

MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION
Game Division

Report No. 1167
December 5, 1952

THE 1952 PHEASANT SEASON

The 1952 pheasant season in most respects was similar to that of last year. When hunter's reports are in the total season's kill should turn out to be somewhat higher than last year's figure of 944,000, but probably not much over a million.

Hunting pressure was a little lower than last season's. Opening day pressure was probably as great as in 1951, but on subsequent weekends it seemed to stay consistently lower than for similar periods a year ago. Last year, in turn, it appeared to be lower than in 1950. It is likely that the Sunday closed counties are discouraging more people each year from making the effort to drive to an open area. This coupled with televised football is resulting in a considerable lowering of pheasant hunting pressure, particularly on the east side of the state--the best part of the pheasant range.

Pheasant numbers seemed to be slightly higher than a year ago in almost all areas. There were no authentic reports of any locality that had a definite decrease. The Thumb area, in general, is still the best in the state, although the limited locality around Zeeland in Ottawa County possibly had a better yield than even the best spot in the Thumb.

It was the opinion of 40 per cent of the hunters contacted that there were more birds this year; 30 per cent thought there was no change; and 30 per cent said birds were fewer.

Warm sunny days prevailed throughout most of the season. And although this weather was pleasant for being out-of-doors, it was not ideal for bagging pheasants. Much of the time conditions were too dry for bird dogs to work properly and too hot for hunters to cover much ground. There was some snow in the Thumb on opening day, and there was a light rain in some areas late on Sunday of the second weekend. The rest of the time was mostly fair and warm, with only a few dewy evenings. In Lansing there was only .49 inches of rain during the period from September 15 to November 10. Normal for the period is 4.11 inches.

Pheasant hunter success rate was slightly higher this year. The 2,340 hunters contacted during the season had killed 642 cock birds in 6,262 hours of hunting. The rate of kill was 9.8 hunter hours per bird. A year ago 1,957 hunters were contacted who had killed 549 birds at a rate of 10.8 hours per bird.

Most soybeans and about one-third of the corn was harvested by the opening day this year. By the end of the season over two-thirds of the corn was cut. This certainly improved hunters' chances, and had the weather too been more favorable, there would have been an appreciably larger kill. Almost all hunters and farmers contacted approved of the later season. Likewise the 10 o'clock opening hour still seems to be agreeable with everyone.

Ralph I. Blouch

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Distribution Schedule:
G, G-1 through G-7