

STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
GAME DIVISION
LANSING, MICHIGAN 48926

Report No. 2644
March 24, 1969

Rural Mail Carrier Winter Pheasant Survey
by
Victor S. Janson

Dates for the rural mail carrier winter survey of pheasants were scheduled for the two-week period February 10-22, 1969 (normally run in early December) in an effort to get more reliable information on sex ratios. February usually can be counted on to have varying amounts of snow on the ground, while early December is considerably less reliable in this regard. Pheasants can be seen more easily with snow cover than without. However, we had an exceptionally dry February in southern Michigan and almost all of the state's pheasant range was devoid of snow, making observations difficult but perhaps somewhat comparable with last winter's counts - November 27-December 9, 1967--a period also without snow.

Over 600 mail carriers traveling over 400,000 miles during the two-week counting period, saw more pheasants than in the previous winter in both the primary pheasant range and in the northern fringe counties (Table 2). Numbers of pheasants seen were noticeably higher than a year ago only in the west and southwest portions of the range (Table 1). However, in the other areas--Thumb, Central, and Southeast--pheasants were seen at least as frequently as they were the previous winter.

The sex ratio of 1.7 hens per cock (1.5 last winter) again suggests a low percentage of the cock pheasant population was harvested (Table 1), which is to be expected when pheasant numbers are below average.

Details of the winter mail carrier survey are shown by county in Table 2. The greatest number of pheasants were seen in Ottawa and Berrien counties.

Table 1
Sex Ratio and Population Data by Area

	Sex ratio (Hens/cock)					Birds per 100 miles				
	1968	1967	1966	1965	1964	1968	1967	1966	1965	1964
Thumb	1.9	1.7	2.7	2.6	5.1	0.5	0.5	1.1	1.1	6.9
Southeast	1.7	1.4	2.6	1.5	2.7	1.1	1.0	2.0	1.3	4.1
Central	1.0	1.2	2.0	1.4	1.8	0.6	0.4	1.2	1.1	1.6
Southwest	1.7	1.1	1.2	1.3	2.0	0.7	0.3	0.7	0.7	1.1
West	4.2	4.2	5.1	3.0	8.1	1.1	0.7	2.6	1.4	3.0
Primary range	1.7	1.5	2.4	1.7	3.5	0.7	0.5	1.3	1.1	3.0
Marginal range	1.2	1.0	1.6	1.8	1.2	0.5	0.2	1.0	0.5	0.8

Table 2

Rural Mail Carrier Winter Pheasant Survey
February 10-22, 1969

<u>County</u>	<u>No. of carriers</u>	<u>No. of miles</u>	<u>Cocks</u>	<u>Hens</u>	<u>Total</u>
Allegan	21	14,861	23	37	60
Barry	13	8,283	8	0	8
Bay	8	5,599	9	31	40
Berrien	20	12,012	73	170	243
Branch	13	10,032	25	21	46
Calhoun	13	10,065	13	17	30
Cass	9	5,368	2	0	2
Clinton	15	10,648	21	36	57
Eaton	20	12,397	48	41	89
Genesee	14	8,734	24	55	79
Gratiot	14	9,031	8	2	10
Hillsdale	14	9,878	58	26	84
Huron	20	16,258	15	29	44
Ingham	16	10,065	44	42	86
Ionia	15	10,714	20	8	28
Jackson	13	9,713	32	26	58
Kalamazoo	12	7,942	15	11	26
Kent	19	11,957	26	158	184
Lapeer	13	9,108	29	20	49
Lenawee	19	11,715	41	65	106
Livingston	12	8,030	16	28	44
Macomb	10	6,743	60	136	196
Midland	6	4,653	5	8	13
Monroe	17	11,627	37	44	81
Montcalm	14	10,483	20	19	39
Muskegon	9	6,853	16	14	30
Oakland	17	8,503	16	23	39
Ottawa	16	10,454	31	245	276
Saginaw	19	12,760	20	41	61
Sanilac	23	16,698	39	69	108
Shiawassee	12	8,613	26	40	66
St. Clair	18	11,506	30	48	78
St. Joseph	9	6,369	16	14	30
Tuscola	16	11,921	5	2	7
Van Buren	19	13,046	23	46	69
Washtenaw	16	11,033	25	36	61
Wayne	8	3,234	16	19	35
TOTAL					
Primary pheasant range	542	366,906	935	1,627	2,562
Gladwin	6	5,148	22	24	46
Isabella	3	2,475	6	4	10
Mecosta	14	11,220	26	25	51
Newaygo	6	3,454	6	9	15
Oceana	9	6,545	8	8	16
Osceola	8	6,567	12	23	35
TOTAL					
Northern fringe	46	35,409	80	93	173