

2015 Upland Game Bird Population Trends – Upper Snake Region

2015 Conditions – Mild winter conditions in 2014-2015 likely allowed for good carryover. Timely moisture and average temperatures during spring/summer 2015 were good for production. These factors combined with few severe weather events during the nesting season should equal a good upland bird season in the Upper Snake Region. There have been reports of good sized gray partridge (hun) broods across the Region. Areas that hold pheasant in the Upper Snake have reported early broods and many good sized broods. Upland bird hunting should be average to slightly above average across the Region this year.			
Upland Game Bird	Trend from last year (2014)	10-Year Trend (2006-2015)	Comments
Pheasant	Stable	Stable	There are no surveys conducted for pheasant in the Upper Snake and last year's harvest data indicates declines in both hunters and harvest. The Upper Snake Region continues to stock approximately 2,500 pheasants per year on Mud Lake WMA, Market Lake WMA, and Cartier WMA.
Columbian Sharp-tailed Grouse	Stable	Stable	Work being done in Unit 69 suggests that sharp-tailed grouse hunting should be good this fall. Nest success was about 42%, which is lower than last year, but brood-rearing conditions were outstanding this year. The birds that did nest successfully had more chicks survive. Lek surveys suggest sharp-tailed grouse numbers have remained relatively stable over the last five years. While recent numbers are slightly lower than the high levels reached during 2006 and 2007, sharp-tailed grouse populations are strong and provide liberal hunting opportunities (Oct. 1–31; 2-bird daily bag). The best hunting is typically in CRP fields that have green alfalfa and/or other forbs, and in more native sagebrush-steppe habitats. If CRP fields are relatively dry, hunters should expect movements of sharp-tailed grouse up into areas where green forbs can still be found (mountain shrub communities).
Chukar	Stable	Stable	Chukar numbers remain low in the Upper Snake and harvest data over the last five years suggest stable to slightly declining numbers. No chukar surveys are conducted in the Upper Snake Region.
Gray Partridge (Hun)	Stable	Stable	There are no surveys conducted for gray partridge in the Upper Snake, but harvest data over the past five years suggest numbers have been stable. A few reports from landowners indicate more broods observed than normal.

Forest Grouse (Dusky, Ruffed)	Stable	Stable	No surveys are conducted for forest grouse in the Upper Snake, but harvest data over the past five years suggests relatively stable numbers. Sportsmen reports give a general trend for both ruffed and dusky grouse numbers and the early reports are variable, which likely indicate numbers are likely stable and hunting should be average across the Upper Snake Region.
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