

## 2015 Upland Game Bird Population Trends – Southwest Region

<b>2015 Conditions</b> – The spring/summer of 2014 and mild winter of 2014-2015 were favorable for all upland birds. Carryover should be high. Spring and early summer conditions in 2015 were also good for production. Most species are up compared to 2014. Forest grouse, especially ruffed grouse, had very good production this year. There have been reports of good-sized chukar broods near the Bruneau and East Fork Owyhee Rivers. Upland bird hunting should be good to great across the Region this year.			
Upland Game Bird	Trend from last year (2014)	10-Year Trend (2006-2015)	Comments
Pheasant	Up	Up	Favorable fall precipitation and late spring/early summer weather likely contributed to good hatch during 2015. Pheasant hunting should be good around the valley during 2015.
Greater Sage-grouse	Up	Stable	The number of sage-grouse counted during lek surveys in 2015 increased in most of Owyhee County. Two mild winters means hens came into spring in good body condition, which translates to good nest success and brood survival. Hunters can expect to find good numbers of grouse near water sources. However, hunters are encouraged to hunt outside of the Soda Fire perimeter. Good places to hunt sage-grouse in GMU 40 are Toy Pass, Triangle, and Antelope Ridge Road.
Chukar	Up	Stable	Chukar populations along the Bruneau and East Fork Owyhee rivers are up and should provide good hunting. Populations of chukar at Arrowrock and Brownlee reservoirs, and along the South Fork Payette River, appear to be up slightly. Hunters can expect to find larger broods in their usual areas compared to last year. Hunters should avoid hunting upland birds within the Soda Fire perimeter. Good chukar hunting in GMU 40 can be found between Sinker Creek and Poison Springs/Mud Flat Road.
Gray Partridge (Hun)	Stable	Up	Gray partridge numbers have been excellent during the past three years and should continue to be good during 2015. Hunters can expect to find gray partridge in the uplands near agricultural fields and in sagebrush/mountain brush near water. Hunters should avoid the area within the Soda Fire Perimeter. Good hunting can be found in Gem, Washington, and Adams counties.
California Quail	Up	Stable	Quail numbers counted along established brood routes are up compared to 2014. Quail production appears to be good to excellent, with reports of good quail numbers across the Treasure Valley and

			west central areas. Overall, quail hunting should be good in areas with deciduous shrubs and berries near perennial water sources. Hunters are advised to hunt outside the Soda Fire Perimeter. Good quail hunting in GMU 40 includes all perennial water sources with good cover between Sinker Creek and Poison Creek/Mud Flat Road.
<b>Mourning Dove</b>	Up	Up	Late August dove numbers are up compared to 2014. Dove production appears to be very good with many young birds observed along established routes. Mild winters also translate to good carryover from 2014. Dove seasons were extended in 2014 and will run through October 30. Daily bag limit is 15 and possession limit is 45.
<b>Ruffed Grouse</b>	Up	Stable	Mild winters and favorable spring conditions translate to good carryover of forest grouse and good production. Reports from the field indicate excellent ruffed grouse production. Dusky and Spruce grouse hunting should also be very good along ridge tops away from roads.
<b>Dusky Grouse</b>	Up	Stable	
<b>Spruce Grouse</b>	Up	Stable	