June 16 a year ago. The later mowing period undoubtedly spared many broods which an earlier mowing season would have destroyed.

PROCEDURE

A questionnaire was sent to 1,000 farmer cooperators of the Farm-Game Habitat project. They were asked questions on dates of plowing and mowing and on numbers of pheasant nests and broods seen during these operations and elsewhere on the farm. About 40 percent of those contacted sent back usable returns.

FINDINGS

Nests found while plowing this spring were down 39 percent from the last 5-year average and 7 percent from 1959 although plowing was continued over a prolonged period this year (Figure 1). Nests found while mowing dropped 45 percent over the 5-year average and 31 percent from 1959 while broods were down 34 percent from the 5-year average but only 10 percent from a year ago. Nests found elsewhere on the farm were about the same as for the past five years and were 23 percent above 1959. Number of broods seen in addition to those observed while mowing were down 15 percent from the 5-year average but totaled the same as a year ago.

Table 1 compares acres plowed and mowed and nests and broods observed during these farm operations and elsewhere on the farm.

Table 1

Farmer Cooperator Pheasant Survey

1956 - 1960

	1956	1957	1958	1959	1960
No. of cooperators	364	391	371	349	398
Acres of farm	72,009	65,584	70,554	48,907	42,260
<u>Sod-plowing</u>					
Acres of sod plowed	10,005	8,793	9,406	5,054	5,206
Nests found on sod	284	207	159	60	58
Nests per 100 A. plowed	2.83	2.35	1.74	1.19	1.11
<u>Hay-mowing</u>					
Acres mowed	13,118	11,871	10,682	7,743	5,246
Nests found, mowing	516	494	437	203	93
Nests per 100 A. mowed	3.9	4.2	4.10	2.6	1.8
Broods found, mowing	481	584	651	232	144
Broods per 100 A. mowed	3.7	4.9	6.1	3.0	2.7
Average clutch size	9.1	10.2	10.4	9.4	13.3
Average brood size	8.3	9.5	9.1	9.7	8.5
<u>Elsewhere on Farm</u>					
Nests per 100 A.	.31	.21	.35	.22	.27
Broods per 100 A.	.47	.63	.67	.46	.46

Figure 1
FARMER COOPERATOR SURVEY

