

2009 Game Animal Population and Hunting Information

Biologist: Dana L. Base

District/Wildlife Area: District One

Pheasant: Very limited availability of wild pheasants as they only occur in a few areas such as the Colville Valley bottom and exclusively on private land. Once again this season we will be releasing game farm produced roosters at the Sherman Creek Wildlife Area, which is mapped on the Go Hunt website -- <http://wdfw.wa.gov/mapping/gohunt/index.html>.

Quail: Very limited population in NE Washington essentially viewed as “songbirds” by local residents; Hence hunting seems to be insignificant.

Forest Grouse: Numbers continue to be down in District One, especially blue and ruffed grouse. Nevertheless shooting at least one opportunistically in the forested portions of the District is realistic, however, getting a bag limit of 4 in one day is probably not.

Wild Turkeys: Numerous reports of “casual” observations of large successful broods over the summer should lead to a good season this fall for “beardless only” turkeys in the early fall and either sex turkey in the late fall general season.

Waterfowl: Limited opportunity for puddle ducks within District One. Most public access hunting seems to concentrate on the Pend Oreille River. Diving ducks including goldeneyes, mergansers and others are the most available ducks throughout the rest of District One on open lakes and rivers. Canada geese are also available on major water bodies such as Lake Roosevelt, the Pend Oreille River, and large farm fields in valley bottoms.

Dove: Hunting prospects for 2009 should be similar to last year. However, District One is not a major dove area, with doves occurring at low population densities relative to the Columbia Basin and similar regions. As often as not, cool temperatures just prior to or during the dove season push many doves further south out of the District.

White-tailed Deer: The long-term population trend for white-tailed deer continues to drift downward with the continued loss of acreage in cereal grain and alfalfa hay farm production. Two bad winters back to back have further exacerbated this situation. The overall white-tail harvest will probably be lower this year than in the previous ten or more years.

Mule Deer: Overall mule deer appear to have weathered these past couple winters better than the white-tailed deer, but have shown the same spotty pattern with some areas having stable to increasing numbers and other areas a decline. Hunting prospects should be similar to 2008.

Elk: There are fewer elk in District One relative to District Three. With rare exceptions the elk population does not appear to have been as heavily impacted as white-tailed deer from the last two winters. Hunting prospects should be similar to 2008. Finding elk is the biggest challenge with so much closed canopy forest within NE Washington where they can effectively hide and “sit out” the season.