

2009 Game Animal Population and Hunting Information

Biologist: Scott Fitkin and Jeff Heinlen

District/Wildlife Area: District Six

Pheasant: Prospects will likely be better than last year due to favorable spring weather conditions improving nesting success. Most wild pheasant production is on private lands in District six, so prospective hunters should seek permission in advance of the season to access private land. Game farm produced roosters will once again be released at traditional release sites this fall. These sites are mapped on the Go Hunt website (<http://wdfw.wa.gov/mapping/gohunt/index.html>).

Quail: California quail numbers appear to be up this year as compared to last year due to favorable spring weather conditions improving nesting success. Hunting prospects are anticipated to be better than last year and possibly the last two years.

Gray Partridge: Favorable spring weather conditions likely improved nesting success for Gray Partridge within the District this year. Hunting prospects are anticipated to be better than last year throughout the district.

Chukar: Favorable spring weather conditions likely improved nesting success for Chukar throughout the District this year. Hunting prospects are anticipated to be better than last year throughout the district.

Forest Grouse: District six supports Blue, Spruce, Ruffed, and Sharp-tailed grouse. Blue and Spruce grouse populations are still down from past years due to the loss of habitat associated with the 175,000 Tripod fire in 2006 (GMU 224 and the east side of 218). However, a mild winter and favorable spring weather conditions throughout the district appear to have increased reproductive success in all forest grouse this year. Hunting prospects are anticipated to be better than last year throughout the district. Sharp-tailed grouse is closed statewide.

Wild Turkeys: Favorable spring weather conditions likely improved nesting success for turkeys within the District this year. Hunting prospects are anticipated to be better than last year throughout the district.

Waterfowl: Prospects are similar to last year with waterfowl surveys indicating local populations are similar to last year. However, most of the waterfowl hunting opportunity is dependent on the number of migrants coming from Canada and Alaska and how long water remains open.

Dove: The 2009 dove call count surveys show populations below the five-year average in the district. Based on this data it is likely to be a below average year for dove hunting.

Deer: Prospects for mule deer in District 6 continue to be down due to an average 70% over-winter fawn mortality during each of the three winters prior to last winter. Even though last winter was not as bad, fawn numbers did not improve as anticipated with spring surveys showing 31 fawns:100 does in the Methow and 42:100 in the Okanogan. This is attributed to poor forage conditions on the winter range.

White-tailed deer are less abundant than mule deer throughout the district but are found in most all valley bottoms. White-tailed deer have fared better than mule deer over the last four winters, so prospects should be somewhat better for those hunters targeting whitetails. Most white-tailed deer are found on private lands in District six, so prospective hunters should seek permission in advance of the season to access private land.

Elk: n/a

Bear: Bears are reasonably abundant in District 6 and the population appears to be relatively stable, so hunting prospects in the district should be good. To date, the berry crop has been very good this year and as a result, bears will likely be widely distributed on the landscape and keying in locally on berry concentrations.

Miscellaneous Comments: Recent rainfall and cooler temperatures have mitigated somewhat for what have otherwise been very hot, dry summer conditions. A return to hot weather is expected, so dry conditions and very high fire danger is anticipated for at least the earlier fall seasons.