

MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION
Game Division

Report No. 2059
June 30, 1955

1955 GAME BIRD COUNTS IN STATE GAME AREAS

METHOD:

Game bird counts have been made in May and early June for the past four years in southern Michigan state game areas. Starting one-half hour before sunrise an observer drives a route stopping to listen for four minutes at each designated listening station. Pheasant "crows" and ruffed grouse "drums" are counted during the first two minutes, and mental notes are made of individual doves and quail that are calling. During the final two minutes the number of individual grouse, doves and quail heard during the entire four minute period are estimated and recorded. Sight observations of game seen on the route are recorded also.

DISCUSSION:

Pheasant Populations

Crowing activity decreased slightly from 1954, indicating a rather thorough harvest of male pheasants on game areas.

The following compilation, based on game bird surveys of the past three seasons, rates game areas according to spring crowing activity:

RATING OF STATE GAME AREAS BY PHEASANT CROWING ACTIVITY FROM RECORDS OF 1953
1954 and 1955.

	<u>Total No. of Crows</u>	<u>Average No. of Crows per Station</u>
<u>Good</u>		
Dansville	604	22.4
Gregory	482	16.1
Petersburg	407	13.5
<u>Fair</u>		
Deford	294	9.8
Gratiot-Saginaw	341	9.5
Sharonville	240	8.9
Waterloo	296	8.2
Pinckney	246	8.2
Stanton	194	7.2

<u>Poor</u>	<u>Total No. of Crows</u>	<u>Average No. of Crows per Station</u>
Flat River	155	3.9
Port Huron	106	3.2
Barry (N)	78	2.2
Barry (S)	64	2.1
Lapeer	47	1.7
Gourdneck	23	1.1
Three Rivers & Crane Pond	19	0.6

Ruffed Grouse Populations

There has been little change in the number of drums per station during the four seasons for which we have data.

The better ruffed grouse areas include: Gratiot-Saginaw, Flat River, Lapeer, Stanton, Deford, Barry and Port Huron.

Dove Populations

Data for the past three seasons indicate no significant change in dove populations.

Quail Populations

Numbers of whistling quail heard per station have increased each season since counts were begun in 1952. Impressions gained from hearing and seeing quail while carrying out routine work on the game areas, also point to a gradual and constant increase in numbers since 1952.

During the past four seasons the highest quail populations have been found in the Dansville, Sharonville, Gregory, Waterloo, Pinckney and Petersburg areas. These areas are located in a relatively small region including southeastern Ingham, southwestern Livingston, eastern Jackson, western Washtenaw, and eastern Monroe counties. Although not included in game bird counts quail numbers in the Pittsford area, in Hillsdale County, compares favorably with the best quail areas. Areas north of the third tier of counties are definitely second-rate quail areas when compared with those mentioned above.

E. J. Gordinier

EJG:vr

TABLE 1

1955 Game Bird Surveys in State Game Areas

Area	Date	Weather Conditions					Game Birds Heard							
		No. of Stations	Wind Velocity	Precipitation	Temperature	Cloud Cover	Pheasants		Ruffed Grouse		Doves		Quail	
							* Total	Ave. Per Station	** Total	Ave. Per Station	*** Total	Ave. Per Station	*** Total	Ave. Per Station
Barry (North)	4/26	12	1-3	none	50	Fog	36	3.0	3	0.25	38	3.2	5	0.4
Barry (South)	5/11	10	1-3	Dew	30-35	Fog	20	2.0	10	1.0	32	3.2	1	0.1
Dansville	4/28	9	0	Dew	46	Fog	152	16.9	3	0.25	21	2.3	18	0.5
Deford	5/19	10	0-7	Threatening	50	Cloudy	97	9.7	3	0.3	17	1.7	2	0.2
Flat River	4/30	14	8	None	40-50	Clear	52	3.7	21	1.5	26	1.9	2	0.1
Gourdneck	5/4	7	1-3	None	70	Hazy	17	2.4	2	0.3	20	2.9	4	0.6
Gratiot-Saginaw	4/29	12	1-3	None	40-50	Clear	115	9.6	46	3.8	28	2.3	2	0.2
Gregory	5/3	10	0	None	45	Slight Haze	215	21.5	3	0.3	17	1.7	22	2.2
Highland	4/29	16	0	None	50	30%	53	3.3	0	0.0	29	1.8	6	0.4
Lapeer	5/10	9	0-3	Light Rain	35-40	Overcast	8	0.9	16	1.6	5	0.6	0	0.0
Lapeer (East)	5/31	7	0-3	Heavy Dew	45	Partly Cloudy	19	2.7	2	0.3	17	2.4	9	1.3
Petersburg	5/12	10	3	Dew	53	None	174	17.4	0	0.0	25	2.5	25	2.5
Pinckney	5/21	10	0-3	None	50-55	Clear	79	7.9	5	0.5	29	2.9	19	1.9
Pontiac Lake	4/21	10	0-3	1" Rain Yesterday	53	Overcast Fog	27	2.7	0	0.0	14	1.4	11	1.1
Port Huron	5/19	11	4-7	None	50-55	Partly Cloudy	24	2.2	10	0.9	10	0.9	0	0.0
Proud Lake	5/26	9	0	6" Rain Yesterday	47	90% Fog	58	6.4	0	0.0	11	1.2	6	0.6
Sharonville	5/9	9	0-3	Heavy Frost	30	Clear	85	9.4	1	0.1	31	3.4	15	1.7
Stanton	5/1	9	1-3	None	48	Clear	75	8.3	29	3.2	13	1.4	1	0.1
Three Rivers & Crane Pond	5/18	10	0-3	None	44	Clear	6	0.6	0	0	14	1.4	5	0.5
Tuscola	4/22	10	4-7	Light Dew	70	Sunny	20	2.0	-	-	-	-	1	0.1
Waterloo #1 (E)	5/19	14	1-3	None	60	Clear	182	13.0	-	-	49	3.5	22	1.6
Waterloo #2 (W)	5/20	13	1-3	None	33	Clear	97	7.5	-	-	16	1.2	37	2.8
		231					1,611	7.0	154	0.7	462	2.0	213	0.9

* No. of pheasants heard in 2-minute listening periods at each station.

** No. of ruffed grouse drums heard in 4-minute periods.

*** No. of individual doves or quail heard in 4-minute periods.

TABLE 2

GAME BIRD COUNTS IN STATE GAME AREAS

Area	Number of Pheasant Crows per Station				Number of Ruffed Grouse Drums per Station				Number of Cooing Doves per Station				Number of Whistling Quail per Station			
	1952	1953	1954	1955	1952	1953	1954	1955	1952	1953	1954	1955	1952	1953	1954	1955
Barry (North)	-	1.0	2.5	3.0	-	0.3	0.7	0.25	-	2.2	3.3	3.2	-	0.3	0.8	0.4
Barry (South)	-	1.4	3.0	2.0	-	1.1	0.7	1.0	-	3.2	3.3	3.2	-	0.0	0.5	0.1
Dansville	13.6	18.7	31.6	16.9	0.2	0.6	0.3	0.25	2.2	2.3	1.3	2.3	0.6	0.9	1.4	0.5
Deford	6.1	7.2	12.5	9.7	1.4	2.1	0.1	0.3	0.8	2.2	1.6	1.7	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.2
Flat River	1.6	5.6	1.8	3.7	0.1	1.8	2.5	1.5	0.8	2.6	2.5	1.9	0.0	0.1	0.4	0.1
Gourdneck	-	0.4	0.4	2.4	-	0.3	0.0	0.3	-	2.0	1.1	2.9	-	0.0	1.0	0.6
Gratiot-Saginaw	6.2	5.2	13.7	9.6	1.3	2.5	2.4	3.8	2.4	3.7	3.3	2.3	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.2
Gregory	15.4	8.8	17.9	21.5	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.3	1.9	1.4	2.0	1.7	1.3	0.9	1.1	2.2
Lapeer	-	1.7	2.7	0.9	-	0.6	2.6	1.6	-	0.9	2.4	0.6	-	0.0	0.1	0.0
Petersburg	-	6.0	17.3	17.4	-	0.0	0.0	0.0	-	1.6	3.0	2.5	-	1.1	1.1	2.5
Pinckney	-	10.5	6.2	7.9	-	0.3	0.4	0.5	-	2.8	2.7	2.9	-	0.4	0.8	1.9
Port Huron	-	3.9	3.5	2.2	-	1.1	1.4	0.9	-	2.5	2.0	0.9	-	0.0	0.0	0.0
Sharonville	-	6.8	10.4	9.4	-	0.1	0.2	0.1	-	2.2	2.6	3.4	-	0.8	1.5	1.7
Stanton	-	4.0	9.2	8.3	-	0.1	1.4	3.2	-	1.0	1.0	1.4	-	0.0	0.0	0.1
Three Rivers and Grane Pond	-	0.8	0.5	0.6	-	0.0	0.0	0.0	-	1.5	2.5	1.4	-	1.2	0.7	0.5
Waterloo #1 (E) +	-	-	-	13.0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3.5	-	-	-	1.6
Waterloo #2 (W) +	-	-	-	7.5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1.2	-	-	-	2.8
Waterloo (Old Route)-	-	5.7	8.7	-	-	0.4	0.4	-	-	1.2	1.1	-	-	0.7	1.1	-
Average	7.6	5.5	8.7	7.8	0.6	0.8	0.9	0.8	1.6	2.1	2.3	2.2	0.3	0.4	0.7	1.0

* In these counts we record the number of pheasant crows heard in a 2 minute period, the number of ruffed grouse drums heard in a 4 minute period, and the number of individual doves and quail heard in a 4 minute period.

+ New routes originated in 1955