

MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION
Game Division

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1961 Early Winter Pheasant Survey
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Pheasant numbers appear to be down from a year ago according to the annual early winter survey. Over 600 mail carriers driving in excess of 400,000 miles tallied pheasant observations from November 27 through December 9. Results of the survey show a 30 per cent drop from the 1960 early winter counts. Carriers in the southern 38 counties (primary pheasant range) saw 1.4 pheasants per 100 miles this year compared to 2.0 in 1960 (Table 1). Since there was little or no snow during both survey periods, the decrease in pheasant numbers appears to be valid. However, the lack of snow on the ground makes pheasant observations difficult and may tend to make year-to-year comparisons unreliable.

The Thumb area carriers saw the greatest number of birds -- 2.5 pheasants per 100 miles. However, this was 36 per cent fewer than last year (Table 2). Southeastern Michigan with 1.4 birds seen per 100 miles dropped 20 per cent from 1960. The Allegan-Ottawa-Muskegon County area showed a 60 per cent decrease. However, only a limited number of carriers made counts in this small area. The central counties (1.6 birds per 100 miles) showed a slight gain of 7 per cent from last year while southwestern Michigan (0.43) remained about the same as a year ago. The fringe counties at the north edge of the pheasant range, which include Gladwin, Lake, Mecosta, Newaygo, Oceana and Osceola counties, had 7 per cent fewer pheasant sightings (0.37) than in 1960.

The sex ratio in 1961 was 2.2 hens per cock compared with 2.8 in 1960. From this information, it appears that only 55 per cent of the cock pheasants were harvested in 1961 while 65 per cent were taken in 1960. At least 80 per cent could have been safely taken without endangering next year's crop. One reason for the reduced harvest percentage may have been that large acreages of corn remained standing throughout the hunting season.

VSJ/aw

Table 1

1961 Early Winter Survey

County	No. of Carriers	No. of Miles	Pheasants Observed		
			Cocks	Hens	Total
Allegan	22	15,588	32	71	103
Barry	12	7,572	18	12	30
Bay	8	5,880	11	97	108
Berrien	17	9,768	26	41	67
Branch	14	10,176	31	42	73
Calhoun	17	11,928	11	14	25
Cass	13	8,892	16	10	26
Clinton	11	8,544	35	38	73
Eaton	15	10,596	42	76	118
Genesee	11	6,756	39	109	148
Gratiot	17	11,580	48	114	162
Hillsdale	16	11,892	57	69	126
Huron	20	13,152	87	268	355
Ingham	17	11,544	103	135	238
Ionia	18	12,312	44	51	95
Isabella	6	4,956	11	10	21
Jackson	16	11,376	56	46	102
Kalamazoo	11	8,268	20	15	35
Kent	22	14,100	32	85	117
Lapeer	15	10,236	55	187	242
Lenawee	21	14,892	93	128	221
Livingston	11	8,244	53	57	110
Macomb	8	6,924	40	243	283
Midland	5	33,972	14	19	33
Monroe	13	9,108	39	75	114
Montcalm	14	10,176	25	28	53
Muskegon	8	5,592	14	23	37
Oakland	17	10,536	54	81	135
Ottawa	17	12,432	37	221	258
Saginaw	18	13,404	72	164	236
St. Clair	19	12,684	85	199	284
St. Joseph	12	8,124	7	4	11
Sanilac	24	18,012	143	480	623
Shiawassee	14	10,296	105	227	332
Tuscola	23	16,224	88	254	342
Van Buren	21	15,120	42	35	77
Washtenaw	16	11,352	36	41	77
Wayne	11	5,412	33	68	101
TOTAL					
38 Counties	570	397,620	1,754	3,837	5,591

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Table 2

1961 Early Winter Survey

	Pheasants Observed			Hens/cock Sex ratio		Birds per 100 miles		% Change From 1960 in Birds per 100 miles
	Cocks	Hens	Total	1961	1960	1961	1960	
Bay	11	97	108	8.8	8.7	1.8	2.6	
Huron	87	268	355	3.1	3.6	2.7	3.1	
Saginaw	72	164	236	2.3	3.0	1.8	4.5	
St. Clair	85	199	284	2.3	2.7	2.2	2.6	
Sanilac	143	480	623	3.4	5.7	3.5	6.8	
Tuscola	88	254	342	2.9	3.6	2.1	3.1	
AREA I	486	1,462	1,948	3.8	4.1	2.5	3.9	-36%
Lenawee	93	128	221	1.4	1.5	1.5	0.9	
Macomb	40	243	283	6.1	5.2	4.1	4.4	
Monroe	39	75	114	1.9	3.5	1.3	1.2	
Washtenaw	36	41	77	1.1	1.7	0.7	1.1	
Wayne	33	68	101	2.1	1.9	1.9	5.0	
AREA II	241	555	796	2.3	2.5	1.7	2.1	-20%
Clinton	35	38	73	1.1	2.3	0.9	1.1	
Eaton	42	76	118	1.8	1.4	1.1	1.3	
Gratiot	48	114	162	2.4	1.1	1.4	1.4	
Ingham	103	135	238	1.3	0.9	2.1	2.1	
Ionia	44	51	95	1.2	0.4	0.8	0.3	
Shiawassee	105	227	332	2.2	3.4	3.2	3.5	
AREA III	377	641	1,018	1.7	1.6	1.6	1.5	+ 7%
Barry	18	12	30	0.7	0.4	0.4	0.2	
Berrien	26	41	67	1.6	2.4	0.7	1.0	
Branch	31	42	73	1.4	1.1	0.7	0.9	
Calhoun	11	14	25	1.3	0.5	0.2	0.3	
Cass	16	10	26	0.6	2.0	0.3	0.1	
Kalamazoo	20	15	35	0.8	1.2	0.4	0.3	
St. Joseph	7	4	11	0.6	1.2	0.1	0.2	
Van Buren	42	35	77	0.8	0.9	0.5	0.3	
AREA IV	171	173	344	1.0	1.3	0.43	0.43	Same
Allegan	32	71	103	2.2	5.9	0.7	3.8	
Ottawa	37	221	258	6.0	7.4	2.1	2.5	
Muskegon	14	23	37	1.6	3.3	0.7	0.7	
AREA V	83	315	398	3.8	6.1	1.2	3.0	-60%
Gladwin	9	18	27	2.0		0.7		
Lake	3	1	4	0.3		0.3		
Mecosta	16	21	37	1.3		0.5		
Newaygo	3	5	8	1.7		0.1		
Oceana	11	5	16	0.5		0.3		
Osceola	7	11	18	1.6		0.3		
NORTHERN FRINGE	49	61	110	1.2		0.37		- 7%