

2009 Game Animal Population and Hunting Information

Biologist: David Anderson /Eric Holman

District/Wildlife Area: District Nine

Pheasant: Very little wild production of pheasants. Essentially all hunting opportunities are associated with pen-raised birds and the formalized release sites.

Quail: Moderate winter conditions reduced winter mortality in 2008-2009. Most hunting is located on private lands in eastern Klickitat County, which is dominated by hunt clubs with limited access. Prospective hunters should seek permission in advance of the season to access upland bird hunting areas.

Gray Partridge: Like quail, moderate winter conditions reduced winter mortality in 2008-2009. Most hunting is located on private lands in eastern Klickitat County, which is dominated by hunt clubs with limited access. Prospective hunters should seek permission in advance of the season to access upland bird hunting areas.

Chukar: Like quail and partridge, moderate winter conditions reduced winter mortality in 2008-2009. Most hunting is located on private lands in eastern Klickitat County, which is dominated by hunt clubs with limited access. Prospective hunters should seek permission in advance of the season to access upland bird hunting areas.

Forest Grouse: Grouse numbers should improve for 2009 as the population rebounds from severe winter conditions of 2007-2008. Prospective hunters should focus on brushy riparian zones or overgrown abandoned logging roads for the best chance at success.

Wild Turkeys: Populations in Klickitat County continue to be robust and hunting conditions for the fall of 2009 should be favorable. Reports of broods and increasing distribution at higher elevations should increase opportunity. Skamania county turkey populations are located primarily along the eastern and southern margin i.e. near Klickitat county. Clark County offers little turkey hunting opportunity, as the eastern turkeys released there in the 1990s haven't established a strong population foothold.

Waterfowl: Hunters are reminded of the complex goose hunting regulations in area 2A designed to protect wintering populations of the dusky Canada goose. Dusky populations remain below objectives and liberalization of the hunting season structure is not likely in the near term. Breeding surveys in Alaska for 2009 were poor and reduced quotas in Washington should be expected.

Duck hunting: Locally produced mallards and wood ducks will provide some early season opportunity for prospective duck hunters. Improved duck hunting opportunity is dependent on the arrival of migratory birds pushed southward from northwestern Washington and British Columbia. Severe winter weather can lead to excellent duck hunting conditions in areas of Southwest Washington including the Vancouver Lowlands and Ridgefield National Wildlife Refuge. New for the 2009-10 duck season is a liberalization of the pintail limit. Two pintails are now legal per day.

Dove: Call surveys for Klickitat County in 2009 indicate a lower population of doves, Although Klickitat County has the best dove hunting in our district, expect reduced opportunity this year. Hunters should remember that most quality hunting areas in eastern Klickitat County are associated with private hunting clubs. Some dove hunting opportunity in the Vancouver lowlands, i.e. Shillapoo Wildlife Area.

Deer: Unfortunately, the severe winter of 2007-08 likely caused greater than average winter losses in the deer population. This was borne out in the harvest reports from the 2008 hunting season. Losses were greatest in those Game Management Units located in the Cascade Mountains. Deer populations are much more stable in lower elevation units such as Washougal (568) and Battle Ground (564), as well as the Klickitat County GMUs, i.e. West Klickitat (578), Grayback (388) and East Klickitat (382). 2009 should offer somewhat improved conditions as the winter of 2008-09 was not severe.

Successful hunting for black-tailed deer is primarily a function of the effort, focus and energy that hunters put into the hunt. Blacktail bucks thrive in heavily vegetated habitats and are often very nocturnal in nature. This means that successful blacktail hunters must be in position early in the morning and carefully hunt near sources of food and in secure cover. Bucks travel more during the rut when they cover large amounts of territory searching for does in estrus. This makes bucks more vulnerable as they spend less time hiding and are sometimes found in "open" habitats, i.e. clearcuts and meadows. Not surprisingly, approximately 1/3rd of the annual buck harvest in Region 5 occurs during the 4-day "late buck" hunt held each November.

Klickitat County deer hunters are reminded to check the 2009 Big Game Hunting Seasons and Regulations pamphlet to become familiar with significant changes in hunting regulations in the Klickitat GMUs. Changes for 2009 include significant boundary changes, implementation of the 3-point antler restriction for all user-groups in GMU 578 West Klickitat, removal of the general late muzzleloader deer season in 578 and elimination of antlerless deer hunting from the late archery season in GMU 388 Grayback.

Elk: Antlerless tag numbers have been adjusted downward by approximately 33% again for 2009. A similar number of 2 ½ and 3 ½ -year-old-bulls, that make up the majority of the harvest, should be available for the 2009 hunt. Those choosing to participate in the popular late muzzleloader elk seasons in GMUs 574 and 578 should hope for severe winter weather just prior to these seasons as the success rate of these hunts is primarily weather dependent.

Miscellaneous Comments: Good luck in all you hunting adventures during 2009-10!