

RECREATION REPORT

Grouse hunters asked to drop off wing, tail from each bird

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) is asking successful forest grouse and mountain quail hunters to return a wing and a tail from each bird they harvest.

Look for collection barrels (often bright blue with yellow signs) at major road junctions or highways in popular hunting areas. You'll also find barrels at some ODFW offices and popular rural markets.

Locations of barrels in this area include:

- Junction of Highways 7 and 245, about 10 miles south of Baker City
- Junction of Highway 7 and Middle Fork Road near Bates
- Junction of Highway 86 and Forest Road 77, near the summit of Halfway Grade between Halfway and Richland in eastern Baker County.
- Junction of Highway 86 and Forest Road 39 east of Halfway
- Junction of Forest Roads 39 and 66 north of Highway 86
- Junction of Imnaha Highway and Forest Road 39 east of Joseph
- Junction of Highway 3 and Charolais Road north of Enterprise
- Junction of Smith Mountain Road and Bramlet Lane north of Wallowa
- Promise Road between Wallowa and Maxville
- Junction of Moses Creek Lane and Bowman Loop east of Lookingglass Creek
- Highway 204 near Andies Prairie Sno-Park
- Junction of Grays Corner Road and Mt. Harris Loop
- Highway 203 near Catherine Creek State Park
- Spring Creek Road near Interstate 84
- Mount Emily Summit Road near Interstate 84
- Highway 244 near Starkey

HOWTO SUBMIT YOUR WINGS AND TAILS

- Clip the right wing close to the bird's body. Submit the left wing if the right wing is damaged (i.e. worn or missing feathers).
- Remove all tail and rump feathers by skinning out the lower 2 to 3 inches of the back of the bird and clipping off the tail.
- Place wing and tail together in provided paper bag, and write the date of kill and general location where indicated. Please do not use plastic bags, as they speed decomposition and make the wings and tails hard to use.
- Put the wing bags inside the collection barrel or drop them off at the nearest ODFW office.

UPLAND GAME BIRD AND WATERFOWL HUNTING OUTLOOK

Winging it

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

UPLAND GAME BIRD FORECAST

Baker County

Upland game bird hunters should see an average year in Baker County. A mild winter and favorable spring conditions led to good chick production. Birds had good reproduction, chicks were of good size, and broods were generally large.

Quail seem to be still trying to recover from the hard winter of 2016-17 and their numbers have been down the last couple of years. Chukar are making a quicker comeback, numbers seem to be about average. Hunters should expect to see birds scattered in pockets of good habitat. Access and Habitat properties offer good upland hunting and access to public land.

Grant County

Trend counts for quail, turkey and chukar are down for the 2019 season while forest grouse were difficult to find and may be down. The likely reasons were the prolonged winter conditions and deeper than normal snow. Turkey and chukar offer the best opportunities this season for upland hunters, with turkey widely distributed throughout the county.

The Philip W. Schneider Wildlife Area is open to the public and offers good bird hunting. Quail, both California and mountain, can be found in brushy and riparian areas throughout the county but hunters will have to work to flush them out of cover. Hunters will find grouse throughout the national forest with blue grouse on ridge tops, like Strawberry Mountain or Vinegar Hill, and ruff along brushy creek bottoms, like Murderers Creek or Camp Creek.

Malheur County

Last winter was very mild, resulting in good over winter survival of upland birds. Timing and intensity of spring precipitation has a major influence on chick production for upland species. This year was characterized by heavier than normal spring rains in April and May and slightly cooler temperatures in early summer. Overall, nesting conditions were good with range conditions in fair to good shape for upland bird chick production.

- Chukar: Surveys on established routes yielded 54 chukar per 10 miles and good production with 11.4 chicks per brood. This is a 15 percent increase from last year and is 23 percent above the 10-year average of 40.7 birds per 10 miles. The most productive routes were along the west side of the Owyhee Reservoir and Cottonwood Canyon southwest of Harper.

- Pheasant: Surveys along established routes yielded 3.4 birds per 10 miles, a 39 percent decrease in number of birds observed from last year's survey and 50.6 percent below the 10-year average. Chick production was fair at 4.0 chicks per brood. Hunting prospects will vary depending on the farming practices in the area where you have permission to hunt. The outlying areas around Willow Creek



Kathy Orr/For EO Media Group

The chukar, a type of partridge, is among the favorite upland game birds for hunters in Eastern Oregon. Chukars generally prefer steep ground in the sagebrush country.

and Vale have higher bird numbers than areas closer to Ontario and Nyssa. Those areas with suitable year round habitat continue to produce pheasants.

There are very few public lands in the area available to pheasant hunters and the few parcels that are available tend to get hunted daily. One option for private lands access is the Cow Hollow fundraiser <https://www.facebook.com/CowHollowPark/> to benefit the Cow Hollow Park.

- California quail: Surveys on established routes yielded 41.5 quail per 10 miles, up 5.7 percent over last year and 2.5 percent above the 10-year average. Production was good at 9.9 chicks per brood with similar production observed in both agricultural and range lands.

Umatilla County

This year's brood routes have shown a decrease in upland game bird numbers. Pheasant counts on our established routes were below our 10-year average. Untimely spring rains and a long harsh winter may be having a negative effect on our upland game birds after last year's robust numbers.

The majority of upland hunting is on private land, so be sure to ask permission prior to hunting. Hunters looking for public land can access the Columbia Basin Wildlife Areas, including Power City, Irrigon, Coyote Springs and Willow Creek.

Union County

Quail counts suggest a better year than last year and pheasant counts are down. Hunters can expect to work a little harder to fill game bags with roosters this season. The best hunting opportunities are pheasant on the Ladd Marsh Wildlife Area and forest grouse on national forests. Hunters should work ridge tops above 5,000 feet for blue grouse and stream corridors with heavy cover and water for ruffed grouse.

Ladd Marsh Wildlife Area

The 2019 hunting season will be challenging for hunters. Although spring weather conditions looked promising, the number of pheasant broods as well as the brood sizes observed have been significantly lower than previous years. Quail however seem to have done better with strong brood sizes.

Dove numbers on the area look good. Hunters can find success hunting tree rows, and harvested farm fields. Pass shooting may also be good where hunters can get between water and these areas in the morning and evening.

Hungarian partridge, ruffed and blue grouse were not seen during the brood routes but can still be found in low numbers on the Glass Hill unit. Overall, hunters should be able to find birds but may have to hunt in non-traditional habitats to find them.

Upland game birds can be located throughout Ladd Marsh providing ample hunting opportunity for all. Grassland, fencerows, brush, and areas adjacent to agricultural fields are good locations to key on but do not overlook dry and receding wetlands. The wetland habitat provides more opportunity for pheasants than all the rest combined.

All visitors, including hunters, must have in their possession a free daily permit to access the wildlife area. Permits will be available at several self-check-in stations at entry points and parking lots. All visitors are required to have an ODFW Wildlife Area Parking Permit to park on the wildlife area. Hunters receive a free parking permit with their hunting license. Parking permits are to be displayed on the vehicle dash. Learn more about ODFW's Wildlife Area Parking Permit Program.

Wallowa County

Surveys for blue (dusky) and ruffed grouse indicate that blue grouse populations are still below the long-term

UPLAND GAME BIRD HUNTS

BLUE & RUFFED GROUSE

- Statewide, Sept. 1 to Jan. 31, 2020
- Daily bag limit, 3 of each species

CHUKAR AND HUNGARIAN PARTRIDGE

- Statewide, Oct. 5 to Jan. 31, 2020
- Daily bag limit, 8 total (within Lower Klamath Hills RHA near Klamath Falls the daily chukar limit is 2 birds)

ROOSER PHEASANT

- Statewide, Oct. 5 to Dec. 31, 2019
- Daily bag limit, 2

CALIFORNIA QUAIL

- Eastern Oregon, Oct. 5 to Jan. 31, 2020
- Daily bag limit, 10

MOUNTAIN QUAIL

- Crook, Grant, Wheeler, Gilliam, Klamath, Umatilla, Morrow and Wallowa counties, Oct. 5 to Jan. 31, 2020
- Daily bag limit, 2

MIGRATORY GAME BIRD HUNTS

MOURNING DOVE

- Statewide, Sept. 1 to Oct. 30
- Daily bag limit, 15 (possession limit 30)

BAND-TAILED PIGEON

- Statewide, Sept. 15-23
- Daily bag limit, 2 (possession limit 6)

DUCK AND MERGANSER

- Zone 2 (see map, Page 2B), Oct. 5-Dec. 1, Dec. 4-Jan. 20
- Bag limit (see footnote below)

DUCK AND MERGANSER (SCAUP)

- Zone 2 (see map, Page 2B), Oct. 5-Dec. 1, Dec. 4-Dec. 31
- Bag limit (see footnote below)

DUCK AND MERGANSER

- Zone 1 (see map, Page 2B), Oct. 12-27, Oct. 30-Jan. 26
- Bag limit (see footnote below)

DUCK AND MERGANSER (SCAUP)

- Zone 1 (see map, Page 2B), Nov. 2-Jan. 26
- Bag limit (see footnote below)

COOT

- Statewide, concurrent with duck seasons listed by zone
- Bag limit, 25 (possession limit 75)

BRANT

- Statewide, Nov. 23-Dec. 8
- Bag limit, 2 (possession limit 6)

CROW

- Statewide, Oct. 1-Jan. 31
- No bag or possession limits

WILSON'S SNIPE

- Zone 2, concurrent with duck season
- Bag limit, 8 (possession limit 24)

WILSON'S SNIPE

- Zone 1, Nov. 2-Feb. 16
- Bag limit, 8 (possession limit 24)

REGULAR GOOSE*

- East zone (see map, Page 2B), Oct. 12-27, Nov. 4-Jan. 26
- Bag limits, 4 Canada geese, 10 white-fronted, 6 white geese daily (possession limits, 12, 30 and 18, respectively)

* Canada geese are all types of Canada geese including cackling and Aleutian Canada geese. White geese are snow and Ross' geese. White-fronted geese are also known as specklebelly geese.

• Footnote: The daily bag limit of ducks (including mergansers) is seven. Within the daily bag limit, you may not have more than: three scaup (during open season), two hen mallards, one pintail, two redheads, and two canvasbacks. The possession limit is triple the daily bag limit.

average. The number of blue grouse broods observed this summer is below normal as well. Nevertheless, these species should provide fair opportunity during September and early October.

Forest grouse hunters should be aware that there are vehicle restrictions and no camping allowed on Hancock forestlands during fire season. Chukar numbers are doing well and hunting should be good this fall.

WATERFOWL FORECAST

Baker County

Duck and goose hunting is expected to be similar to past years with a few resident birds available early in the season. More migrant birds will arrive later in the season and hunting should improve, especially in the Baker and Keating valleys. Almost all

hunting is on private property, so be sure to ask permission before hunting. The Powder River from Baker City to Brownlee Reservoir offers the best waterfowl hunting.

Grant County

Grant County offers very limited waterfowl hunting opportunities due to lack of habitat — it's mostly jump shooting on private land along the John Day River.

Malheur County

Many of the desert ponds dried up this summer because of mild winter conditions and very little precipitation, but those ponds that held water through the summer had fair duck and goose production. Desert ponds are also a good opportunity for early season jump shooting.