

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

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The 1977 Quail Whistling Survey

by

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Quail whistling counts were conducted on 34 routes during the first two weeks of June (Table 1). Numbers of quail heard dropped almost 40 percent from comparable routes run in 1976. We anticipated substantial losses again this year because of the severe weather encountered over much of the quail range this past winter. Despite the winter weather, bobwhites survived in adequate numbers to recommend that 23 counties be opened for hunting this fall (see map) -- only four less than the 27 counties opened to quail hunting last year.

Counties having less than 10 quail heard per 20 mile route were not recommended for hunting. These included: Barry, Eaton, Genesee, Gratiot, Macomb, Livingston, and Tuscola, all of which were hunted last year. Three additional counties -- Oakland, Ottawa, and Saginaw -- qualified to be added to the area open to hunting in 1977.

We have consistently made the point that hunters should be allowed to take quail when numbers build up over a period of mild winters because a "hard" winter can reduce the population severely. That happened last winter. All seven counties to be closed, which were open last year, are north of the two southern tiers of counties. Even in those counties where quail numbers have been the best, such as Hillsdale and Lenawee for example, counts were greatly reduced this year. We can only forecast a poorer than average season for the Michigan quail hunter this year.

Table 1
Quail Whistling Counts
1973-1977

<u>Number of Quail Heard Per Route</u>					
<u>County</u>	<u>1973</u>	<u>1974</u>	<u>1975</u>	<u>1976</u>	<u>1977</u>
Allegan	24	28	19	18	12
Barry	12	19	11	25	6
Berrien	17	24	16	19	15
Branch, N	48	48	42	39	20
Calhoun	31	14	21	21	17
Cass	42	58	49	41	12
Clinton	16	12	13	6	5
Eaton, S	21	25	17	14	5
Genesee	18	21	21	23	0
Gratiot	10	28	21	11	6
Hillsdale, S	48	83	56	55	31
Ingham	23	37	25	13	12
Ionia	4	9	10	13	12
Jackson, NE	50	19	43	47	13
Kalamazoo	46	66	39	52	11
Kent	--	--	6	0	6
Lapeer	0	4	2	0	1
Lenawee, SW	46	45	28	32	17
Livingston, S	12	18	25	12	6
Macomb	32	0	18	10	6
Monroe	31	33	16	19	17
Montcalm	3	7	24	65	25
Muskegon	--	--	26	16	10
Oakland, S	1	11	11	8	12
Ottawa	--	--	3	--	20
Saginaw	15	14	25	6	12
St. Clair, N	15	--	--	13	6
St. Clair, S	19	19	28	26	13
St. Joseph	58	37	55	34	28
Shiawassee	26	15	30	21	12
Tuscola	--	--	14	10	6
Van Buren	14	47	50	30	12
Washtenaw	24	37	26	19	18
Wayne	41	56	42	23	25
Average/route	27.5	28.8	25.2	21.8	12.6

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