

STATE OF MICHIGAN  
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES  
WILDLIFE DIVISION  
LANSING, MICHIGAN 48909

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OPENING DAY OF THE 1977 PHEASANT PUT-TAKE SEASON

by  
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Monday, August 15, was the opening day of the 1977 pheasant put-take hunting season on 15 of the 20 put-take areas. Hunters generally appeared happy with the opening day hunt. Weather was excellent -- in the 50's at the 8 a.m. opening hour with heavy dew reported in all areas. The cool temperatures permitted a longer hunt than a year ago when hunting opened at noon under hot, humid conditions. Hunter success was reasonably good in most areas with about one bird checked for every two hunters. Gourdneck hunter success was best with hunters checked averaging .86 pheasants each. Hunters at Three Rivers, Barry, Stanton, Rogue River, Flat River, and Portland also scored well (Table 1).

A total of 976 hunters checked on the 15 put-take areas had 480 pheasants, or .49 pheasants per hunter. This is better than opening day success for the regular pheasant season the past two years when hunters averaged .35 pheasants each. A total of 2,280 pheasants (18 to 20 weeks old) were released on these 15 areas on the afternoon prior to opening day.

There were an estimated 2,800 hunters at 8 a.m., the opening hour on the 15 areas (Table 2). Pressure was less than a year ago on opening day on 11 of the 15 areas and overall was down about 20 percent. However, there were considerably more hunters at Gladwin this year and counts were also up at Dansville, Gregory, and Gratiot-Saginaw.

Most hunters expressed satisfaction with this year's opener, especially those who had hunted during the early part of the season (a noon opener) a year ago. Pheasants were well scattered from the previous afternoon releases. Dense vegetation also helped make hunting difficult and considerable effort was required before a bird was flushed. According to some hunters, this hunt was similar to hunting wild birds.

Response to the use of seals this year (first time) was mostly positive. Almost all favored this system for regulating number of birds taken. Complaints regarded the seals themselves. They do tend to peel off the backing if carried in a wallet or pocket. A few birds were improperly sealed and a few arrests were made for pheasants in possession without a seal attached. In addition to pheasants, three Ruffed Grouse, all with a pheasant seal attached, were checked. Twelve wild pheasants were taken by hunters opening day.

Hunter success and car count information for opening day are recorded in the two tables below:

Table 1 -- 1977 Hunter Success Opening Day

Area	Hunters	Gun Hours	Pheasants Taken			Pheasants/Hunter
			Cocks	Hens	Wild	
Barry	85	132	35	21	0	.66
Dansville	77	149	23	8	0	.40
Deford	74	92	15	13	0	.38
Flat River	38	63	16	6	0	.58
Gladwin	71	134	18	5	0	.32
Gourdneck	76	-	27	38	1	.86
Gratiot-Saginaw	32	82	5	11	1	.50
Gregory	44	79	8	3	0	.25
Holly	69	127	10	4	0	.20
Lapeer	123	267	26	15	0	.33
Portland	63	115	27	5	2	.54
Rogue River	46	109	20	10	0	.65
Sharonville	55	108	12	4	4	.36
Stanton	57	111	32	5	0	.65
Three Rivers	66	94	24	22	4	.76
	976	1,662	298	170	12	.49

Table 2 -- Opening Day Hunting Pressure

Area	Number of Cars				Number of Hunters			
	8 am	11 am	1 pm	'76 Opening Hour	8 am	11 am	1 pm	'76 Noon Opening
Barry	78	*	*	143	117	*	*	270
Dansville	124	57	30	90	250	120	75	180
Deford	89	34	20	100	178	68	40	200
Flat River	45	17	7	64	86	32	13	120
Gladwin	115	80	40	35	230	160	80	80
Gourdneck	84	4	0	97	125	6	0	144
Gratiot-Saginaw	72	18	7	60	144	36	14	120
Gregory	113	63	32	*	283	158	80	*
Holly	154	41	12	250	332	86	25	500
Lapeer	150	87	39	200	300	174	78	500
Portland	91	17	2	112	173	32	4	200
Rogue River	66	26	9	130	132	52	18	260
Sharonville	128	84	14	204	260	160	26	450
Stanton	26	13	6	28	52	26	12	56
Three Rivers	75	12	2	143	135	22	4	210

\*No data